GERMAN ARMY SECURITY UNITS IN RUSSIA, 1941 - 1943: A CASE STUDY

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on the motivation and conduct of units of the German Army of the East, the *Ostheer*, in the partisan war in central Russia from 1941 to 1943.

The ruthlessness of the *Ostheer*'s anti-partisan campaign was driven not just by military necessity but also by National Socialist concepts of ideological warfare, by the German Army's institutional phobia of guerrillas and by cold economic calculation. A pluralistic "history from below" approach of the kind employed here, however, can analyse motivation and conduct not just in terms of these general influences but also in terms of the particular circumstances in which units operated and the individual perceptions of their officers. The thesis contributes to this emerging line of research by being the first *longitudinal* case study of an *Ostheer* anti-partisan unit.

The longitudinal approach deepens analysis by utilising extensive history-from-below sources to examine changing causes and patterns of behaviour within the same unit over the entire 1941-3 period. It enables the thesis to show different shades of behaviour, ranging from massive brutality to constructive engagement of both the civilian population and potential partisan deserters. It also allows deeper explanation of the varying interactions of complex and diverse influences which shaped that behaviour.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abt.	Abteilung
Anl.	Anlage
ARA	Army Rear Area
BA-MA	Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv
BfZ	Bibliothek für Zeitgeschichte
Dg./Dulag	Durchgangslager
Div. St. Qu.	Divisions-Stabs-Quartier
EM	Ereignißmeldung
FK	Feldkommandantur
GFP	Geheime Feldpolizei
GR/Gren. Rgt.	Grenadier-Regiment
HiWi	Hilfswillige
ID/Inf. Div.	Infanterie-Division
IR/Inf. Rgt.	Infanterie-Regiment
IWM	Imperial War Museum
KdF	Kraft durch Freude
Kmd.	Kommandeur
Kp.	Kompanie
Kr. Verw-.Gr.	Kriegsverwaltungsgruppe
KTB	Kriegstagebuch
LSB/Landessch.-Btl.	Landesschützen-Bataillon
LSR/Landessch.-Rgt.	Landesschützen-Regiment
MadbO	Meldung aus den besetzten Ostgebieten
m.g.	machine gun
MGFA	Militärgeschichtliche Forschungsamt
Mil. Verw.	Militärverwaltung
NA	National Archive (U.S.)
OB/Ost-Btln.	Ost-Bataillon
OD	Ornungsdienst
OK	Ortskommandantur
OKH	Oberkommando des Heeres
OKW	Oberkommando der Wehrmacht
OT/Ost-Tr.	Ost-Truppen
Prop. Abt.	Propaganda-Abteilung
Qu.	Quartiermeister
RHGeb.	Rückwärtige Heeresgebiet
RPB	Reserve-Polizei-Bataillon
SB/Sich.-Btl.	Sicherungs-Bataillon
SD/Sich.-Div.	Sicherungs-Division
Sich. Truppen	Sicherungstruppen
SR/Sich.-Rgt.	Sicherungs-Regiment
TB	Tätigkeitsbericht

TWCNMT	Trials of War Criminals, Nuremberg Military Tribunal
WB/Wach. Btl.	Wach-Bataillon
Wi. In.	Wirtschaftsinspektion
Wi. In. Mitte Fü. Chef	Wirtschaftsinspektion Mitte Führungschef
WiKo/WiKdo	Wirtschaftskommando
ZSt	Zentrale Stelle der Landesjustizverwaltungen

CHAPTER 1: THE *WEHRMACHTSDEBATTE*

Reaching a total of over 3.5 million personnel over the course of the years 1941 to 1944,[1] the German forces in Russia constituted a true "people's army" drawn from all sectors of society. For this reason the *Wehrmachtsdebatte* has always carried deep implications for the self-image of post-war Germany, and it is therefore little wonder that, far from restricting itself to the academic arena, the debate has unleashed fierce controversy in the public arena also.[2] Chapter One outlines the debate's development to the present, and considers how further research might enrich it.[3]

1.1. The debate to the late 1960s

Throughout the 1950s and early 1960s the West German public's inability to come to terms with history and the political backdrop of East-West confrontation both necessitated resurrecting a German Army with a blemish-free past. This helped perpetuate the myth of a German Army which had remained separate, decent and aloof from the crimes of the Nazi regime. Historiographically, the myth was personified by the US Army-sponsored "military studies" of the war in the east, to which former German generals contributed; by specialist studies of German occupation written by former military and civilian officials; and by the memoirs of former high-ranking officers.[4]

No one historiographical work "blew the lid" off this consensus. Right up to today, the controversies, sensitivities and vested interests involved have meant that a justifiably critical view of the Army's conduct of the eastern war has developed only gradually, each step paving the way for a more critical treatment later on.[5] The first steps towards a more critical assessment, taken during the 1960s, focused on the Army leadership. They showed how desire for rearmament and reassertion of the Army's prestige had combined with the extensive infiltration of the officer corps by National Socialist elements to assure the Army leadership's voluntary assimilation into the Nazi regime. Reinforced by the need to "out-Hitlerise" opponents in the institutional turf wars which so characterised the Third Reich, this had led to the Army leadership's complicity in the murder of Hitler's political enemies, the planning of aggressive war and the formulation of "criminal orders" for the war against the Soviet Union. It had also led to its taking a lead in efforts to inculcate Nazi ideology into the Army in its entirety.[6]

These works laid foundations for even more critical historiography over the following decades.

1.2. The debate to the mid-1990s: the senior officer corps

During the 1970s and early 1980s historians began uncovering the true extent of the senior officer corps' active, often decisive role in formulating and implementing criminal policies in the war against the Soviet Union, its collusion in the crimes of the SS, and the intensity and

complexity of the influences which had shaped its motives and actions. Making sense of the growing intricacy which characterised the debate at this stage necessitates separating out the different influences which were being examined, as well as the individual historians responsible.[7]

1.2.1. Anti-Bolshevism and anti-Semitism

Christian Streit depicted the senior officer corps' mind-set as an ideological web incorporating anti-Semitism, desire for eastern expansion and anti-Bolshevism.[8] It was the ruthlessness which such hatred and compulsion had injected into the senior officer corps which had assured it a pivotal role in formulating a series of ideologically-coloured criminal orders for the conduct of the troops. Through its own efforts and collusion with the SS and the *Einsatzgruppen*, it had become embroiled in a killing process whose scale had increased geometrically. This process had originally targeted communist functionaries in the shape of the now infamous Commissar Order or *Kommissarbefehl*, an order issued in the spring of 1941 which involved the Army in the systematic murder of a class of person not because of their actions but because of their position in a political system.[9] It had expanded to encompass Soviet prisoners of war, Jews and eventually the civilian population as a whole, the latter two often with the spurious excuse of "security needs".[10] Streit's major 1978 study, which assigned a central role to the German Army in the mass death, through murder or systematic neglect, of Soviet POWs, utilised an extensive body of official sources generated not just by the highest military offices but also by army groups, armies and smaller field units. Streit showed that at this lower level officers had often been instrumental in radicalising the killing process further.[11]

In seeking to explain the Army's involvement in this process, Streit attached particular importance to anti-Bolshevism. This, he argued, had ensured the willing participation of older, more conservative officers who might otherwise have held no truck with National Socialism.[12] The senior officer corps' fear of Bolshevism, Streit argued, predated National Socialism, dating back to the period 1918-19 when, in the eyes of most if not all senior officers, both the Army and society had been infected with the Bolshevik poison. This had sapped discipline and morale and led, successively, to collapse on the home front towards the end of the First World War, mutiny in the German armed forces, and the near-collapse of the established order. Only the *Freikorps*, right-wing vigilante units composed of ex-soldiers, had averted catastrophe by battling communists on the streets in a period known as the *Kampfzeit* (time of struggle).[13] For the senior officer corps of the Third Reich, then, Bolshevism was a pestilential threat to be countered and destroyed.[14]

Anti-Bolshevism was also connected to anti-Semitism, a link highlighted further by Helmut Krausnick and Hans-Heinrich Wilhelm's work on the Army's role in the extermination of Soviet Jews by the *Einsatzgruppen*.[15] Employing material from the Nuremberg trials, official German Army documents and reports of the *Einsatzgruppen* themselves, Krausnick and

Wilhelm stressed the intensity of long-standing anti-Semitic feeling even among those sections of the officer corps which had remained lukewarm or even hostile toward the Nazi regime.[16] Across the officer corps, a measure of disapproval at the killing of Jews by the SS in Poland had by 1941 greatly diminished in the wake of the victories of 1940.[17]

Similarly, as earlier historiography had already shown, anti-Semitism enjoyed a much older history within the German Army than National Socialism did. From the 1870s, there are clear signs that wider societal anti-Semitism combined with the aristocratic, elitist self-image of the imperial officer corps to provide a particularly fertile seed-bed of hostility against what officers saw as the urban, decadent and money-minded Jew. The expansion of the Army before 1914 and the consequent erosion of social exclusivity could only intensify the racist and reactionary tendencies which many officers harboured.[18]

A 1970 study by Martin Broszat showed how such convictions might be strengthened by personal experience. Even prior to 1914, Broszat maintained, there had been a longing among the German *bourgeoisie* for a *Volksgemeinschaft* (racially-based society) headed by a strong *Führer*-type figure, to free it from the stifling softness of Wilhelmine Germany.[19] Such a perception, for many officers of a certain generation, had been reinforced by their own experience of the *Kampfzeit*, which they had remembered as a time of comradeship and energy in the face of a perilous threat to stability.[20] It was in these circumstances that anti-Semitism and anti-Bolshevism had become wedded in the officer corps' world-view. Already during Bismarck's time Jews had been equated with socialism;[21] now, the fact that some of the most prominent Bolsheviks were actually Jews helped further ensured that the Weimar officer corps became possessed of a *Feindbild* (picture of the enemy) equating Jews with Bolshevism. That many officers had been personally involved in the *Kampfzeit* meant that they came to loathe "Jewish Bolshevism" with particular intensity.[22] For National Socialism, this was fertile ground indeed. The process would culminate in the Army leadership's collusion in the formulation of the "criminal orders" prior to the invasion of the Soviet Union, in the senior officer corps' co-operation with the *Einsatzgruppen* in the murder of racial and political "undesirables" in the prison camps and the wider population, and in the zeal with which it identified Jews as a "security threat".[23]

The picture emerging from this historiography was one in which the murderous radicalisation of Army policy had been driven more by ideological conviction than by the institutional turf wars which earlier critical works had focused upon. Fundamentally important though they were, however, anti-Bolshevism and anti-Semitism were not the only forces which shaped the officer corps' ruthlessness in the war against the Soviet Union.

1.2.2. Imperialism and anti-Slavism

The ruthlessness which the Jew-Bolshevik link engendered seems to have been intensified by senior officers' identification with the need for "living space" (*Lebensraum*) in the east. This identification was in many ways a legacy not only of a long-term German *Drang nach Osten* (urge to go east),[24] but also of the Army's own policies, uncovered by Fritz Fischer back in the 1960s, of eastern expansionism during the First World War. These policies had culminated in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in March 1918 in which the new Soviet government had been forced to place vast swathes of territory, rich in minerals and agriculture, under German military occupation.[25] Christian Streit pointed out in 1978 that eastern expansion had also been an integral part of the *Freikorps*' programme.[26] In 1941, Streit maintained, it had meant that the senior officer corps had seen quick and crushing victory and the destruction of the Soviet system as vital. A precondition of this, they had believed, was the ruthless liquidation of the enemy's "Jew-Bolshevik" political intelligentsia.[27]

Peter Jahn, writing in 1991, argued that it was not just territorial ambition which had lain behind such expansionist desire, but also deep-seated fear and contempt of "eastern races", rooted in centuries-old russophobia common to the West in general and in Germanic notions of racial superiority over eastern neighbours.[28] Such sentiments, Jahn maintained, were likely to have been felt particularly strongly by officers who had served on the Eastern Front during the First World War and experienced Russian "primitiveness" first-hand, or who had originated from the Baltic states or eastern Germany. These areas had after all experienced centuries-long "confrontation" with the East in particularly immediate ways, most recently during the Russian invasion of East Prussia in 1914.[29] This mind-set is likely to have fed the *"insecurity, racism both arrogant and programmatic, and blind faith in violent methods"*[30] which seem to have contributed significantly to the *Ostheer*'s so often brutal treatment of the Soviet civilian population between 1941 and 1944.

1.2.3. The military and economic dimensions

Other historians sought explanations in altogether different areas. It was Michael Geyer's view that the senior officer corps' ruthlessness had been driven to a large extent by the rise of the military technocrat during the inter-war years.[31] This, Geyer argued, had been in large part symptomatic of the mass industrialisation of warfare in general, but in the German case it had been intensified by the officer corps' loss of social status in the Weimar Republic. By way of both compensating for this and seeking to avoid defeat in future wars, the officer corps had become fixated not with maintaining its social status but instead with narrow professionalism, a process whereby the organisation, specialisation and exercise of violence had become the officer corps' sole purpose.[32] This had eventually caused a very large element of the officer corps to identify National Socialism as providing the ideological backbone with which the

masses could be mobilised for hi-tech, industrial "total warfare", and the war against the Soviet Union as the best opportunity to carry such warfare out.[33]

Richard M. Fattig focused on Army security policy, arguing that the traumatic experience of French guerrillas during the Franco-Prussian War had injected the officer corps with an acute fear and loathing of a form of warfare which was anathema to the clean, clinical Prussian way of war and to all notions of soldierly "decency".[34] This *francs-tireur* phobia had resulted in ruthless counter-measures against the French population, an approach which had been reactivated in even harsher form by the German Army in occupied France and Belgium during the First World War.[35] Christopher Browning and others also showed how the Army had gone to even greater extremes in the reprisals which it had executed, particularly in Yugoslavia, during the Second World War.[36]

Yet other historians explored the economic dimension.[37] In 1983, for example, Rolf-Dieter Müller detailed how the Army had collaborated in plans to induce mass starvation in order to alleviate its supply problems during its rapid advance into the Soviet Union in 1941, and argued that only its increasing reliance upon the population, as the long-term nature of the war became clear, had led to some easing in the directives' harshness.[38] Later research, by both Müller and Ulrich Herbert, analysed the Army's role in procuring vast numbers of Soviet workers, through a mixture of threats, financial coercion and usually empty promises, for the growing demands of the German war effort from 1942 on.[39]

But neither the military nor the economic dimension had been separate from the ideological. Walter Manoschek, writing in the 1990s, showed that whilst the Army's reprisal policy in Yugoslavia in 1941 had been driven to a large extent by military considerations - the danger posed to the troops' safety and the Army's prestige by a surge in partisan activity - it had primarily targeted Communists and above all Jews.[40] Race hatred had also been loud and clear in calls for the mainly Austrian troops stationed in Yugoslavia to avenge the Serb "outrages" of 1914.[41] Similarly, the callous hunger policy in the Soviet Union had gone beyond the dictates of genuine economic necessity, with anti-Semitism and anti-Slavism having helped determine the miserable degree of provision allocated to various population groups and geographical areas.[42]

By the mid-1980s, then, the historiographical "offensive" had produced a picture of a senior officer corps which, through an interaction of poisonous ideology, cold economic calculation and excessively harsh notions of military necessity, had undertaken a vast campaign of criminality against the Soviet Union. In response, the early 1980s saw an emerging historiographical backlash.

1.2.4. Conditions in the field

Whilst much of it was of a deeply suspect, apologist nature, some of the research constituting the historiographical counterattack added an important caveat to the picture by arguing that actual brutality and callousness in the field had been caused less by ruthless higher-level directives than by the circumstances of the eastern campaign itself. Alfred Streim, for example, maintained that the actual death of Soviet POWs had been due to a large extent to insufficient rations and shelter rather than to a systematic plan to let them die. He also drew attention to attempts which had been made in the field to alleviate the misery which higher-level directives had inflicted upon the POWs.[43]

Some of the backlash echoed the *Historikerstreit* (historians' conflict) which raged during the 1980s, in which Ernst Nolte sought to depict the barbarity of the Nazi regime as an attempt to fend off the equal if not greater evil of Stalinism.[44] Nolte found an echo in the *Wehrmachtsdebatte* in the works of Joachim Hoffmann and Jörg Friedrich. Hoffmann stressed the importance of the directives issued by Stalin for radicalisation of the Soviet partisan war, the Soviets' scorched earth policy which had brought misery and death to their own citizens, and the often ghastly maltreatment and murder of captured German soldiers.[45] This, Hoffmann argued, had constituted a big input from the Soviet side into the murderous dynamic of the war in the east. Friedrich, using material from the Nuremberg trials, asserted that German ruthlessness had been both a necessary response to severe conditions and the terroristic nature of the Stalin regime, and also a symptom of the destructiveness of modern industrialised warfare. He also argued that the Army's complicity in the campaign to terrorise the Jews had been borne mainly of "practical" motives; primarily, the Germans would secure the population's co-operation by impressing it with their ruthlessness against the Jews.[46]

Jürgen Förster, by contrast, drew a very different conclusion stressing the importance of both Nazi ideology and "circumstances".[47] Förster, utilising German Army sources generated by various command levels, stressed that a great many officers and units in the field had fully adhered to the views, propagated in the criminal orders issued prior to and during the invasion of Russia, that Jews were responsible for stirring all the unrest in the German-occupied areas and that the most effective means of controlling the eastern population was the rigorous exercise of terror.[48] While Förster fully acknowledged the role that had been played by ideological conviction in fuelling this perception, however, he also maintained that "military necessity" had to a large extent provided the bridge which had transformed the perception into the mass killing of non-combatants. Förster did not argue that such "necessity" had remotely justified such slaughter. He did however assert that the difficulties facing the German Army during the opening months of the campaign - time constraints, limited manpower for administering the vast occupied areas and above all the emergence of organised and ruthless partisan groups - had played a role in transforming ideological conviction into outright brutality. Many officers and their units had viewed their increasing difficulties as warranting a

harsh, ideologically-coloured response, and this had intensified the targeting of particular racial and political groups as reprisal victims, the identification of such groups as the cause of all the unrest behind the lines and, as time had gone by, the use of excessive terror generally.[49] The Army's institutional environment, moreover, had made such an outcome to a large extent inevitable, for the higher-level orders formulated by Hitler and the Army leadership had used conditions on the ground as an excuse to urge such greater ruthlessness.[50]

Whilst Hoffmann and Friedrich's arguments were not to be dismissed entirely, and those of Förster were a particularly important attempt to link issues and acknowledge the full complexity of the debate, this did not detract from the conclusively damning picture of the senior officer corps as a whole which had emerged by the mid-1990s.

At the Army's lower levels, however, the picture was both far less clear and far more controversial, concerning as it did not an elite but a vast body drawn from all sectors of German society. By the mid-1990s, however, the lower levels too constituted a burgeoning area of research. Both the arguments and the methodological issues thrown up by these lower-level studies need to be considered at some length, for they have important implications for this thesis.

1.3. The debate to the mid-1990s: the lower levels

In view of the explosion during the 1980s of "history from below" studies which sought to research the Third Reich in terms of the experiences, motivations and actions of "ordinary" Germans, it seems at first surprising that parallel developments in the *Wehrmachtsdebatte* were initially so slow and piecemeal. The lack of a history from below of the Third Reich was after all a yawning historiographical gap which the previously dominant "elites-oriented" approach, despite its strengths, had by its very nature been unable to fill.[51] It was these "ordinary Germans" who had after all been the prosecutors of policy in the Third Reich and, in many cases, the perpetrators of its crimes.

A history from below of the German Army, however, was at particular risk of churning out trivia without getting to grips with the central issues. This was due to serious methodological problems in the sources available for the study of rank-and-file motivation, sources which included soldiers' letters (*Feldpostbriefe*), photographs, diaries, and personal interviews. Despite its ability to illustrate other aspects of the life and experiences of the "ordinary" German soldier, using such material to try to identify and explain his motivations was an undertaking which faced major obstacles. *Feldpostbriefe* can be criticised in terms of how far they fail to reflect reality; to a major degree, factors such as censorship and the psychological needs of a letter's recipient determined what was written.[52] Interviews with former German soldiers can be frustrating due to the blurring of memory and the interviewee's possible unwillingness to recount details which might incriminate him.[53] Photographs, meanwhile,

include a serious caveat concerning the depiction of atrocities. Often, if the perpetrators themselves are not photographed, there simply can be no certainty as to who did the killing.[54]

Quite apart from all this is the often fragmentary and therefore fundamentally unrepresentative nature of such sources. *Feldpostbriefe*, photographs and diaries held in archives have been collected on a mostly coincidental and piecemeal basis rather than a systematic one and thus constitute a tiny section of the total produced during the war. More insightful material, such as detailed morale reports generated by particular units, collections of private papers bequeathed by middle-ranking and junior officers (*Nachlässe*) or post-war criminal investigations of German Army atrocities, is extremely rare in western archives and can be difficult to locate in eastern ones.

Historians seeking to investigate the German Army's lower levels adopted a number of approaches in their attempts to overcome these hurdles. The Israeli historian Omer Bartov, for example, combined *Feldpostbriefe* with the official files of three front-line Army divisions which had served in Russia.[55] Bartov concluded that the Army had injected its troops with National Socialist ideology in order to justify both the sacrifices and suffering which they were undergoing, and the atrocities which both their situation - horrendous casualties and increasingly primitive conditions - and their orders were disposing them to commit.[56] This, Bartov argued, had boosted fighting spirit to a truly fanatical level. That the troops had proven so receptive was hardly surprising, however, in view of the ideological education which they had already undergone in school, the Hitler Youth and the Reich Labour Service.[57] Indoctrination had been further facilitated by the fact that the junior front-line officers directly responsible for their men's political instruction had hailed primarily from the age cohorts and socio-economic groups which most strongly identified with National Socialism.[58] The barbarisation process had been completed by a morally warped military justice system that punished perceived cowardice with unparalleled severity but tolerated all manner of outrages committed by the troops against the population.[59]

Bartov's findings were important, but his arguably excessive reliance upon *Feldpostbriefe* meant that his conclusions as to what had motivated the ordinary German soldier remained very much educated guesswork.[60] Less methodologically difficult were the sources tapped by Michael Geyer and Mark Mazower for their contributions to the 1995 *Vernichtungskrieg* collection of essays.[61] Whilst neither were concerned primarily with the eastern campaign, the material which they utilised - respectively a division-level morale report and one of the few post-war Federal German investigations of an Army atrocity - offered rare opportunities for a surer analysis of rank-and-file motivation. Geyer, focusing on atrocities committed by German paratroops in Italy in 1944, painted a picture of an exhausted military unit, frustrated in the face of an unseen partisan enemy and possessed of an intense distrust of and contempt for the Italian civilian population.[62] These circumstances, Geyer argued, had been ideal for unleashing

the brutality inherent both in the troops' frustration at their situation and in their racist mind-set.[63] For its part, Mark Mazower's analysis of the 1st Mountain Division in Greece argued that in some ways National Socialist ruthlessness had greatly appealed even to those soldiers who had not themselves been convinced Nazis. Mazower showed how Hitler's abnormally pitiless view of anti-guerrilla warfare had resonated with soldiers who, due in large part to the predilections of the German Army as an institution, had regarded armed civilians as the polar opposite of their own clean and decent conduct, a monstrous outrage against which any measures were justified.[64]

Other historians, realising the unlikelihood of "striking gold" as Geyer and Mazower were fortunate to do, avoided or at least reduced the pitfalls of studying the rank and file by pitching their analysis at a somewhat higher level. They focused as well, or instead, upon the German Army's *mittlere Schicht*, the middle-ranking and junior officers who had commanded individual jurisdictions and field units. This kind of study, it was argued, was at a level still low enough to illustrate the complex forces which had shaped the motivation and conduct of individuals. At the same time it meant that the historian was better able to formulate general theories, because at this particular level he or she was able to access sources more comprehensive and meaningful than the "shards" which often were all that was available for rank-and-file analysis.[65]

An early example was Theo J. Schulte's *The German Army and Nazi Policies In Occupied Russia*.[66] Schulte focused on occupation policy as implemented by small units operating in the occupied areas, and thematically examined conduct regarding Jews, POWs, civilians, anti-partisan operations and economic measures. His main source was the official files of two Army Rear Areas, occupation zones which had lain directly to the west of the German front-line. Schulte argued that conduct at the lower levels had been brutalised not just by adherence to ideology, but also by organisational pressures and the extreme hardships of the eastern war. [67] He also placed importance upon the fact that most rear area officers and troops had hailed from older age groups which had been less thoroughly subjected to National Socialist indoctrination than had their counterparts at the front line. Their mind-set had therefore been thrown open to other influences, including not just the technocratic ruthlessness identified by Michael Geyer but also more "civilising" values characteristic of an older, "traditional" residue within the officer corps.[68] Overall Schulte's picture of conduct was more nuanced than Bartov's, encompassing not just brutality but also the sensible, pragmatic engagement of the civilian population and, indeed, instances of genuine humanity. In seeking to explain brutalisation, his study echoed the findings of other historiography from below. These depicted German society's relations with the criminal regime of the Third Reich as having been borne not only of a measure of ideological agreement, but also of instincts of self-interest, self-preservation and indifference to the suffering of those outside one's immediate sphere of concern. These were tendencies which had been intensified by the severity of wartime conditions.[69]

The fact that Schulte tried among other things to cover the rank-and-file meant, however, that his study suffered similarly to Bartov's in that his evidence for motivation at this level was highly fragmentary. A strength of his study lay instead in the fact that the views and orders contained in the low-level official files which he utilised provided valuable insights into the motivations of junior and middle-ranking officers. Later, Truman O. Anderson's work on German Army reprisal policy in a particular jurisdiction in the southern Soviet Union developed the potential inherent in Schulte by focusing specifically upon the decisions which had been made by the officers of various units.[70] Anderson too painted a diverse picture, concluding that the decision to carry out reprisals had been determined at different times by different influences, including not just ideology but also the tactical situation and the Army's acute fear and hatred of guerrilla warfare.[71] There was no fear of Nazi ideology being "de-emphasised", however; both Schulte and Anderson still accorded it considerable importance. Anderson, for example, pointed out that it had been field units rather than the Army High Command which during 1941 had been instrumental in singling out members of certain racial groups as hostages to be shot for reprisal purposes.[72] Up to the mid-1990s, moreover, various case studies and the uncovering of previously untapped sources, many from newly-accessible former Eastern bloc archives, further revealed the true extent of the ideologically-coloured brutality of the German "security effort" during 1941, particularly in the southern Soviet Union, and the extent to which individual Army units had colluded in the murder campaign of the *Einsatzgruppen*.[73]

By the mid-1990s the picture of the *Ostheer*'s lower levels was still extremely fragmentary. There was enough to suggest however that the forces which had fuelled brutality within both the rank-and-file and the *mittlere Schicht* had been more diverse and complex, both in themselves and in the ways in which they had interacted, than ideology alone.

1.4. The debate to now

1.4.1. The *Wehrmachtausstellung* and the *Vernichtungskrieg* thesis

From the mid-1990s the *Wehrmachtsdebatte* aroused its fiercest public controversy yet, in the shape of the *Wehrmachtausstellung*. The *Wehrmachtausstellung* is a travelling exhibition mixing official documents with *Alltagsgeschichte* sources such as private letters, diary entries and photographs. Since its opening in 1995 it has provoked bitter protest by veterans and far-right groups over the question of how far the German Army, from the rank and file up, was more thoroughly Nazified and brutalised than was previously thought.[74] The impact of the exhibition was if anything heightened by the fact that it coincided with publication of Daniel J. Goldhagen's *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, a work which arguably has stoked even more fury by claiming that the Holocaust was the culmination of a centuries-long national German hatred of the Jews.[75]

The *Wehrmachtausstellung* was however only the most public manifestation of a new development in the *Wehrmachtsdebatte* - the *Vernichtungskrieg* thesis. The exhibition organisers, the Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung, developed this thesis in the 1995 essay collection of the same title.[76] They maintained not only that the *Ostheer*'s war had been one of extermination, but also that it had possessed its own dynamic. This had dictated that tactical considerations be sacrificed to a logic which viewed war as an end in itself, in which the enemy was defined not in narrow military terms, but in terms of seething historical animosity with racial, ideological and territorial dimensions.[77] The collection's most robust statement of this concept was Hannes Heer's study of anti-partisan operations in Byelorussia from 1941 to 1943.[78] The article extensively utilised judicial material from the Soviet trials of former German soldiers, conducted both during and immediately after the war,[79] and argued that the conduct of anti-partisan warfare had been intended to override tactical considerations and strip the soldiery of all civilised norms, replacing these norms with a *Vernichtungsmentalität* (extermination mentality)[80] Moreover, the endeavour had succeeded. This view contrasted strikingly with Jürgen Förster's assertion that anti-partisan warfare had contained an element of military necessity, and it was universes away from the consensus of the 1950s.

However, whilst the *Vernichtungskrieg* thesis and the *Wehrmachtausstellung* may both rightly claim that ideologically-driven brutality existed at all levels to a greater degree than was previously supposed, the significance of their findings is restricted by methodological difficulties. The photographs, letters and diary entries on display in the *Wehrmachtausstellung* are essentially fragments, from which it is impossible to generalise for the entire German Army. It has also been claimed by some that there is a political agenda behind both the exhibition and the thesis, and that the judicial materials and official documents which they utilise have been selected essentially for shock value rather than academic value.[81] A counter-argument was mounted by 1998's *Die Soldaten der Wehrmacht*. This essay collection, whilst straying into suspect apologist territory on more than one occasion, is on firmer ground when it argues that brutality was not a uniform phenomenon in either its cause or its degree, and that blanket condemnation of the entire German Army is not warranted.[82]

Whatever the truth of the matter, the controversy of the *Wehrmachtausstellung* clearly demonstrates the ongoing importance of the *Wehrmachtsdebatte* in the German public arena. It is thus apparent not only that the still fragmentary picture of the *Ostheer*'s lower levels retains ample scope for further development, but also that developing it remains a very necessary undertaking.

1.4.2. Recent developments

Historians are recognising that the *Wehrmachtsdebatte* needs to address more thoroughly the full complexity of the forces which shaped the conduct of the *Ostheer*'s lower levels, be it regarding Jews, POWs, the partisan war or any other "policy area". Rolf-Dieter Müller's

introduction to the essay collection *Die Wehrmacht* is a clarion call to this end.[83] Müller urges a more nuanced view of the German Army's lower levels which, whilst fully acknowledging complicity in atrocities, gives necessary attention to causes beyond ideologically-driven ruthlessness such as military circumstances and different generational attitudes. Müller thus echoes Martin Broszat's call during the 1980s for a "historicisation" of the Third Reich which avoids the pitfall of allowing moral condemnation, however justified, to blunt historical understanding,[84] It also urges the use of a varied range of analytical tools such as feminist theory and social history techniques.[85]

Further pointers for the future development of the *Wehrmachtsdebatte* are found in recent Holocaust historiography. Whatever its flaws, Goldhagen's *Hitler's Willing Executioners* is at least right to have focused on an issue which, like motivation and conduct at the German Army's lower levels, has yet to receive the attention it deserves - the role of thousands of ordinary Germans in the prosecution of genocide.[86] This "research of the perpetrators", or *Täterforschung*, of which Christopher Browning's *Ordinary Men* is another important example,[87] marks out yet more clearly the "low-level" territory which the *Wehrmachtsdebatte* itself needs to explore much further.[88] The Holocaust debate has also thrown up a number of regional-level studies which together have placed research on the origins of the Final Solution on a new level of refinement.[89] They bring to further light not only the role which was played by the machinations of elites, but also the ways in which regional conditions, often economic ones, interacted with anti-Semitic conviction, ambition and amoral utilitarianism to fuel a process of genocide which varied greatly in form and timing across both occupied Europe and the Reich itself.[90]

One of a number of historians who have been particularly active in uncovering this regionally differentiated picture is Christian Gerlach.[91] Gerlach's study of the area of what is now Belarus in fact examines a wide range of Nazi economic and extermination policies, considering among other things the role which the German Army played in formulating and executing them.[92] Gerlach exploits a vast range of sources generated by many agencies and command levels, and examines every grim aspect of occupation. Among other things he demonstrates the importance of the dealings which took place between a swathe of agencies including not just the *Ostheer* but also the SS, *Luftwaffe* and numerous economic bodies. Just as the work of historians such as Browning and Goldhagen can be seen as a "trailblazer" for an intensified *Täterforschung* of the German Army's lower levels, then, so the research of Gerlach and others points the way to much greater engagement with the issue of *Ostheer* policy as conducted in particular regions or by particular units. A recent attempt to tackle this particular question, one which again highlights the interaction of ideological, military and economic factors, is Klaus-Jochen Arnold's case study of the military occupation of Kiev in 1941.[93]

Having outlined the course of the *Wehrmachtsdebatte* up to the present, it now remains to consider briefly where the opportunities for enriching the debate actually lie, and the particular contribution which this thesis will make.

1.5. Contributing to the debate

Building blocks are provided by the works of Schulte, Anderson, Arnold and the various historians who contributed low-level case studies to the 1995 *Vernichtungskrieg* collection.[94] Given that the overall picture of motivation and conduct presented in these studies is not only varied and complex but also fragmentary, any study which clarifies some of the issues further will render a valuable service to the debate. There is a specific way, moreover, in which the debate could be particularly enriched: there has been a lack until now of a "longitudinal" study of a single German Army division.

Such a study could bring significant benefits. For one thing, divisions are the lowest administrative level of the German Army for which a large body of archival material is available. A division-level study may therefore hold even greater potential than a study focusing on a large jurisdiction, like Anderson's *Conduct of Reprisals*, for combining extensive and meaningful source material with an ability to examine the complex make-up of motivation and conduct at the lower levels.[95] It might therefore prove a particularly fruitful means of contributing to a *Täterforschung* of the *Ostheer*'s lower levels. At the same time, a division was large and important enough to have an impact upon the lives of a significant portion of the Soviet population. This was particularly the case with a security division, a unit which operated in the rear areas and whose jurisdiction might reach up to 35 000 square kilometres in size.[96] A security division study, then, could constitute a particularly valuable addition not only to a *Täterforschung* but also to a regional-level picture of the *Ostheer*, one which, like the studies of Christian Gerlach and others, might help to highlight and explain contrast and variety in the bigger picture.

Moreover, a study which compares the same security division at different points in time and is rich in source material generated over a lengthy period can address the question of how conduct was affected by change both in circumstances and in the ways in which they were perceived by officers. This too may improve on what previous studies have achieved. The various contributors of case studies to the *Vernichtungskrieg* collection, along with Arnold, use sources which whilst comprehensive and diverse cover only short periods. Schulte's thematic treatment of his subject matter, though arguably unavoidable in view of the pioneering, "testing the water" nature of his study, also eschews the benefits of a longitudinal approach.[97] Anderson, whilst having himself adopted a longitudinal approach, uses sources which in terms of the *sub-divisional* levels of German units are excellent for 1941, but are considerably less rich for 1942 and almost non-existent for 1943.[98]

1.6. Conclusion

Over the course of fifty years, the *Wehrmachtsdebatte* has moved from an immediate post-war consensus which upheld the myth of a "clean" German Army, through a period in which a comprehensively damning picture emerged of the *Ostheer*'s active collusion in crimes on a staggering scale. Explanation has focused to a large extent upon ideological drive, but much importance has also been accorded to the particularly harsh German military mind-set, to economics, and to the conditions of the eastern war itself. The main heat, of which there is a great deal, is now generated by the question of motivation and conduct at the *Ostheer*'s lower levels, an area which remains largely unexplored but particularly controversial. Such research as has been undertaken so far suggests that it is a phenomenon more complex and differentiated than was thought before, shaped as it seems to have been by an interaction of wider ideological, military and economic influences, circumstances on the ground and varied personal motives. This thesis will contribute to the debate's development with a "longitudinal" study of an *Ostheer* security division. The following chapter describes how.

Endnotes to Chapter 1

[1] Schulte, *German Army*, p. 29 (all secondary literature references lacking particular page citations are cited *ad passim*).

[2] *Die Wehrmachtsdebatte* roughly translates as "the armed forces debate". Thus strictly speaking the term *Wehrmacht* refers not just to the German Army (*Heer*) but also the Air Force (*Luftwaffe*) and Navy (*Kriegsmarine*). Whilst the term *Wehrmachtsdebatte* is used throughout the current thesis, the research itself is concerned with the *Heer* only. Except where mentioned, it concentrates on the *Ostheer*, the Army of the East, which conducted the war against the Soviet Union.

[3] For a particularly extensive review of secondary literature, see: Müller, R.-D. and Ueberschär (eds.), *Hitler's War*. Recent overviews of the debate include: Schulte, "German Soldier"; Müller, R.-D., "Die Wehrmacht: Historische Last und Verantwortung". A very useful review of the debate up to the late 1980s is provided in: Schulte, *German Army*, pp. 1-27.

[4] Schulte, *German Army*, pp. 2-7. Even historians with no axe to grind were influenced by this over-generous view of the German Army's conduct in the east. See for example the early standard work on the German occupation of the Soviet Union: Dallin, *German Rule*, pp. 507-8, which essentially describes rear area officers as having been a bastion of decency.

[5] For a wry illustration of this process see Wolfram Wette's comments on the Commissar Order or *Kommissarbefehl*. "Wir hatten geglaubt", pp. 84-5.

[6] Messerschmidt, *Die Wehrmacht*; Müller, K.-J., *Das Heer*.

[7] Thus the following secondary literature review does not proceed in strictly chronological order.

[8] Streit, *Keine Kameraden*, pp. 50-9.

[9] See also: Jacobsen, "Kommissarbefehl"; Krausnick, "Kommissarbefehl und Kriegsgerichtbarkeitserlaß Barbarossa".

[10] Streit, *Keine Kameraden*, pp. 83-127. *Einsatzgruppen* were mobile formations composed of personnel from various branches of the SS, under direct command of the Reich Security Service (SD). They played a pivotal role in the genocide of the Soviet Jews and were also responsible for outrageous criminal conduct against other sections of the Soviet population, not least in the anti-partisan effort.

[11] Ibid..

[12] Streit, "Behandlung", p. 218; idem., "Ostkrieg", pp. 249-51.

[13] Participation by many younger German officers in the *Freikorps* would fundamentally shape their later ideological world-view. See: Messerschmidt, *Die Wehrmacht*, pp. 38 ff..

[14] Streit, *Keine Kameraden*, pp. 56-9. See also: Messerschmidt, *Die Wehrmacht*, pp. 1 ff..

[15] Krausnick and Wilhelm, *Die Truppe*. The first volume is also published in paperback: Krausnick, *Hitlers Einsatzgruppen.*

[16] Krausnick, *Hitlers Einsatzgruppen*, pp. 189-95. See also: Messerschmidt, "Das Verhältnis", pp. 14 ff..

[17] Krausnick and Wilhelm, *Die Truppe*, pp. 103-4.

[18] Kitchen, *German Officer Corps*, pp. 37-48.

[19] Broszat, "Soziale Motivation", p. 401.

[20] Ibid., p. 396.

[21] Streit, *Keine Kameraden*, p. 57.

[22] Indeed, Jews were being identified with Bolshevism before the collapse of summer and autumn 1918. See for example the diary entries of Major Karl Freiherr von Bothma, 13th and 25th June 1918, cited in: Wilhelm, *Rassenpolitik*, pp. 147-8.

[23] See also: Hillgruber, "Endlösung", pp. 141 ff.; idem., "Ostkrieg", pp. 191-8; Messerschmidt, "Harte Sühne".

[24] On the tradition of German thinkers who expressed the Drang nach Osten and the subjugation of the Slavs by the superior Teutonic race, see: Burleigh and Wippermann, *Racial State*, pp. 23-8.

[25] Fischer, *Griff nach der Weltmacht*, pp. 714-36.

[26] Streit, *Keine Kameraden*, p. 58.

[27] Ibid., pp. 56-7.

[28] Jahn, "Russenfurcht". See also: Burleigh and Wippermann, *Racial State*, pp. 23-8.

[29] Jahn, "Russenfurcht", pp. 51-3.

[30] Translated from: *"Unsicherheit, rassischer Hochmut, volkstumpolitisches Programm und ein unreflektiertes Vertrauen in die Methoden der Gewalt."* Hans Umbreit, cited in Förster, J., "Die Sicherung", p. 1231. On anti-Slavism see also: Wette, "Rassenfeind".

[31] A process examined in: Geyer, *Aufrüstung oder Sicherheit* (see also review by Berghahn: Berghahn, "Militär", pp. 30-3); idem., "Professionals and Junkers", *Deutsche Rüstungspolitik*, "Traditional Elites".

[32] Geyer, "Professionals and Junkers".

[33] Idem., "Etudes", pp. 118-9; "Professionals and Junkers", pp. 99 ff..

[34] Fattig, *Reprisal*; esp. pp. 48-68.

[35] On German military attitudes to guerrillas during both the Franco-Prussian War and the First World War, see also: Howard, *Franco-Prussian War*, pp. 249-56, 374-81; Best, *Humanity in Warfare*, pp. 193-7; Messerschmidt, "Der Kampf", pp. 231-2; Schöller, "Fall Löwen".

[36] Browning, "Wehrmacht Reprisal Policy"; idem., "Harald Turner". See also: Messerschmidt, "Rassistische Motivationen"; Manoschek and Safrian, "717./117. ID"; Schmider, "Auf Umwegen".

[37] The earliest "economic" interpretations of Nazi occupation policy were made by East German historians, who unsurprisingly focused too much attention on the driving power of monopoly capital. They nonetheless unearthed much material of interest. Arguably the best example, which made some valid and original criticisms of the true extent of the German Army's involvement in the criminal aspects of occupation policy, is: Müller, N., *Wehrmacht und Okkupationspolitik.*

[38] Müller, R.-D., "Das Scheitern", pp. 1181-95.

[39] Idem., "Die Rekrutierung", "Menschenjagd."; Herbert, *Foreign Workers*, esp. pp. 167-71.

[40] Manoschek, *Serbien ist Judenfrei*; idem., "Gehst mit Juden erschießen?", "Vernichtung".

[41] Manoschek, "Vernichtung", p. 217.

[42] Müller, R.-D., "Das Scheitern", pp. 1168-1202. More recently, see: Gerlach, *Krieg, Ernährung, Völkermord*, pp. 13-30.

[43] Streim, *Die Behandlung*.

[44] Nolte, "Between Myth and Revisionism".

[45] Hoffmann, "Die Kriegführung", pp. 918-30; idem., *Stalins Vernichtungskrieg*, esp. pp. 176-80, 216-48.

[46] Friedrich, J., *Das Gesetz*, pp. 247-673, 743-828. For criticism of Friedrich, see: Heer, "Der Freispruch".

[47] Förster, J., "Unternehmen "Barbarossa""; idem., "Die Sicherung", "Das nationalsozialistische Herrschaftssystem", "The Relation", "Wehrmacht, Krieg und Holocaust".

[48] Idem., "Die Sicherung", pp. 1237, 1251-3; "Zum Rußlandbild", pp. 144-7, 150-1; "The Relation", pp. 95-7. The criminal orders issued prior to the start of the campaign are detailed in: Förster, J., "Unternehmen "Barbarossa"".

[49] Idem., "Die Sicherung", pp. 1232-7, 1246-50; "Das nationalsozialistische Herrschaftssystem", pp. 41-3; "The Relation", pp. 90-7; "Wehrmacht, Krieg und Holocaust", p. 953.

[50] Idem., "Wehrmacht, Krieg und Holocaust", p. 953.

[51] Prominent history-from-below works include: Broszat et al. (eds.), *Alltag und Widerstand*; Niethammer (ed.), *"Die Jahre"*; Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany*; Kershaw, *Hitler Myth*; idem., *Popular Opinion*.

[52] Studies of *Feldpostbriefe*, which draw attention to their methodological problems, include: Latzel, "Tourismus"; idem., "Vom Kriegserlebnis zur Kriegserfahrung".

[53] The drawbacks of interviews as a source are described in: Rosenthal, "Vom Krieg erzählen". For an example of an extensive collection of interviews with former German soldiers, see: Schröder, *Gestohlene Jahre*.

[54] In October 1999, for example, the *Wehrmachtausstellung* came under attack for ascribing a massacre depicted in one of its photographs to the *Wehrmacht*, when it turned out that the massacre had actually been perpetrated by the Soviet secret police, the NKVD. See: Die Welt, p. 1, 1.11.99. On the use of photographs as a source, see: Hüppauf, "Der entleerte Blick".

[55] Bartov, *Eastern Front*; idem., *Hitler's Army*.

[56] Bartov used the term "demodernisation of the front" to describe the process by which Army units accustomed to overwhelming technical superiority in earlier *Blitzkrieg* campaigns had been reduced to a far more primitive state by both their living conditions on the Eastern Front and the deterioration in clothing, weaponry and equipment which could not be made good in a situation of chronically inadequate supply. Bartov, *Eastern Front*, pp. 7-39, 68-105; idem., *Hitler's Army*, pp. 12-28.

[57] Bartov, *Hitler's Army*, pp. 108-18.

[58] Idem., *Eastern Front*, pp. 40-67.

[59] Idem., *Hitler's Army*, pp. 59-105.

[6060] Arguably, it is only *Hitler's Army* in which Bartov disregards his own caution and overstates his case. On an earlier occasion, he himself acknowledged the problems of assessing the "motivations" of ordinary German soldiers in the face of a fundamental lack of suitable source material in sufficient quantities. See: Bartov, "Indoctrination".

[61] *Vernichtungskrieg* translates as "war of extermination".

[62] Geyer, "Civitella", pp. 213-24.

[63] Ibid., pp. 221-4.

[64] Mazower, "Militärische Gewalt", esp. pp. 168 ff..

[65] See Schulte's methodology chapter. Schulte, *German Army*, pp. 28-40.

[66] Schulte, *German Army*. See also: idem., "Die Wehrmacht", "Korück 582". *Korück* is an abbreviation of *Kommando des rückwärtigen Armeegebiets*, the German translation of "Army Rear Area Command".

[67] Schulte, *German Army*, pp. 42 ff..

[68] Ibid., pp. 28-36, 74-7; 273-6; 284-96.

[69] See: Kershaw, *Popular Opinion*, esp. pp. 373-85; idem., "Alltägliches und Außeralltägliches".

[70] Anderson, *Conduct of Reprisals*. See also: idem., "62. Infanterie-Division", "Incident".

[71] Idem., *Conduct of Reprisals*, pp. 302-3; "62. Infanterie-Division", pp. 309-11; "Incident", pp. 8-9, 46 ff..

[72] Idem., *Conduct of Reprisals*, p. 189.

[73] Lozowick, "Rollbahn Mord"; Dreßen & Klee, *Gott mit uns*; Wilhelm, *Rassenpolitik*; Headland, *Messages*, esp. pp. 135-45; Heer, "Killing Fields"; Vestermanis, "Ortskommandantur Libau"; Boll and Safrian, "Auf dem Weg"; Hilberg, "Wehrmacht"; Safrian, "Komplizen".

[74] On the controversies and protests surrounding the *Wehrmachtausstellung*, see: Naumann, "Tabu"; Prantl (ed.), *Wehrmachtverbrechen*; Thiele (ed.), *Wehrmachtausstellung*.

[75] Goldhagen, *Willing Executioners*. For comprehensive criticism of Goldhagen's methodology and arguments, see for example: Wehler, "Goldhagen Controversy"; Pohl, "Holocaust-Forschung".

[76] Heer and Naumann (eds.), *Vernichtungskrieg*.

[77] Heer and Naumann, "Einleitung", esp. p. 27.

[78] Heer, "Die Logik"; see also idem., "Killing Fields", which focuses upon the *Ostheer*'s campaign against the Soviet Jews during 1941.

[79] On the 1943-6 Minsk trials of German soldiers, from which Heer draws extensively, see: Messerschmidt, "Minsker Prozeß".

[80] Heer, "Die Logik", pp. 111-15.

[81] Müller, R.D., "Die Wehrmacht – Historische Last und Verantwortung", pp. 19-24; Förster, "Wehrmacht und Holocaust", p. 946; Klinkhammer, "Partisanenkrieg", pp. 815-19. At time of writing a question mark hung over both the future of the *Wehrmachtausstellung* and its historical reliability, as it was in a state of suspension following revelations about the authenticity of some of its photographic material.

[82] Poeppel, Hans et. al (eds), *Die Soldaten*, esp. on the *Ostheer*: Rohde, "Politische Indoktrination"; Hammel, "Kompetenzen"; Hasch and Friedrich, G., "Der Partisanenkrieg"; Post, "Die Proportion".

[83] Müller, R.-D., "Die Wehrmacht – Historische Last und Verantwortung"; idem. and Volkmann, Hans-Erich (eds.), *Die Wehrmacht*.

[84] Broszat, "Plädoyer". On the "historicization" problem, see: Kershaw, *Nazi Dictatorhsip*, pp. 180-96.

[85] Two other recent articles urging a similarly eclectic approach are: Bartov, "Wem gehört die Geschichte?"; Schulte, "German Soldier".

[86] Herbert, "Neue Antworten", p. 11.

[87] Browning, *Ordinary Men*.

[88] Though it should be noted that the particular type of source which Goldhagen and Browning use most extensively, namely post-war Federal German judicial material, does not concern itself to any significant extent with the *Ostheer*.

[89] Herbert, "Neue Antworten", p. 28.

[90] For an excellent overview of recent developments in the Holocaust debate, encompassing an introduction to the debate and several such case studies, see: Herbert (ed.), *Nationalsozialistische Vernichtungspolitik*.

[91] Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*; idem., *Krieg, Ernährung, Völkermord*; "Deutsche Wirtschaftsinteressen, Besatzungspolitik und der Mord an den Juden".

[92] Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*. Except at the very end of the writing of this thesis, the newly-published book of Gerlach's doctoral thesis, *Kalkulierte Morde*, was unavailable for consultation. For a review of *Kalkulierte Morde*, see: Wette, "Ein verwüstetes Land".

[93] Arnold, "Die Eroberung".

[94] See: Heer and Naumann (eds.), *Vernichtungskrieg*, pp. 39-373.

[95] Anderson focused on the Army Group South Rear Area. Generally speaking each of the three main Army Group Rear Areas in the German-occupied Soviet Union - North, Centre and South - deployed at least two and usually three security divisions at any one time. Whilst Schulte's study of Army Rear Areas was focusing on a type of jurisdiction in which the number of troops deployed was often similar to that of a security division, its lack of a longitudinal approach means that it eschews some of the other analytical benefits which this thesis incorporates. See also below, footnote 97, this chapter.

[96] See below, p. 63.

[97] As referred to above, footnote 95, this chapter.

[98] The main problem faced by Anderson was that the Army Group South Rear Area's 1943 *Kriegstagebuch* has not survived. Anderson, *Conduct of Reprisals*, p. 25.

CHAPTER 2: THE THESIS: ISSUES, METHODS AND SOURCES

This chapter outlines the overall argument to be tested and the basic methodology to be employed, and then examines the questions which have been thrown up by the *Wehrmachtsdebatte* concerning the specific area of concern to this thesis, the partisan war as it was conducted by officers at the *Ostheer*'s lower levels. It illustrates the wide-ranging nature of the issue, and the fact that the *Ostheer*'s anti-partisan effort was not confined to partisans proper but also targeted Jews, communists and, increasingly, the civilian population at large. It considers at some length two issues which help lend this topic particular complexity - institutional chaos, and the myriad personal influences which affected the response of officers. Finally, the chapter considers the opportunities and problems in the sources to be utilised.

2.1. Central argument and basic methodology

There are three strands to the central argument which this thesis will test. The first is that the conduct of officers in the *Ostheer*'s rear area anti-partisan units was shaped by interactions between *real or perceived* military necessity, ideology, economics, the need for constructive engagement, and the personal perceptions of officers; the second, that perceptions were shaped by a variety of ideological, military, pragmatic, ethical and careerist influences; the third, that the resulting conduct displayed different shades of brutality and restraint. Whilst such a pluralist approach to explanation might at first seem obvious, the fact remains that such an approach has been neglected by most of the secondary literature on the subject so far, literature which has either taken more the form of overviews or focused excessively upon one potential explanation.

The means by which the argument will be tested is a longitudinal study of the 221st Security Division, a unit which mainly saw service in the jurisdiction of the Army Group Centre Rear Area to the west of the front line's central sector.[1] Investigating the division over the 1941-3 period enables comparison over time.[2] Analysis will focus on two levels - the officers at divisional level, and the officers of the division's subordinate units. In the first instance subordinate units were composed of the division's regiments and *Feldkommandanturen*, and below them, respectively, battalions and *Ortskommandanturen*.[3] As the central argument implies, analysis focuses at both levels upon security division *officers* rather than the rank-and-file; the previous chapter has already explained the problems likely to be encountered in attempts to pitch analysis too low for the available source material to do it sufficient justice.[4]

Several other units feature also. The 221st's interactions with its superiors must be considered in order to assess the role played by directives from above and to help illustrate the overall context in which the division operated. Secondly the 221st, like all security divisions, saw co-operation with a plethora of agencies including the SS, *Luftwaffe* and economic bodies, and analysing these interactions is a further means of deepening analysis of the 221st itself. Finally, several purposes are served by comparing the 221st with other German Army security divisions

at various points; the representativeness of the 221st's material can be demonstrated, the 221st's conduct can be put further into context, and comparative analysis of particular points can help better explain the 221st's own motivations.

2.2. The *Ostheer*'s anti-partisan effort: the debate

The *Ostheer*'s anti-partisan effort was in many respects a monstrous undertaking, encompassing ideologically-driven killing, terror of the civilian population, the destruction of thousands of villages and forced labour recruitment on an unprecedented scale.[5] Whilst it is virtually impossible to arrive at an exact figure either for the death toll inflicted or villages destroyed, both went far beyond the point of military justification.[6] The issues involved are nonetheless highly complicated, and the *Wehrmachtsdebatte* has yet to accord them the full attention they warrant.[7] Until the 1970s historians tended to be preoccupied with the technical and operational aspects of the Russo-German partisan war. The 1964 collaborative American study edited by John A. Armstrong, whilst still today retaining much informative value, typified a literature interested primarily in learning from German experiences in order to prepare for any future war with the Soviet Union.[8] Whilst Armstrong's work did not ignore the often brutal nature of German conduct, it paid little attention to the true nature of the causes.

Addressing this issue is complicated, however, by a mire of methodological problems generated by the available sources, for such was the complex and chaotic nature of the partisan war that the material generated by either side makes for a far from complete picture. Moreover, the "psychological" aspect of the partisan war ensured that much of the "information" contained in the sources was actually false and intended to mislead the enemy.[9] Despite the methodological confusion, however, there are some clear historiographical battle lines generating a series of issues which guide much of the analysis presented in this thesis.

2.2.1. Partisan ruthlessness

Many earlier studies, several written by former German participants in the partisan war, adopted various shades of argument vilifying the "bestial" practices of a partisan enemy which had consciously and consistently failed to observe international conventions of warfare.[10] Some later works, though certainly more balanced, were still preoccupied with normative aspects of the partisan war and paid insufficient attention to the extent and causes of *Ostheer* brutality.[11] Most recently, historians such as Joachim Hoffmann and Jörg Friedrich have again stressed the role which partisan ruthlessness played in radicalising the conduct of the war in the east.[12]

There is in fact plenty to be said for this interpretation. Partisans regularly flouted three of the four criteria of lawful combatant status laid down in the 1907 Hague Convention; they were not readily identifiable and did not carry arms openly, and their maltreatment and murder of German prisoners and native collaborators defied all notions of internationally acceptable

conduct.[13] Indeed, partisan outrages were often calculated to provoke vicious German reprisals against the population in order to turn the population against the invaders.[14] How far this behaviour was compelled by German terror in the first place is of course another question.[15] Recourse to Soviet and other Eastern bloc historiography is hardly a recipe for achieving a full and balanced outlook, however; political pressure and ideological conviction ensured that it depicted the partisan war as a just, epic struggle into which the population of the German-occupied Soviet Union had thrown itself wholeheartedly.[16] Historically uncomfortable truths, such as the cautious support with which large swathes of the population had initially greeted the German invasion and the terror which the partisans had themselves employed to compel the population's co-operation, were brushed under the historiographical carpet.[17]

All this aside, apologist western historiography was itself ignoring or misrepresenting a series of uncomfortable historical truths about the *Ostheer*'s anti-partisan effort. From the late 1970s, however, this particular imbalance was to be redressed.

2.2.2. Ideological, military and economic ruthlessness

From the late 1970s much western research, reflecting the emerging critical historiography on the German Army as a whole, started adopting a harsher line. Figures uncovered recorded often ludicrous disparities between the number of casualties which the Germans themselves had sustained and the vastly higher numbers of partisan dead which they claimed to have inflicted. Not only these disparities but also the often tiny amounts of partisan weaponry seized by the Germans after anti-partisan operations showed clearly that the great majority of "partisan" dead had actually been non-combatants.[18] These figures were seen as symptomatic of an ideologically-driven "security" campaign which had targeted Jews, communists and gypsies and subjected the general population to widespread terror.[19] A recurring theme throughout much of the critical historiography has been the ways in which the *Ostheer*'s anti-partisan effort was shaped by a fusion of ideology and "military considerations", shaped themselves by a mixture of difficult conditions, partisan ruthlessness and the harsh anti-guerrilla doctrine of the German military.[20]

In the 1990s attention has also focused upon the economic dimension.[21] Christian Gerlach has shown that as the German war effort became ever more dependent on forced labour and foodstuffs from the east through 1942 and especially 1943, the partisans came to control more people and ever-greater areas of arable land behind the German lines. Cold economic calculation therefore ensured that German operations in areas controlled or partly-controlled by the partisans came to encompass the destruction of villages on a scale even more massive than before, requisitioning, deportations and frequently the murder of those civilians deemed economically useless.[22] Economics featured in other counter-insurgency operations of the Twentieth Century; the burning of Boer farmsteads by the British during the 1899-1902 war was just one instance of pressure being brought to bear on guerrillas by depriving them of

shelter and food. But so great did the needs of the German war economy become that the German anti-partisan campaign in the east unleashed economic upheaval and misery on a scale unprecedented in anti-guerrilla warfare.

The sum of this kind of ruthlessness suggests that the brutality of the *Ostheer*'s anti-partisan effort went beyond that created by the normal pressures of anti-partisan warfare such as the overstretch of units, difficult terrain and fear of a ruthless unseen enemy. Whilst many aspects of the *Ostheer*'s anti-partisan effort deserve moral condemnation, however, ruthlessness at the lower levels was indeed shaped further by such pressures. It is these which are considered next.

2.2.3. Conditions in the field

On no occasion during the war in the east did the *Ostheer*'s anti-partisan effort receive the quality or quantity of manpower and equipment with which it might have enjoyed decisive, lasting success. It seems from official German sources that German manpower engaged in security duty in the Soviet Union never exceeded a quarter of a million, but hovered for most of the time from 1942 on around the 190 000 mark. Of these, only around 37 000 at most were suitable for front-line duty. Added to this figure were units from Italy and the Axis satellites, of varying but usually low quality. Total manpower ranged against the partisans seems never to have exceeded 900 000 at any one time, but well over half of these were Eastern volunteers which also were of usually poor quality.[23] Most German manpower committed to the rear areas, as will be seen, was drawn from formations which contained older personnel who often were unsuited to the rigours of anti-partisan duty. Security Battalion 242, under the 221st Security Division, complained for example in April 1943 that its company commanders were aged 54, 42, 48 and 44.[24] In January 1943, the average age of thirteen new officers recently transferred to the 203rd Security Division was nearly 48 years old.[25]

With such resources as were at their disposal, moreover, rear area security units had to administer often vast areas of inhospitable terrain riddled with forests, swamps and lakes; in Byelorussia, where the partisan war would rage most fiercely, such terrain covered 2 million hectares.[26] Such terrain was ideal for partisans,[27] and the hardship which the Germans faced was intensified by weather conditions which could be extreme at any time of year. All this took place against a ruthless enemy who was to grow increasingly effective and dangerous over time.[28]

There were several potential ways in which such a situation might translate into brutality. One was simply that inability to get grips successfully with the partisans caused German troops to vent their anger on the population.[29] Another was the need to appear successful to superiors, with failure to engage partisans driving units to kill non-combatants as a means of covering such failure with an impressive body count.[30] This certainly seems to have been one of the motives for SS brutality; SS-*Brigadeführer* Herf, commander of police units in the Ukraine in 1943, commented that such practices did an SS officer's prospects no harm at all:

> *"Yesterday a* Gauleiter *and General commissar unintentionally and unwittingly broadcast certain secret reports (intended for the Führer!) showing that some 480 rifles were found on 6 000 dead "partisans". Put bluntly, all these men had been shot to swell the figure of enemy losses and highlight our own "heroic deeds".*"*[31]

Thirdly, units with low combat capability may have felt that terrorising the population might at least deter civilians from aiding and abetting the partisans. Terror had after all been a feature of German counter-insurgency doctrine since 1870 and was also a guiding National Socialist principle behind the higher-level criminal orders for conduct of security in the East. By order of Field Marshal Keitel of the High Command, it was terror of the occupying power which would rob the population of any urge to resist, and General Lothar Rendulic was very far from being the only high-ranking field officer to believe that *"success comes only through terror"*.[32] This is not to say that such an approach had any chance of working in Russia; the sheer size of the area and, increasingly, the partisans' greater ability to execute counter-terror against the population prevented the *Ostheer* from realising effectively the kind of terror-based security campaign which had worked, for a time at least, in Yugoslavia.[33] In the conditions which *Ostheer* security units so often had to face, however, terror may simply have seemed the only option available.

A final potential source of "situation-driven" brutality was generated by the mechanism of the large, sweeping anti-partisan operations to which from 1942 the Germans increasingly resorted - the so-called *Großunternehmen.* The pressure of having to cleanse a large area in a short period with wholly inadequate manpower seems to have led many German units to abandon any attempt to distinguish between combatants and non-combatants and adopt the quicker, simpler approach of wholesale killing.[34] For all four of these possible explanations, meanwhile, the butchers' mentality which facilitated such conduct may well have been strengthened by uncertainty as to where civilian loyalties actually lay and, indeed, as to who was a civilian and who was actually a partisan.[35] Whilst it would be wrong to use any of these "situational" explanations to excuse brutality and carnage, it does not do to overlook the influences generated by the difficult concrete circumstances in which the *Ostheer*'s anti-partisan effort took place.

That said, it needs also to be recognised that brutality was by no means an inevitable result of such circumstances; constructive engagement often was another option, one which some units pursued more than others. It is this which is considered next.

2.2.4. The "constructive" imperative

Cultivation, whether aimed at the population or at potential partisan deserters, might take the form of propaganda, practical occupation measures, or efforts to alleviate the suffering the anti-partisan effort was inflicting.[36] It seems to have been borne less of humanitarian considerations than of the realisation, also clear in other 20th-century counter-insurgency campaigns, that the battle for hearts and minds is as essential to success as actual combat is. It was also a

recognition of the fact that the predominantly rural population of the German-occupied Soviet Union was mainly interested in being left to till the land without outside interference, and that it would therefore support whichever side offered the best chance of a quiet life.[37] Cultivation was an aspect of the *Ostheer*'s anti-partisan effort which, though doomed to ultimate failure by the destructive and tyrannical nature of the German occupation, further highlights the complex and nuanced nature of the issues with which a low-level case study needs to engage.

No explanation of motivation and conduct should either play down the scale of unnecessary death and suffering which the *Ostheer*'s anti-partisan effort inflicted or attempt to "legitimise" actions which on countless occasions, regardless of their cause, were brutal and excessive by any sensible or moral measure. That said, it is clear that there is much to be said for the view that a picture reflecting the full complexity of the issues remains far from realisation, and that further analysis of particular units, jurisdictions and operations can go a long way to filling the gap.[38]

Serving historical explanation, however, necessitates considering not just the influences outlined already but also the ways in which they interacted with two further sets of influences. The first of these is now examined.

2.3. Institutional chaos and "Chinese whispers"

That the forces which drove the German anti-partisan effort were so complex was due in no small measure to the chaotic institutional set-up of the Third Reich itself. Numerous studies have argued that this condition was generated by Hitler's desire to be seen as aloof from "grubby politicking", seeing such aloofness as he did as an essential component of the "*Führer* myth" which he sought to generate in order to shore up his prestige in the eyes of the people.[39] He preferred instead to let the various Reich agencies fight it out, usually siding with the institutionally stronger participant in the power struggles which ensued. Rather than issuing specific orders, Hitler instead outlined the overall goals which the various parties should aim for. These were goals which, though radical and extreme in a general sense, were vague in detail and left much leeway in how they might be achieved. This "charismatic leadership" system, if system is the right word, meant that different elites were given free rein to build up massive and inevitably overlapping power bases, and this led in turn to fragmented decision-making in policy area after policy area. The outcome was "cumulative radicalisation", fuelled by ambitious individuals and agencies seeking to demonstrate their radicalism and effectiveness and unleashing forces of unparalleled destructiveness.[40]

This chaotic and destructive institutional machinery characterised the German anti-partisan effort also. Beyond the setting of general goals by Hitler himself, more detailed policy formulation was influenced by inputs from the Armed Forces High Command (*Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* or OKW) and, directly below it in the command chain, the

Army High Command (*Oberkommando des Heeres* or OKH). Whilst both bodies, as will be seen, were initially united in support for "criminal orders", their views would diverge significantly as the situation changed. Below them the larger field formations - the army groups and their subordinate armies - might either radicalise directives or dilute them for pragmatic reasons in accordance with their own predilections and the particular situation which they faced. Moreover the SS, the Luftwaffe and economic bodies attempted at various levels to exploit the institutional leeway and manipulate the partisan effort to advance their own agendas.[41] The orders which eventually filtered down to the security divisions and their own subordinate units had therefore already been subjected to a pot-pourri of policy-making influences.[42] Essentially it was a game of Chinese whispers.

Moreover, security divisions and their subordinate units very much enjoyed a free hand themselves. This was due in large part to the need for military government to "improvise" in the face of the enormous practical challenge of having to administer vast areas with the meagre forces, composed largely of second- and third-rate manpower, which the Army had assigned to the task. These formations were after all responsible not only for anti-partisan warfare but also for guarding supply points, supply routes and POWs, and appointing and overseeing an extensive yet often ramshackle network of native administrators. The Army's neglect of rear area security seems to have been due in large part not only to initial expectation of a quick victory but also to single-minded concentration on warfare's operational aspects to the detriment, if not neglect, of everything else.[43] Thus, whilst the challenge of rear area security actually warranted a co-ordinated and effective effort by the German Army, no such effort materialised. Instead, much was left to the "inventiveness and initiative" of officers on the spot, who acted in accordance with the circumstances they faced and the ways in which they perceived them.[44] As was made clear by the Army's own official summarising report on military administration, compiled in 1944, *"(i)t was no time to await the orders and detailed formal directives of upper echelons....things had to be largely improvised."*[45] Similarly General von Schenckendorff, commander of the Army Group Centre Rear Area from 1941 to 1943, often issued "orders" which left his commanders a great deal of freedom of action. This was implicit in a directive of June 1942:

> *"The divisional commanders are absolute masters in their jurisdictions - in other words, they are to work independently. They are responsible, however, for carrying out my orders!"*[46]

Whilst such leeway would ultimately prove insufficient to counter effectively the destructiveness engendered in so many "policy areas" by the cumulative radicalisation inimical to the Third Reich, and indeed to a large extent often facilitated unbridled brutality, it did mean that conduct was shaped by forces far more complex and diverse than the need to obey orders. A central task of this thesis is to investigate how far such freedom of action resulted in relatively restrained and constructive forms of anti-partisan warfare, and conversely how far it encouraged officers to believe they could get away with all manner of brutality. In either case,

the make-up of the personal perceptions which helped shape a particular officer's conduct will need to be analysed also. It is this which is considered next.

2.4. The personal dimension

What influences were brought to bear on the personal perceptions of security division officers which subsequently helped shape their conduct of anti-partisan warfare? As well as being subjected to at least some degree to the institutional anti-Semitism, anti-Bolshevism, imperialism and military ruthlessness of the German officer corps, each officer hailed from a certain generation whose collective perceptions may have been influenced by the collective life experiences which it had undergone.[47]

There was great potential for ruthlessness, both ideological and military, in these experiences. Security division officers hailed from older age groups, and many therefore belonged to the *Frontkämpfergeneration* (generation of front-line officers) which had seen front-line service during the First World War. This generation's direct, intense experience of mass death and destruction imbued it, it has been argued, with a social darwinist view of warfare which held that German soldiers of the future would need to be much tougher than many of their forefathers of 1918 had been. These after all were the troops who had "cracked" after their resolve had been weakened by the debilitating influence of democratic, socialist and Bolshevik ideals. German soldiers of the future would therefore need an ideology to inspire them, a regime which rooted out and exterminated all corrosive alien elements, and charismatic fanatical officers to lead them. For many of the *Frontkämpfergeneration* these ideals were embodied by their own experiences in the *Freikorps*.[48] Moreover, those officers who from 1914 to 1919 had seen service on the Eastern Front may have been hardened in their anti-Slavic resolve because they had experienced first-hand during a formative period of their lives the contrast between "advanced" German culture and the often extremely primitive living conditions of Russia and the east.[49]

Other officers, be they older or younger than the *Frontkämpfergeneration*, had themselves been subjected to influences conducive to ruthless behaviour in the east. Those who had been too old to see front-line duty even in the First World War, or had served between 1914 and 1918 as staff officers, may have been less vituperatively ideological but still supported the Nazi regime, particularly its military and foreign policy goals. The staff officers from 1914 to 1918, moreover, had been party to the techniques of mass industrialised warfare which the Prussian general staff developed and which the *Reichswehr* developed further.[50] Those officers too young to have experienced the Great War in either a front-line or staff capacity may have been hardened instead by the fact that the drab and demodernised conditions of rear area security were hardly the right environment for the dynamism and ambition which they may have harboured. This is particularly likely to have been the case among the few regular officers who

occupied some of the most important posts within security divisions. Their propensity for ideologically-coloured ruthlessness, meanwhile, may have been bolstered by their formative political experiences - Versailles, economic crisis and the collapse of Weimar democracy.[51]

No officer, however, was pre-programmed to inevitable brutality; older ones in particular may have been inculcated with more traditional, conservative values which assured an element of restraint and moderation.[52] Even those officers who had experienced events such as the 1918 collapse with particular directness and intensity had also been subjected to potentially more civilising societal "counter-values", for example religious ones. Further, even potentially brutalising influences might sometimes have worked the other way. For example, whilst the experiences of many officers on the Eastern Front from 1914 to 1919 may have hardened their anti-Slavic resolve, it is likely in a number of cases that prolonged contact with civilians during that period led to a strengthening of personal bonds and the emergence of more favourable impressions over time.[53] Good sense, as well as moral scruples of whatever origin, may also have played a role in moderating behaviour. This is especially likely to have been the case over conduct toward the general civilian population, principal site of the crucial "battle for hearts and minds". In short, no individual was as straightforward as any attempt to pigeon-hole him, and this is something of which a low-level study of the *Ostheer*'s anti-partisan effort needs to be aware.

The crucial issue is how far the range of influences and types of conduct which this chapter has already considered can be analysed using the source material available. This is the next point to address.

2.5. The sources

Most of the source material used here hails from the official files of *Ostheer* units and other Third Reich agencies which were active in the eastern campaign. Much of this material was destroyed, either in the course of the campaign or after it, or captured by the Red Army. As the demands of Soviet archives are beyond the financial reach of most British doctoral students, one needs instead to rely upon western archives. But even with this restriction the files of the 221st Security Division, the unit of principal interest here, constitute an extensive main source base.

2.5.1. The main source: divisional files - problems and remedies

German Army divisional files were generated by a number of departments at divisional level. The main types utilised here are the operational files (Ia), the quartermaster's files (Ib) and the intelligence files (Ic). Among other things, they present an extensive if not necessarily comprehensive picture of a division's anti-partisan effort. Operational files contain orders and reports on both general security matters and particular anti-partisan operations. The divisional

quartermaster was responsible for gathering reports generated by various divisional sub-sections including the divisional court, the military police, and transport, supply and administrative offices. Intelligence files detail the population's mood, propaganda, and matters pertaining to the troops' leisure activities and "spiritual well-being" (*geistige Betreuung*). Included within *geistige Betreuung* was the concept of *wehrgeistige Führung*, or military-political instruction - essentially the indoctrination of the troops with Nazi ideology. All these types of file provide important clues about the forces which shaped officer motivation and conduct. The intelligence section files also contain transcripts of interviews with captured partisans or partisan deserters; these constitute a source of information on the composition and activity of the partisans in a security division's area.

When it comes to the German anti-partisan effort at divisional level and below, the files of the 221st are probably the most extensive, detailed and meaningful of any *Ostheer* security division. Selective use has been made, however, of the files of other security divisions, both for the purposes described in Section 2.1. and also in order to illustrate certain issues in greater depth than the 221st's files are able to on their own. It is well to be aware, however, of the potential pitfalls of divisional files as a source base and how they might be avoided.

Incompleteness and unintentional distortion

Even the 221st Security Division's files are incomplete, and much that has survived is irrelevant to the issue of partisan warfare or indeed to any other meaningful issue. Moreover, numerous "nitty-gritty" aspects of policy, particularly those involving inter-agency co-operation, are neglected in the written and printed records, having been more likely to have been discussed over the telephone.[54] In such cases the only way forward is informed speculation based upon what can already be more confidently established about the units in question. Other forms of unintentional distortion or incompleteness relate to the compilation of figures for partisan dead. False figures might have been unintentionally given,[55] or more commonly figures were compiled hurriedly and without conclusive information. Here the only long-term solution is to cross-refer using Soviet sources.

During the early part of the campaign, moreover, officers could be haphazard in their reporting of both partisans and anti-partisan activity. Even where reports were compiled conscientiously, as became the case as time went by, lack of sufficient intelligence prevented a genuinely comprehensive picture. Stretched out as they were across vast tracts of territory, security divisions relied extensively upon incomplete information. Information about the mood of the population and about the partisans themselves was very often supplied by captured partisans, partisan deserters, native informers or auxiliary units, and was subject to all kinds of distortion. Captured partisans and partisan deserters had a tendency to tell their captors what they thought their captors wanted to hear.[56] Native informers might sometimes have actually been working for the partisans and fed the Germans with false information, whilst auxiliary units might have

exaggerated the partisans' strength in order to disguise their own failings in combating them.[57] Both informers and auxiliary units might also have exaggerated partisan numbers in order to draw more German troops to their home area, thereby ensuring that their own families were better protected from marauding partisans. Quite apart from all this was the unintentional distortion caused by anti-Slavic preconceptions held by the German officers who were compiling the reports.[58]

Ultimately, the only means of combating such inaccuracies is again to compare German with Soviet sources. For this thesis, however, it is not so much of a problem in any case. The thesis is after all less concerned with an accurate picture than with the picture as officers perceived it, for it was this after all which shaped their conduct.

Deliberate distortion

At all levels of a security division, the need to appear successful was a major consideration. Frequently faced with the reality of failure, it is almost certain that security division officers compiling reports for higher consumption, whether concerning figures for partisan dead or any one of a range of other issues, felt tempted to be inventive with the facts. This might involve exaggerating either success or the scale of the partisan problem which was frustrating success. To some extent, this too is a problem best remedied by comparing German with Soviet sources. On the other hand, it can be at least reduced without recourse to Soviet sources. By considering some indisputable facts - for example that the terrain was partisan-friendly, that divisional areas were huge in size, and that the divisions were far down the pecking order when it came to allocation of quality manpower in sufficient numbers - it becomes clear that reports of "insurmountable difficulties" were true at least to a significant extent. Moreover, the files of other Reich agencies active in the same area as the division can be a valuable source of cross-referencing.[59]

Trickier is the possible deliberate distortion of figures for partisan dead, information that was gathered only by the division itself, primarily through its subordinate units, and for which there is therefore no other source of corroboration in western archives. Two kinds of distortion may have taken place. Firstly it is a well-established fact that, for whatever reason, a massive number of partisans recorded as having been "killed" were in fact non-combatants. It is possible, however, that some of the figures were in fact a complete invention, concocted again as a cover for failure. Even to raise this question risks courting controversy, for it suggests apologist motives for playing down the scale of carnage which the German anti-partisan effort inflicted. It would be wrong however to reject the possibility that at least some of the figures for partisan dead were indeed doctored in this way. Whilst it is unlikely to have taken place on such a scale as to undermine evidence of an excessively harsh German anti-partisan effort overall, it does hold implications for analysing the conduct of individual units.[60] Ultimately however a more conclusive treatment can only be reached, again, by comparing German with Soviet sources.

A sanitised version of events

Another caveat to security division files is that they almost certainly present what is to some extent a "sanitised" version of events, unreflective of the true volume of atrocity being perpetrated.[61] To some degree, as will be seen, this problem can be countered by reference to sources of other agencies, or more frequently by a "reading between the lines" in the divisional files themselves. Another aspect of this phenomenon is harder to remedy; it is possible that a security division, or one of its subordinate units, actually failed to report an atrocity of which it was aware or recorded artificially low body counts, either to avoid the impression that the troops were growing wild and ill-disciplined or to escape the disapproval of superiors who favoured a more restrained approach.[62] This again is a problem in need of remedy at a later date through comparison between German and Soviet sources.

The most fundamental weakness of divisional files as a source base, however, is the amount of speculation which is needed when using them to analyse the personal motives of officers.

Personal motivation: a murky area

Such is the official rather than private nature of the sources that considerable speculation about personal motives is unavoidable. Whilst divisional files do indeed provide an insight into the personal forces which brutalised officer conduct, expressions of ruthlessness cannot necessarily be taken at face value. Whilst they may convey what an officer genuinely felt, they may also merely have been attempts to pay lip service to Nazi ideology. Deciding which is the case, however, is by no means impossible, providing there is enough informed reading between the lines. Such clues as the files provide need to be exploited fully, in conjunction, as far as possible, with the officer personnel files which the thesis also utilises.[63] Overall, it needs to be acknowledged that considerable speculation is necessary.

This is perhaps especially the case when trying to analyse the motives behind constructive conduct. Army files contain numerous examples of objection to harsh policy and attempts to ameliorate it, but those officers who were genuinely motivated by compassion would have been foolish to put their case in anything other than pragmatic terms. This was the case even with those officers who, as time went by, were increasingly critical of policy.[64] For one thing, acquiring a reputation as too much of a soft touch was arguably inadvisable within an institution whose essential ruthlessness had been intensifying for decades. Whilst voicing moral objections therefore was not necessarily life-threatening - the increasing shortage of suitable officers probably meant that the Army could not afford to be so choosy - it might harm promotion prospects, and this for many officers may have been sufficient disincentive.[65] More fundamentally, moral objections were far less likely to be acted upon than were pragmatic arguments, if indeed they were acted upon at all.[66] All this notwithstanding, however, it would be very wrong to assume that every pragmatic argument located in the official files masked humane motives. All told, whilst it needs to be recognised that a number of different potentially

"civilising" influences may well have helped shaped the more constructive approach of some officers, this is an area which the research presented in this thesis can to a large extent only touch upon. There are ways, however, of developing this aspect of research at a later point in time.[67] Meanwhile, the thesis makes such inferences as are possible.[68]

2.5.2. Other sources

Among the other sources are the files of the higher-echelon military formations to which security divisions were subordinate. These illustrate the wider situation in the occupied areas and thus put the conditions and conduct of the 221st and other security divisions into better context. In some cases, they also provide information in greater depth concerning specific anti-partisan operations in which certain security divisions were involved. The files also help establish the origin of particular orders. In terms of the partisan war, they were arranged along similar lines to security division files and their drawbacks are similar also.

Sources generated by other Reich agencies come in the form of the SD *Einsatzgruppen* reports and the reports of economic agencies. *Einsatzgruppen* reports concerned themselves with among other things the mood of the civilian population, the effectiveness of German Army propaganda, and the partisans. On these matters at least the SD had no interest in distorting the facts and the reports thus constitute a useful, unbiased source which can be used both to check the veracity of points made in security division files and to provide unbiased new information on others.[69] The economic "task forces" deployed in the rear areas of the various army groups, in which most of the security divisions operated, were the *Wirtschaftsinpektionen* and, below them, the *Wirtschaftskommandos*. The usefulness of their files is two-fold. For one thing, they too were concerned with the population's mood and the partisan war - albeit from a primarily economic viewpoint - and thus constitute a further source of corroboration and selective "plugging of holes". More significantly, they help illustrate the interaction between economic forces and the anti-partisan effort.

Another source is the personnel files of officers. These were compiled by the Army itself and contain biographical details and written assessments by superiors. Whilst reservist officers, which constituted the vast majority of a security division's officer contingent, are very poorly represented in these files, some useful files have been unearthed. Important though this source is, however, there needs to be awareness of the teleological traps which await in trying to explain conduct in terms of life experiences which took place years earlier. This source aids informed speculation, but it remains speculation nonetheless, and it is even harder, from such a small sample, to make broad statements about "generational" effects upon motivation and conduct.

Finally, some *Feldpostbriefe* are used. Though their methodological drawbacks are readily acknowledged, they can still illustrate points made in other sources in vivid and dramatic ways.[70]

2.6. Conclusion

The *Ostheer*'s anti-partisan effort is an issue as complicated as it is harrowing, driven as it was by a complex interaction of ideological, military and economic forces as well as containing more constructive elements. At the lower levels, it seems to have been shaped significantly by the ways in which particular officers perceived their often difficult circumstances. Such perceptions were in turn shaped by varying degrees of ideological or military ruthlessness, a range of potentially more civilising influences, and careerist ambition. A backdrop was provided by the chaotic organisational nature of the German anti-partisan effort, which left significant room for individual initiative. It is the issue of how all these forces interacted, and the varying outcomes which resulted, which this thesis will address. The sources bring a range of problems of which the historian needs to beware, including incompleteness, intentional and unintentional distortion, the "sanitising" of brutal events and the speculation necessary in using mainly official sources to address questions of personal motivation. They nonetheless constitute an effective basis for beginning to explore the issues.

The following chapter sets the scene for the opening phase in the 221st Security Division's anti-partisan effort from June to December 1941.

Endnotes to Chapter 2

[1] See below, p. 38.

[2] The official files of the 221st, like most other German Army divisions of the Second World War, do not continue beyond 1943.

[3] As will become clear over the course of the thesis, a security division's precise order of battle changed considerably over time.

[4] See above, pp. 7-10.

[5] In Byelorussia for example 5 295 villages were either destroyed or were the scene of massacres perpetrated by the Germans in the course of anti-partisan operations. Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*, p. 801.

[6] Tim Mulligan, for example, cites figures from July 1941 to May 1942 of 80 000 partisan dead as against just 1 094 German in the Army Group Centre Rear Area. Mulligan's source was the official files of the Army Group Centre Rear Area. Mulligan, "Reckoning", p. 32. The figures for many individual anti-partisan operations after that date also record astronomical disparities. See: *Gerlach, Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*, pp. 826-31.

[7] Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*, p. 791; Klinkhammer, "Partisanenkrieg", pp. 815-19.

[8] Armstrong (ed.), *Soviet Partisans*. Other "normative" works, dating from the early 1950s to the mid- 1970s, include: Teske, *Spiegel*: ibid., "Partisanen gegen die Eisenbahnen", "Über die deutsche Kampfführung" (which nonetheless does criticise the stupidity of excessively brutal German methods); Howell, *Soviet Partisan Movement*; Kreidel, "Partisanenkampf"; ibid., "Jagd auf Grischin"; Luttichau, *Guerrilla and Counterguerrilla Warfare*; Gordon, *Soviet Partisan Warfare*; Simpson, "German Experience".

[9] Not least among the problems of historical accuracy is the question of the precise number of partisans, either as a whole or at any one time. Official Soviet estimates range between 700 000 and 1.3 million for the entire partisan movement over the course of the war, and are even more uncertain over numbers in particular regions and republics. Contemporary German estimates range between 400 000 and 500 000 partisans, but this figure only accounts for partisans in the more organised groups. Bonwetsch, *Sowjetische Partisanen*, p. 98. Earl Ziemke, relying mainly upon official Soviet figures, alleges that the partisan movement grew from around 30 000 in early 1942 to 200 000 by the summer of 1943, before declining somewhat as territory was retaken by the Red Army. The figure for early 1943 was put at 120 000. Official German figures for March 1943, by contrast, put the figure at under 80 000. Bonwetsch, "Sowjetische Partisanen", p. 98; Ziemke, "Composition", p. 151; Hesse, *Partisanenkrieg*, p. 205.

[10] See for example: Redelis, *Partisanenkrieg*, esp. pp. 86-90.

[11] See for example: Hesse, *Partisanenkrieg*; Wilenchik, *Partisanenbewegung.*

[12] Hoffmann, "Die Kriegführung", pp. 889-95; Friedrich, J., *Das Gesetz*, pp. 514-45; Hammel, "Kompetenzen", esp. pp. 184-90; Hasch & Friedrich, G., "Der Partisanenkrieg", esp. pp. 232-8, 246-51.

[13] The fourth condition, that of being commanded by a superior responsible for his subordinates, was met. Dixon and Heilbrunn, *Guerrilla Warfare*, p. 85.

[14] Bonwetsch, "Sowjetische Partisanen", p. 110.

[15] Hoffmann, for example, does not deny the ruthless excesses which German units perpetrated, but asserts that it was partisan ruthlessness, along with the wider ruthlessness of the Soviet regime as a whole, that set the process off. Hoffmann, "Die Kriegführung", pp. 889-95.

[16] See for example: Babakov, "Partisan Movement"; Kumanyev, "Partisan Movement".

[17] More recent works have challenged Soviet historiography's picture of the partisans. See for example: Bonwetsch, "Sowjetische Partisanen"; Slepyan, *Avengers*; Grenkevich, *Soviet Partisan Movement.* For an example of a history-from-below study which further undermines the myth of the partisans as a "people's movement", see: Hill, "Between Two Fires".

[18] To avoid irritating repetition throughout the thesis, the term "partisan" does not appear again in inverted commas. It will be clear throughout, however, that much of the killing referred to was indeed of non-combatants.

It would be going too far to claim that all the disparity is explainable in terms of the killing of non-combatants. Partisan casualties inflicted in open combat with German troops may often have been due to the Germans' frequent use of artillery (Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*, p. 834) or to the fact that partisan groups, used as they were to subversion and sabotage but not to proper combat, were unlikely to come off well in open combat with superior German troops (Hammel, "Kompetenzen", p. 212). In the light of current research, however, it seems unlikely that either explanation can account for more than a fraction of the disparity. As the 221st's case will show, artillery units were involved in only a fraction of the larger and medium-sized "engagements" for which significant disparities between German and partisan dead are recorded. Similarly, the argument that partisan units facing superior German troops were bound to suffer heavier losses cannot be taken too far; it ignores the fact that significant numbers of partisans were in fact former Red Army soldiers, and that German rear area security troops, and particularly their native auxiliaries, were themselves of relatively poor quality.

Disparities between recorded partisan dead and recorded partisan weapons captured may *sometimes* have been due, to partisans hiding their weapons to prevent them from being captured. This is unlikely to have occurred often, however, and certainly not nearly as much as German reports liked to claim (see: Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*, pp. 833-4). It could also be argued that any partisan, armed or otherwise, was hardly an innocent bystander - though here of course the question arises as to whether killing unarmed partisans, even if they were genuine, was justified, and whether German troops bothered in any case to make the distinction between unarmed partisans and actual civilians.

These necessary qualifications aside, the current state of research suggests that the vast majority of recorded partisan dead was indeed composed of unarmed civilians. Except where evidence to the contrary exists, this thesis makes the same assumption (though see below, Section 13.1., on the importance of further research to identify the composition of recorded partisan death tolls more accurately).

For a statistical breakdown of the death toll inflicted in the Soviet partisan war, albeit one which also contains significant flaws, see: Mulligan, "Reckoning".

[19] On Jürgen Förster, see works cited above, footnotes 47-50, Ch 1. See also: Cooper, *Phantom War*, esp. pp. 37-56; Mulligan, "Reckoning"; Umbreit, "Auf dem Weg"; idem., "Problem"; Heer, "Die Logik"; Wette, "Rassenfeind".

[20] See above, pp. 4-7.

[21] Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*, pp. 791-968; Umbreit, "Die Deutsche Herrschaft", pp. 140-224.

[22] Ibid., pp. 895-950.

[23] Cooper, *Phantom War*, pp. 145-6.

[24] NA T-315/1685, file 36509/13. Sich. Btl. 242, 4.5.43. "Erfahrungsbericht aus dem Unternehmen "Osterhase" vom 27.4. - 30.4.43.", pp. 1-2.

[25] NA T-501/1586, file 29186/6. Sich.-Div. 203 Abt. Ia, 7.1.43. Betr.: Monatsbericht, 1. bis. 31. Dezember 1942, p. 3.

[26] Schulte, *German Army*, p. 47.

[27] Cooper, *Phantom War*, pp. 89-91.

[28] See: Dallin et al., "Psychological Warfare", pp. 216-227; Schulte, *German Army*, pp. 42-52, 69-85, 117-49, 253-67.

[29] Cooper, *Phantom War*, p. 1; Schulte, *German Army*, pp. 127, 266-7.

[30] Schulte, *German Army*, pp. 266-7.

[31] Cooper, *Phantom War*, pp. 83-4.

[32] Translated from *"man kann nur durch Terror Erfolg haben"*. Umbreit, "Problem", p. 133; idem., "Verantwortlichkeit", p. 752.

[33] Anderson, *Conduct of Reprisals*, pp. 40-1, 79-81; Schmider, "Auf Umwegen", pp. 919-20. *Wirtschafstkommando* 212, an economic unit stationed in Mogilew in central Byelorussia, maintained that the population's philosophy was *"Loyalty lies where the power lies."* BA-MA, RW 31/849. WiKo 212 (Mogilew), 18.5.43. Lage- und Tätigkeitsbericht Nr 17, Gesamtüberblick.

[34] Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtunsgpolitik*, pp. 818-19. Gerlach argues that some commanders, be they Army or SS, had reckoned with such an outcome in advance.

[35] Teske, "Über die deutsche Kampfführung", pp. 665-9.

[36] Mulligan, *Politics*, pp. 93-106, 123-146.

[37] On the attitude of the population, see: Dallin et. al, "Psychological Warfare", pp. 320-37; Weinberg, "Yelnya-Dorogobush", pp. 430-7.

[38] Klinkhammer, "Partisanenkrieg". Whilst Klinkhammer's article focuses more upon western theatres than upon the Soviet Union, he applies this observation to both.

[39] This literature is reviewed in: Kershaw, *Nazi Dictatorship*, pp. 69-74.

[40] Mommsen, "National Socialism", pp. 179-84, 195-202; idem., "Realisation", p. 115.

[41] Mulligan, *Politics*, pp. 137-46.

[42] On the "institutional chaos" which beset the Nazi empire in the east, see: Mulligan, *Politics*, esp. re the partisan war Ch. 10.

[43] Creveld, *Fighting Power*, p. 164.

[44] Schulte, *German Army*, p. 57.

[45] Mulligan, *Politics*, p. 124. For an overview of the workings of German military administration in the Soviet Union, see: Toppe et al., *German Military Government*.

[46] Translated from: *"Die Div. Kdre sind absolute Herren in ihrem Bereich, also selbständig arbeiten. Sie sind aber dafür verantwortlich, für die Durchführung meiner Befehle!"* NA T-501/15, file 24693/3. "Besprechungspunkte für Divisions-Kommandeur-Besprechung", 12.6.42, p. 7.

[47] Kroener, "Strukturelle Veränderungen", pp. 271-5.

[48] Broszat, "Soziale Motivation".

[49] Jahn, "Russenfurcht".

[50] Geyer, *Deutsche Rüstunsgpolitik*, pp. 98 ff.; Berghahn, "Militär", p. 39.

[51] Kroener, "Strukturelle Veränderungen", pp. 274-5.

[52] Dallin, *German Rule*, p. 507; Geyer, "Professionals and Junkers", p. 79; Anderson, *Conduct of Reprisals*, pp. 163-4.

[53] Certainly "affection" for Russians, especially women and children, was widespread among the rank-and-file during the 1941-5 war. Often it went beyond affection; Hitler and Himmler estimated that 1 million illegitimate babies had been born to German soldiers in the first year of occupation alone. Mulligan, *Politics*, pp. 124, 132 footnote 6; Schulte, "Wehrmacht", p. 171.

[54] Conversation with R.-D. Müller, 1.2.99.

[55] Lutz Klinkhammer cites an example from the partisan war in Italy. The unit which had actually carried out the killing informed its superiors over the telephone that it had disposed of 36 (*sechs und dreißig*) partisans, but it was misheard and the figure which was actually recorded was 630 (*sechs hundert dreißig*). Klinkhammer, "Partisanenkrieg", p. 825.

[56] Weinberg, "Yelnya-Dorogobuzh", p. 434.

[57] Klinkhammer, "Partisanenkrieg", p. 826.

[58] Weinberg, "Yelnya-Dorogobuzh", p. 434.

[59] See above, p. 19.

[60] More specific problems relating to recorded figures for partisan dead are commented on later in the thesis. See below, footnote 62, Ch. 7. See also above, footnote 18, this chapter.

[61] For further analysis of this particular problem, see: Birn, "Two Kinds of Reality"; Bartov, "Wem gehört die Geschichte?".

[62] It is also extremely likely that atrocities were committed at the company level and below which never came to the attention of higher offices. This is not a problem for the present thesis however, as its analysis does not encompass such low operational levels.

[63] See below, p. 31.

[64] Schulte makes a similar point. Schulte, *German Army*, p. 290.

[65] On the chronic officer shortage in the Army during the years 1939-42, see: Kroener, "Die Personellen Ressourcen".

[66] On the feeding of the population, for example, Schulte writes:

"Ortskommandantur (village- or small town-level command post) *reports from Witebsk for August 1941 outlined the action that was being taken to feed the town's inhabitants. OK had set up seven bread distribution centres, and two communal kitchens to provide hot meals for the homeless. German troops were also issuing milk to infants and small children.*

Spontaneous compassion of this sort was not, however, officially permissible and the only real hope for the civilian population lay with the resurgence of pragmatic arguments. A number of military commanders did indeed justify a less harsh line on practical grounds. In the case of the OK in Witebsk, (the Army Rear Area) *was urged to point out to* (9th Army command) *that the decision to feed the urban population had been taken in order to avoid "hunger-riots"* (Hungerrevolten) *and prevent the town's citizens from moving towards the partisans."* Schulte, *German Army*, p. 102.

[67] See below, pp. 238-40.

[68] Whilst on the subject of the limitations of this source base with regard to motivation, it is worth mentioning that there are myriad further questions and further areas of analysis which for practical purposes are beyond the scope of the sources utilised here. Attempts to do justice to issues such as the brutalising role played by deference to authority or unquestioning Germanic "efficiency", as well as a range of other issues worthy of

psychological, ethnographic or gender analysis (see for example: Browning, *Ordinary Men*, pp. 159 ff.; Steinberg, *All Or Nothing*, pp. 168 ff.), really would necessitate a wider utilisation of sources, above all personal-level sources, of a kind which have not been available here.

[69] The *Einsatzgruppen* were not themselves responsible either for administration of the population or for the propagandising of it. Similarly, the conduct of anti-partisan operations in the Army-administered areas was not their primary responsibility. As such, the *Einsatzgruppen* could view the performance of the *Ostheer* on all these scores with much impartiality. That said, it needs also to be borne in mind that *Einsatzgruppen* reports tend not to got into great detail, apart from a few occasions, concerning partisan activity and population mood in specific smaller areas.

SD *Einsatzgruppen* reports were firstly called *Ereignißmeldungen* and later on *Meldungen aus den besetzten Ostgebieten*. For an excellent introduction to using the *Einsatzgruppen* reports from the Soviet Union as a historical source, see: Headland, *Messages*.

[70] See above, pp. 7-8 for discussion of these methodological drawbacks, and also re the unavailability of other sources such as detailed morale reports, *Nachlässe* (bequests of private papers) and post-war criminal investigations.

CHAPTER 3: THE PARTISAN WAR, 1941: HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

The German security effort during the six months following the invasion of Russia took place primarily not against actual partisans but against those groups who, defined by a combination of ideology and excessively harsh military doctrine, constituted a "threat" to security - refugees, Red Army stragglers, commissars and above all "Jew-Bolsheviks". This created a recipe for brutality which during the autumn of 1941 was to escalate into massive bloodshed. This chapter illustrates the backdrop to the analysis of these events which follows in succeeding chapters. It covers the background to the invasion - code named Operation *Barbarossa* - the composition of the *Ostheer*'s security divisions and the tasks they were set, and the ideologically-coloured "criminal orders" issued from above which helped shape their subsequent conduct. It then outlines developments in the security effort itself with particular reference to the 221st Security Division.

3.1. The context: Operation *Barbarossa*

The invasion of Russia had been a long-standing aim of Hitler's. He planned to annihilate the Soviet Union, seeing Bolshevism as he did as an infernal pestilence, carried principally by the Jews. The particular timing of the invasion was influenced by strategic considerations, such as the need to sap Britain's will to resist by depriving her of potential allies, but Hitler's *Weltanschauung* (world-view) was fundamental to the conception of *Barbarossa* as a war to destroy an alien ideology.[1]

It was also intended to exploit unscrupulously the Soviet Union's economic resources and population. Millions of German settlers would colonise in a massive population push for living space (*Lebensraum*), and the Soviet people, decimated and reduced to helotry, would provide them with a vast supply of expendable, stupefied labour.[2] Subversion of Soviet agriculture to feed the Reich and plans for the advancing troops to "live off the land" would, it was calculated, mean the death by starvation of millions of Soviet citizens.[3] Finally the Soviet Union's economic resources would be utilised massively to give a German-dominated Europe the means of achieving economic self-sufficiency and ultimately world domination.[4]

Such was the Soviet Union's size and resources that it would need to be subdued by a rapid, overwhelming victory. A vast military force was assembled into three army groups, North, Centre and South, and was set specific objectives as well as the task of trapping and annihilating the Soviet armies. The end objective, a front line at the Urals, must be reached before the Russian winter set in and did to the Germans what it had done to Napoleon.[5] The vast area earmarked for occupation would need to be pacified rapidly if supply of front-line units was to be possible and operations were to continue unhindered.

3.2. The role of the security divisions

The *Ostheer*'s security divisions were set the task of pacifying and administering great tracts of the German-occupied Soviet Union. In the long term, the major administrative unit was to be the civilian-administered Reich Commissariat, but until the military campaign was won three additional types of jurisdiction were to be administered by the *Ostheer* itself. Farthest east lay the immediate combat zone; to the west of this, each individual army was to control its own Army Rear Area (*Kommando der rückwärtigen Gebiete* or *Korücke*), and to the west of these, three Army Group Rear Areas (*rückwärtige Heeresgebiete*) were to be set up. Each Army Group Rear Area was to be administered by one of the Army Groups to which the various armies were subordinate, and it was here, primarily, that the security divisions were to be deployed.

The divisions' duties are given a dry, technical description in the High Command's Guidelines for the Training of Security Divisions of 21st March 1941. They consisted of guarding supply points and transport routes; securing airports and supply dumps; overseeing and transporting prisoners-of-war, and regulating traffic.[6] It was made clear from the start, however, that security was to be an active as well as a passive business. Rather than restricting themselves to defensive duties, the divisions must take the fight to the partisans.[7] The reality in fact was infinitely more sinister. Pursuing ideological goals, ostensibly in the interests of "security", was to be an integral part of the security divisions' duties. For one thing, the framework of orders under which the troops were to operate was characterised by a ruthlessness which went beyond both what the situation actually demanded and what international convention deemed permissible.

The main directives were an edict on the "Conduct of Courts Martial", or *Kriegsgerichtbarkeitserlaß*, issued on 13th May 1941; "Guidelines for the Conduct of Troops in Russia", or *Richtlinien für das Verhalten der Truppen im Rußland*, issued six days later, and the Commissar Order or *Kommissarbefehl* of 6th June.[8] The *Kriegsgerichtbarkeitserlaß* allowed commanders to waive the restrictions on counter-guerrilla warfare which they had previously observed. All attempts by "enemy civilians" to "interfere" against the German Army were to be dealt with ruthlessly, civilians were to be denied access to protection by military courts, and battalion commanders and above were granted power to exact reprisals against villages from which troops had been fired upon. In addition, troops could be exempted from punishment for any wrongdoings against the population. The *Richtlinien* urged the most ruthless and energetic measures against the carriers of Germany's implacable enemy, Bolshevism - the "Bolshevik Army", irregulars (denoted as *Freischärler*, a term originating from Prussia's wars against Napoleon), saboteurs and Jews. By order of the *Kommissarbefehl*, finally, Army units were to co-operate in the liquidation of the Soviet commissars, particularly within the Red Army. These, as the principal carriers of Bolshevik ideology within the enemy's

armed forces, were to be denied combatant status and either shot by the troops themselves or handed over to the *Einsatzgruppen* for liquidation.

Together, these provisions more than cocked a snook at international convention. The particularly flagrant criminal nature of the *Kommissarbefehl* lay in the fact that it advocated elimination of a category of persons not because of their particular actions but because of their position in a political system.[9] The *Kriegsgerichtbarkeitserlaß* and the *Richtlinien* tore up the provisions of the 1907 Hague Convention which, whilst allowing actual guerrillas to be exempted from the protection of international law, had expressly forbidden *"the taking of collective sanctions against localities from which opposition stemmed"*.[10] The guidelines also tore up previous provisions of the Army's own "Ten Commandments" which, to some degree contradicting harsher German military traditions, had stipulated that guerrillas would be allowed a fair military trial before any execution was carried out, and that only a divisional or "independent" regimental commander could authorise the execution of hostages in reprisals.[11] That the new provisions were deeply terroristic was precisely the point, however; the population's fear of German measures must be greater than their fear of Bolshevik measures.[12] At the same time, whilst much of this package of criminality constituted a blank cheque for brutality, it did not explicitly *order* certain measures to be taken. Echoing the "charismatic leadership" principle which characterised the Third Reich as a whole, it left much leeway in terms of the specific action which officers on the spot could take.

The divisions were also to lend material and logistical support to the SD *Einsatzgruppen* that were to follow on the heels of the invading armies at various points along the Soviet frontier.[13] The *Einsatzgruppen* were soon to be joined by two SS infantry brigades, the SS Cavalry Brigade, and a massive number of Order Police battalions. These units were in turn answerable to their regional SS commanders, the Higher SS and Police Leaders, but the campaign of 1941 was to see extensive co-operation between them and *Ostheer* units.[14] The brief of these units, initially the liquidation of potential "subversive elements", would within months if not weeks of the invasion expand to encompass the complete extermination of the Soviet Jews. *Ostheer* co-operation with these groups, though usually stopping short of participation in actual massacres, was to be extensive; indeed, the need to involve the *Einsatzgruppen* in particular in the *Ostheer*'s security effort was a further spur to such co-operation.[15]

Together, the criminal orders and the provisions for co-operation with other agencies constituted a blueprint for an excessively ruthless and ideologically-coloured security effort, formulated not only before the emergence of genuinely serious security problems but also before the first German troops had even crossed the border. Further potential for brutality, however, was inherent in the situation which the security divisions faced; much of this related to the composition of the divisions themselves.

3.3. The composition of the security divisions

At the outset each Army Group Rear Area was assigned three security divisions, but the areas would soon grow to such size that the divisions would become acutely overstretched. A normal German Army infantry division consisted of between 15 000 to 18 000 combat troops and various types of support troops; the security divisions of 1941, however, were about two-thirds that size.[16]

Most of the security divisions which operated during 1941 were made up of two basic troop types. The first were the combat troops (*Eingreiftruppen*), normally consisting of an infantry regiment drawn from a Category Three infantry division. This was one of the weaker types of division; its troops were mainly reservists aged over thirty who had undergone about three months' training, rather than the two years for divisions of the peace-time army, and its originally envisaged role as a defensive unit meant that it was far less mechanised than other divisions.[17] Despite these drawbacks, the *Eingreiftruppen* were a security division's best troops; apart from anything else, they were the only ones deemed fit for front-line duty, some having seen action in earlier *Blitzkrieg* campaigns. They were to operate as a mobile force capable of carrying out "active" security operations.[18] The other main body of troops were the *Landesschützen-* and *Wach-Bataillone* which made up the division's security troops (*Sicherungstruppen*). These were composed mainly of older soldiers considered unfit for front-line work. Theirs was the task of "passive security", the guarding of the installations and routes cited above[19] - although reality would increasingly compel them to carry out active operations also. In equipment and training, too, they were inferior to the *Eingreiftruppen*.[20] Along with the size and topography of the areas for which they would be responsible, the partial increase in partisan activity from late summer on and the Army's traditional ruthlessness in security matters, the divisions' state of fighting power makes it easier to understand (albeit not condone) how their situation eventually provided a "bridge" for ideology to translate into excessive brutality.[21]

Also subordinate to each security division were its *Feld-* and *Ortskommandanturen*, static units based in particular towns and villages, which constituted the apparatus of day-to-day military administration. These were to work with native civilian officials to ensure that political and economic administration proceeded smoothly, and their contribution to the security effort involved among other things ensuring civilian co-operation in the anti-partisan effort and the rounding-up of Red Army fugitives. Security divisions could also draw on support from other types of unit, be they directly subordinate to the division itself or to the commander of the relevant Army Group Rear Area. Artillery, pioneers, and a company of military police (*Feldgendarmerie*) were at each division's disposal, and extensive assistance from the highly ruthless Secret Field Police (*Geheime Feldpolizei*) could also be counted upon. The GFP was not an Army organisation as such, but was composed of ex-civilian policemen. It had

responsibility for intelligence-gathering and for other security duties, most notably the "screening" of "suspect elements".[22]

This then was the set-up which characterised the *Ostheer* security divisions which went in to Russia in 1941. It now remains to outline the subsequent actions of the security division of primary concern here, the 221st.

3.4. The 221st Security Division's war, June - December 1941

At the outset, the 221st Security Division took on the role of a combat unit, and it was this brief period which saw the dramatic prelude to the division's tenure in General Max von Schenckendorff's Army Group Centre Rear Area. In late June, under its commander, Major-General Johann Pflugbeil, the division captured the city of Bialystok - a unique achievement for a unit equipped for security duties, but one which was to be sullied by implication in the massacre of over 2 000 of the city's Jews by the Order Police. Table 1 shows a time-line for the June to December 1941 period. It depicts the main events on the Eastern Front generally and in the security efforts which took place in the Army Group Centre area as a whole and in the 221st Security Division's jurisdiction specifically. It also shows the main changes in composition and leading personnel within the division.

6th July saw the start of the 221st's security duties, and from then to December, as the Army Group Centre Rear Area expanded eastward and the westernmost areas of the German-occupied Soviet Union came under civilian administration, the division's jurisdiction underwent constant alteration. The 221st, like the other Army Group Centre security divisions, saw duty in three different regions during 1941 - eastern Poland and western Byelorussia, both of which had been overrun by the Soviet Union in 1939, and eastern Byelorussia. Each had a politically and ethnically distinct make-up, and this was to influence relations between division and population and also between population and partisans. Common to all three areas - a fact which, for the Germans, was eventually to become unpleasantly apparent - was a geography perfectly suited to irregular warfare.[23] The region which eventually would be encompassed by the Army Group Centre Rear Area was overwhelmingly rural, with over four fifths of the population engaged in agriculture.[24]

Stationed in the southernmost part of the rear area, the 221st's tasks during early July were to pacify the area around Bialystok and the Bialowieza'er forest - so that Reich Marshal Göring could turn it into a massive game park - and to secure two major highways.[25] The 221st, in common with the Army security effort as a whole at this stage, encountered no

Table 1: Developments (June — December, 1941)

Year Month	Eastern Front	Security campaign in Army Group Centre	Security campaign of 221st Security Division	Composition of 221st Security Division
1941 June	Invasion of Soviet Union (22nd June) North: invasion of Baltic States. Centre: invasion of eastern Poland and western Byelorussia; rapid advance of General Guderian's Panzer units. South: invasion of eastern Poland, Moldavia and Ukraine.		Action as front-line division under VII Army Corps. Captures city of Bialystok (26th/27th). 2 000+ of Bialystok's Jews killed by Order Police under 221st's nose (27th).	Commander: General Pflugbeil Operations officer: Captain (later Major) Haupt 350th Inf. Rgt. (3 btlns.. Cdr.: Col. Koch) *Landessch.-Rgt.* 45 (4 btlns.. Cdr.: Lt.-Col. Mater) Reserve Police Battalion 309 (Cdr.: Major Weis) Security Rgt. 2 (2 btlns.. Cdr.: Col. Ronicke)
July	North: fighting in Baltic states; German failure to encircle and destroy Soviet armies. Drive on Leningrad. Centre: encirclement and destruction of Soviet armies in Bialystok-Nowogrodek and Mogilev pockets.	Stalin calls for *Vernichtungskrieg* against German rear. Increasingly ruthless security directives issued by German Armed Force High Command and Army High Command.	Under Army Group Centre Rear Area (from 3rd). Active in Bialowiezaer Forest area, eastern Poland (to 20th). Extension to line of Davidogrodek-Pinsk-Rozana-Zelwa-Luna, western Byelorussia (to 6th).	Security Rgt. 2 leaves division (11th July).
August	North: Leningrad cut off. Centre: 300 000 Soviet troops captured around Smolensk. Armoured divisions diverted to North and South - drive on Moscow postponed. Start of intensification of killing of Soviet Jews (beginning of "Final Solution").	Small increase in partisan activity.	Takes over former area of 252nd Inf. Div., eastern Byelorussia (16th). Relinquishes western part of jurisdiction to 707th Inf. Div. (23rd).	Reserve Police Battalion 309 leaves division temporarily (31st)
September	Kiev captured by Army Group South. Heavy German losses to Soviet counterattacks. Troops diverted from North and South back to Centre for drive on Moscow.	Increasingly high body count of recorded partisan dead; injections of "ideological ruthlessness" into security directives issued by German field commanders over following months.	Expansion of jurisdiction to Rivers Dnjepr and Ssosh (6th). Increasingly high recorded partisan body count from early September. 350th Inf. Rgt. carries out major encirclement of partisans with other units in area of Bobruisk-Minsk railway line (16th-18th). Relinquishes western part of jurisdiction to 339th Inf. Div. (20th).	*Partisanen-Bekämpfungs-Bataillon* formed (7th).

Table 1: Developments (June — December, 1941)

Year	Month	Eastern Front	Security campaign in Army Group Centre	Security campaign of 221st Security Division	Composition of 221st Security Division
	October	Kharkov captured by Army Group South. 650 000 Soviet troops captured in Vyazma pocket west of Moscow. Attempt to encircle Moscow begins. First snowfall.	Further increase in body count of recorded partisan dead (continues into November). Start of recruitment of indigenous population either as auxiliaries or members of eastern legions.	339th Inf. Div. takes over 221st's area west of Dnjepr (11th). Further eastward extension of divisional area (20th). Further intensification of killing in security effort from late October.	
	November	North: Soviet counterattacks from 11th near Tikhvin; Germans go on defensive (25th). Centre: New drive to take Moscow (from 15th).		Further eastward expansion of divisional area (1st).	Operations officer: Major Benke (from 1st) 192nd Inf. Rgt. joins division (6th).
	December	Mass death of Soviet POWs during winter months. German advance on Moscow halted (6.12); beginning of Soviet counter-attacks. Hitler issues "stand fast" orders; Germans pushed back but not forced into headlong retreat.	Many security units sent to front-line; partisans given breathing space to rebuild after earlier blows.	Transfer of divisional command and 350th Infantry Regiment to front-line (13th). Service in Orel region until 20th March 1942.	192nd Inf. Rgt. leaves division (12th).

armed bands to speak of; the Poles, occupied by the Red Army as they had been since 1939, seem to have proven well-disposed toward the invaders and more than willing to assist in handing over communist functionaries and Red Army stragglers. On 20th July the 221st's area of administration was greatly extended eastward to encompass an area containing 35 000 square kilometres,[26] but still there was no serious trouble and the division's grim duties proceeded apace in line with the security effort across the rest of the rear area. The term *Ortsfremden* was employed as a blanket label for all who posed a threat to security, including fugitive Red Army soldiers and refugees, among whom were large numbers of Jews. The division also enacted a raft of measures for the persecution of the Jews in its jurisdiction, and assisted other agencies, notably the SD and Order Police, in their "security" work. The *Kommissarbefehl*, too, was executed thoroughly.

By now the 221st was also operating into western Byelorussia, an ethnically diverse area composed mainly of Poles and White Russians. Despite the enmity which seethed between these ethnic groups, they were mostly distinctly anti-Soviet, their region also having been overrun by the Red Army only two years before. Sovietisation had barely got started, and the population was willing at least to co-operate with the German regime and see what changes it might herald. This helped assure security divisions a virtually trouble-free baptism into their occupation role; an absence of popular support for the Soviet regime blighted all initial attempts to establish effective underground resistance in western Byelorussia. Additional factors conspired also; Soviet military theoreticians had neglected irregular warfare during the 1930s, and so by 1941 the Soviet authorities had comprehensively failed to lay the groundwork for a partisan war.[27]

In the western regions the speed and suddenness of the German advance thwarted frantic attempts to throw some kind of effective effort together. The Soviets certainly could not hope to utilise the bands of fugitive Red Army soldiers who were at large in German-occupied territory; most were dispersed, disorganised and, more to the point, weaponless, remaining in hiding only for fear that they might be shot if taken prisoner.[28] There was therefore a lack of any serious partisan disruption. This, along with the cautiously amicable disposition of a population which for the most part was hoping for a better existence under the Germans than under Stalin, has led one historian to speak of the "bargain" with the population which the *Ostheer* had the opportunity of striking during the early weeks of the Russian campaign.[29] This relieved the *Ostheer* of the need to pursue the kind of coercive pacification which would have driven a destructive wedge between occupier and occupied, easing the task of security considerably. Instead its security effort at this stage was concentrated, with the help of the *Einsatzgruppen* and Order Police, on certain political and racial groups.[30]

On 3rd July, Stalin exhorted the Soviet people to rise up in the fascistic invader's rear, disrupt his lines of supply and communication, and employ every ruthless measure against him. He

depicted the Russo-German War as a struggle for the liberation not just of the Soviet Union itself but also of Nazi-controlled Europe. Hitler and the military leadership used Stalin's speech as an excuse to administer security directives with ever-greater injections of ruthlessness; three days later Hitler declared that here was an opportunity to annihilate anyone who stood in the Germans' way, even if all they were guilty of was giving a wrong look.[31] The OKW's Directive Number 33 of 23rd July urged the utmost use of terror to ensure that the civilian population would lose any inclination to resist. Further instructions, issued on 25th July by the Army's commander-in-chief, Field-Marshal von Brauchitsch, were intended as a direct response both to the discovery of the Soviet directives ordering the formation of sabotage groups in the German rear, and to what was perceived as a failure by German troops to conduct themselves with the requisite harshness. The first priority, declared Brauchitsch, was the security of the German soldier; harshness was the only means of ensuring this, and summary executions and the destruction of villages were urged as the only proper response to partisan attacks.[32] The fact that the Soviet side did indeed display considerable ruthlessness - though how far this was a response to German ruthlessness is an important point - was a further gift to Hitler and the military leadership.[33]

However, whilst such directives were intended to intensify the harsh approach urged in the criminal orders issued before the invasion, parallel efforts were made by field commanders such as General von Schenckendorff to counter some of the danger to discipline which excessively harsh measures posed. In August, for example, Schenckendorff forbade both the arbitrary destruction of villages and the shooting of surrendering Red Army soldiers.[34] Officers did take heed. Hence, whilst countless Byelorussian villages were wiped off the map in the course of the partisan war from 1941 to 1944, "only" three per cent were destroyed during 1941 - an awful figure in absolute terms, but negligible next to the welter of annihilation which would later be unleashed.[35] Nor was much attention paid to the particularly extreme provisions of the Hostage Decree, issued Europe-wide by the OKW on 16th September, which stated that the execution of fifty to a hundred civilians was a "fair exchange" for every German killed by the partisans. The extensive and ruthless involvement of the SD and Order Police in the security effort was a further factor which seems to have enabled the *Ostheer*, through the summer of 1941 at any rate, to keep its own bargain with the general population,. The reason was that the participation of these extra forces meant that the *Ostheer* did not feel the need to exercise the more general ruthlessness which it would later display.[36]

The immediate impetus for more murderous conduct, the imperative of "military necessity", started gathering pace around mid-August. At this point the 221st Security Division, relieved of the westernmost portion of its area by the civilian-administered Reich Commissariat Ostland, commenced occupation of an area incorporating Byelorussia's south-eastern region and part of neighbouring greater Russia as the German security effort underwent a general eastward expansion (see Figure 2 - Figure 1 shows the relation between this theatre of operation and the

wider geographical area).[37] The disruption and misery which the people of this region were enduring far exceeded what the population of western Byelorussia had undergone. In eastern Byelorussia, the Soviet authorities had had time to put into action Stalin's order to uproot and evacuate the fabric of industry and commerce, and with it thousands of specialist workers, civil servants, doctors and managers.[38] The population, those in urban areas especially, suffered horrendously from the mass unemployment and hunger which ensued. Hunger in turn unleashed mass foraging from the cities into the surrounding countryside which created enormous tension between the urban and rural populations.[39] In the midst of this chaos, the task falling to the Germans of ensuring effective local administration was largely hamstrung by the chronic lack of administrators which the evacuations had also caused.

Such confusion, along with the greater residue of communist sympathy amongst some of the population and the rural population's disappointment at continuing German failure to introduce agricultural reform, could only work to the advantage of the partisans. Moreover, the Soviet authorities in eastern Byelorussia had had time to lay the foundations for underground resistance, so it is no surprise that during this period the 221st recorded the first instances of trouble caused by partisan activity. The level of absolute damage which the partisans inflicted upon supply routes and personnel was at this stage pitiful, and the partisan groups themselves would soon start to disintegrate,[40] but the partisans remained a source of severe uncertainty for a population still more inclined toward the German cause. This took place, moreover, at a time when the difficulties of rear area security and the growing realisation that victory was not imminent meant that productive relations with the population were assuming greater importance for the German occupiers. Consequently General von Schenckendorff was at pains to distinguish between the partisans and the Soviet people as a whole:

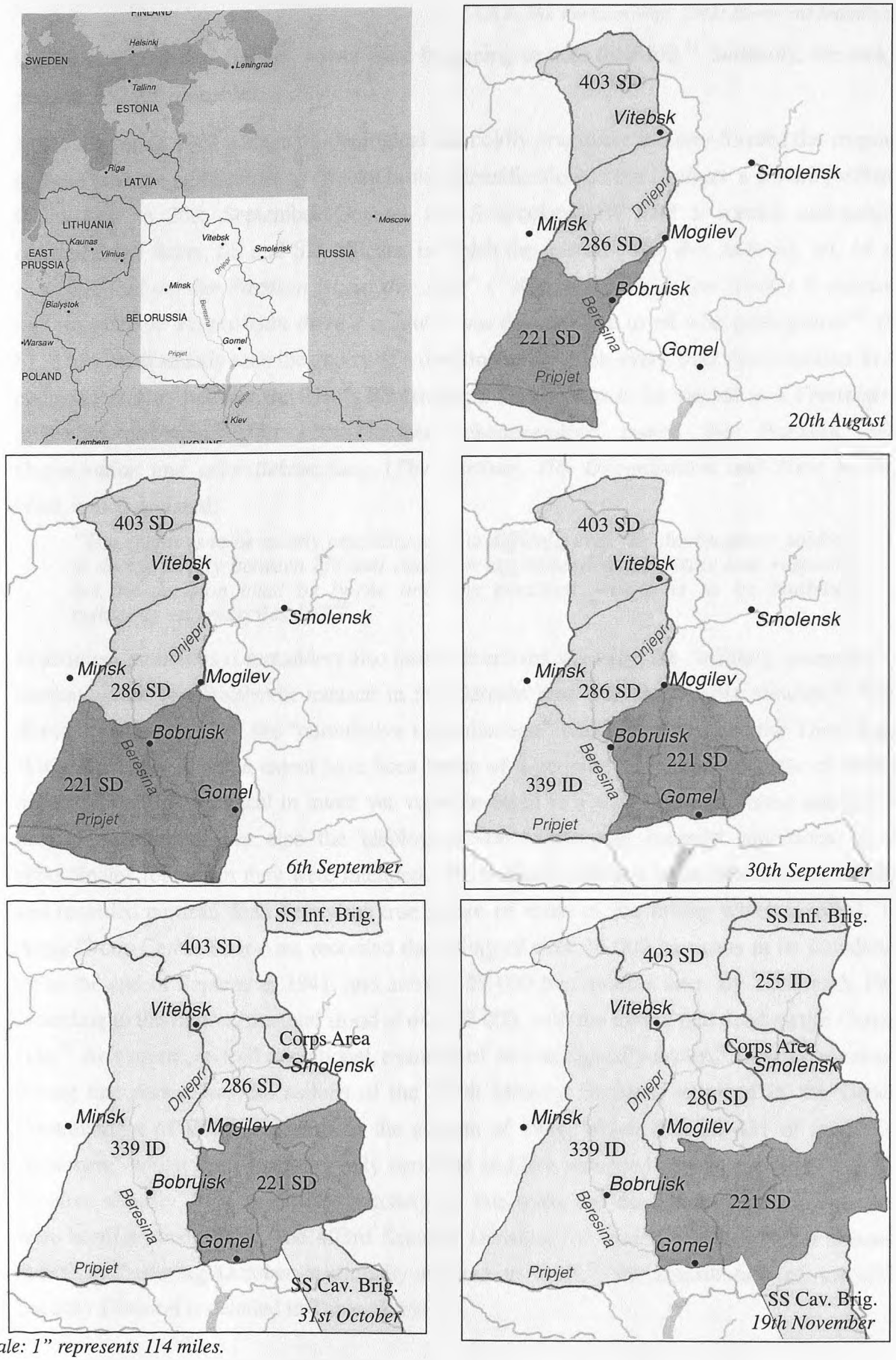
> *"The partisan movement is a menace to the lives and property of its own compatriots. The Russian people, the farmers in particular, rejects these terror tactics. The current partisan war is a war not for the people, but for Bolshevism."*[41]

Pleas such as this were mirrored by concrete measures. In October moves were made to establish networks of civilian informers to aid the security effort,[42] and there were also widespread attempts, initially in the teeth of opposition from Hitler, to recruit Soviet civilians and POWs into Eastern battalions (*Ost-Bataillone*) or various auxiliary formations for the same purpose.[43] For the sake of a workable administering of the rear areas, then, the partisans needed to be combated; this furthermore at a time when the inevitable strains upon



Scale: 1" represents 122 miles.

Figure 1: The Western Soviet Union and European neighbours, June 1941. The grey rectangle indicates the main area of operation of the Army Group Centre Rear Area from 1941 to 1943.



Scale: 1" represents 114 miles.

Figure 2: Changes of jurisdiction for the 221st Security Division and the Army Group Centre Rear Area, 20th August to 19th November 1941. There are no suitable maps for 1941 before or after this period. Dark grey denotes the 221st's area; light grey denotes the rest of the Army Group Centre Rear Area. These maps were based on photocopies taken from the 221st's operational files — NA T-315/1667, file 16748/10 & NA T-315/1668, files 16748/11 & 16748/12.

the security divisions' fighting power were beginning to take their toll.[44] Suddenly, the task of security had grown harder.

In the autumn of 1941 a range of ideological and coldly pragmatic motives formed the response to these emerging difficulties to effect a brutal intensification of the *Ostheer*'s security effort.[45] From 24th to 26th September General von Schenckendorff held a special anti-partisan conference of Army, SS and SD officers, in which the maxim *"Wo der Jude ist, ist, ist der Partisan, und wo der Partisan ist, ist der Jude"* (*"Where there's a Jew there's a partisan, and where there's a partisan there's a Jew"*) was drummed in to all who participated.[46] 16th September had already seen the expiry of a deadline after which every Red Army soldier in the occupied territory between the Rivers Beresina and Dnjepr was to be viewed as a *Freischärler* and shot on sight.[47] On 12th October Schenckendorff issued *Der Partisan, seine Organisation und seine Bekämpfung*, (*The Partisan, His Organisation and How to Fight Him*), which declared:

> *"The enemy is to be utterly annihilated. It is difficult, even for the toughest soldier, to decide swiftly between life and death for apprehended partisans and suspects, but the decision must be borne and any personal feeling is to be banished ruthlessly and mercilessly."*[48]

In addition, numerous commanders also issued directives stressing the "military necessity" of combating the Jew-Bolshevik menace in the German rear with the utmost severity.[49] These directives were typical of the "cumulative radicalisation" which characterised the Third Reich. Whilst they may to some extent have been borne of a genuine albeit warped sense of military necessity, they were radical in intent yet vague in detail in a way which exploited not just the military sensibilities but also the ideological convictions and careerist ambitions of the subordinates for whom they were intended. The massive contrasts between recorded German and recorded partisan dead betray the true nature of most of the killing which resulted. The Army Group Centre Rear Area recorded the killing of over 24 000 partisans in its jurisdiction up to the end of September 1941, and another 28 000 two months later. By 1st March 1942, according to the figures, the total stood at over 63 000, with the loss of 638 dead on the German side.[50] An extreme, indeed exceptional, example of an ideologically-driven "security measure" during that period was the actions of the 707th Infantry Division, stationed in the General Commissariat of White Ruthenia in the autumn of 1941, which shot 10 431 of its 10 940 "prisoners" whilst itself suffering only two dead and five wounded against partisans.[51] Whilst no other security division inflicted butchery on this scale, the death tolls which they exacted were horrific nonetheless. The 403rd Security Division, for example, killed over a thousand "partisans" during October at virtually no loss to itself;[52] the contribution of the 221st Security Division is detailed in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2: Prisoners, partisan dead, and suspect partisans/civilians captured or arrested by the 221st Security Division, with division's own losses, July to December 1941.[53]

Period	German dead	Partisan dead	Partisan prisoners	Suspect partisans/ *Partisanenhelfer* arrested
6.7. — 16.8.41	5	24	1155	101
17. — 23.8.	0	3	251	21
24. — 30.8.	5	9	556	—
31.8. — 6.9.	2	34	960	—
7. — 13.9.	2	64	478	4
14. — 20.9.	1	252	271	423
21. — 27.9.	1	28	95	104
28.9. — 4.10.	1	46	474	156
5. — 11.10.	1	100	832	409
12. — 18.10.	0	156	1687	928
19. — 25.10.	1	55	755	623
26.10. — 2.11.	0	224	1190	493
3. — 9.11.	2	273	620	490
10. — 16.11.	0	165	443	158
17. — 23.11.	7	315	702	36
24. — 30.11.	4	132	677	—
1. — 7.12	0	40	337	—
8. — 14.12.	11	61	334	—
TOTALS	**43**	**1981**	**11817**	**3946**

Table 3: Percentage of partisan dead from total of partisan dead and prisoners taken (221st Security Division).

Date:	Partisan dead.	Partisan dead & prisoners	Partisan dead as % of total dead & prisoner
6.7. — 16.8.41	24	1179	2
17. — 23.8.	3	254	1.2
24. — 30.8.	9	565	1.6
31.8. — 6.9.	34	994	3.4
7. — 13.9.	64	542	11.8
14. — 20.9.	252	523	48.2
21. — 27.9.	28	123	22.8
28.9. — 4.10.	46	538	8.6
5. — 11.10.	100	932	10.7
12. — 18.10.	156	1843	8.5
19. — 25.10.	55	810	6.8
26.10. — 2.11.	224	1414	15.8
3. — 9.11.	273	993	27.4
10. — 16.11.	165	608	27.1
17. — 23.11.	315	1017	31
24. — 30.11.	132	809	16.3
1. — 7.12	40	377	10.6
8. — 14.12.	61	395	15.4

This then was the context in which the 221st, like other security divisions, unleashed carnage in its jurisdiction from September on; the impetus was reinforced by the merciless decisions which senior divisional officers themselves made, in accordance with both the situation and their perception of it. Further intensification of the 221st's anti-partisan effort, partly in response to an increase in genuine partisan activity, set in from late October on.

Shortages in time, manpower and equipment nonetheless prevented the 221st, like other security divisions, from destroying the partisans before the winter set in. In mid-December the SD reported that the partisans in eastern Byelorussia were still causing considerable disruption, if not to the war effort itself then certainly to the population. With the onset of winter they had stepped up plundering of villages in order to supply themselves, and were operating far from their bases in order to keep the locations secret.[54] For the Germans it was a portent of the vastly more difficult security situation which they would face the following year.

3.5. Conclusion

The 221st Security Division's experiences in many ways reflected the wider German "pacification" experience in the Soviet Union during 1941. Deficiencies in manpower and the magnitude of the task which the *Ostheer*'s security units had been set certainly made for a daunting situation, but the ferocity of the *Ostheer*'s response to its situation, especially after September 1941, cannot be explained alone by the argument that the response was necessary in the circumstances. Rather, it was shaped by a mixture of "perceived necessity", borne not just of reality but also of ruthless military perceptions of it, and ideology.

Complex though this explanation is, the next two chapters show that the reality in the field was more complex still. Closer analysis of the 221st Security Division during 1941 shows how conduct was shaped by an interaction of these more general forces with an array of circumstances and mind-sets specific to individual units. The following chapter illustrates how this phenomenon worked during the summer of 1941.

Endnotes to Chapter 3

[1] Hillgruber, *Hitlers Strategie*; Förster, J., "Hitlers Entscheidung".

[2] Förster, J., "Unternehmen "Barbarossa"", pp. 498-506.

[3] Müller, R.-D., "Wirtschaftsallianz"; idem., "Das Scheitern", pp. 1168-1202; Gerlach, *Krieg, Ernährung, Völkermord*, pp. 13-30.

[4] Hillgruber, "Endlösung", p. 140.

[5] For a detailed treatment of the German military planning for Barbarossa and the subsequent campaign, see: Klink, "Konzeption", pp. 246-363; idem., "Operationsführung", pp. 541-736. A very readable introduction to the entire military campaign is: Seaton, *Russo-German War*.

[6] BA-MA, RH 26-221/7. Oberkommando des Heeres GenStdH/Ausb. Abt. (Ia), 21.3.41. "Richtlinien für die Ausbildung der Sicherungsdivisionen und der dem Befehlshaber des rückwärtigen Heeres-Gebiets unterstehenden Kräfte", p. 1.

[7] Ibid., p. 2.

[8] The full texts of the three directives, along with the slight modifications inserted by the Army's commander-in-chief, Field Marshal von Brauchitsch, to guard against possible damage to discipline, are reproduced in: Wette and Ueberschär (eds.), *Überfall*, pp. 251-4, 258-60. On the formulation of the "criminal orders", see: Jacobsen, "Kommissarbefehl"; Krausnick, "Kommissarbefehl und "Gerichtsbarkeitserlaß Barbarossa"; Streit, *Keine Kameraden*, pp. 33-50; Förster, J., "Das Unternehmen "Barbarossa"", pp. 506-25.



[9] Förster, J., "Unternehmen "Barbarossa"", p. 525.

[10] Cooper, *Phantom War*, p. 48. At the "Hostage Trial" of former German generals in Nuremberg, the Allies drew up a series of the criteria for reprisal-taking which German troops had consistently failed to observe. Reprisals, it was asserted, were to be carried out only under the following conditions:

i) it had not proved possible to apprehend the actual perpetrators of an attack;

ii) the population as a whole had been party to the offence; that is to say, that it had supported the partisans;

iii) ideally, those selected for reprisal had actively assisted the committing of the attack;

iv) those selected had been drawn from the area where the attack had taken place;

v) judicial proceedings had been carried out;

vi) the reprisal was conducted as a last resort, after other measures such as curfews had failed.

IWM, TWCNMT Vol. 11, pp. 1230-1317; ZSt, *Geisel- und Partisanentötungen*, pp. 48-55.

[11] Fattig, *Reprisal*, p. 21; Bonwetsch, "Sowjetische Partisanen", p. 47.

[12] Umbreit, "Problem", p. 133.

[13] For the best treatment of the movements and activities of the *Einsatzgruppen* in 1941, see: Krausnick and Wilhelm, *Die Truppe*; Ogorreck, *Einsatzgruppen*; Wilhelm, *Einsatzgruppe A*; Klein (ed.), *Einsatzgruppen*; Longerich, *Politik*.

[14] On the SS brigades, see: Büchler, "Kommandostab"; Birn, "Two Kinds of Reality"; on the Higher SS and Police Leaders: Birn, *Die Höheren SS- und Polizeiführer*; on the Order Police: Lichtenstein, *Grüne Helfer*. For a thorough treatment of the involvement of all three in the unfolding of the Final Solution in the Soviet Union during 1941, see: Longerich, *Politik*, pp. 293-418. The Order Police have also been the subject of a number of case studies. See: Kwiet, "Auftakt"; Browning, *Ordinary Men*; Angrick et al., "Tagebuch"; Goldhagen, *Willing Executioners*, pp. 181-280.

[15] Richter, "Die Wehrmacht", p. 841.

[16] See: Hesse, *Partisanenkrieg*, pp. 80-2. An indispensable "directory" of all German Army units down to regimental, *Feldkommandantur* and *Ortskommandantur* level, which among other things lists the composition and movements of divisions, is the 17-volume work by Georg Tessin. Tessin, *Verbände*.

[17] Müller-Hillebrand, *Das Heer*, vol. 1, pp. 68-72, Kroener, "Personellen Ressourcen", pp. 709-15.

[18] BA-MA, RH 26-221/7. Oberkommando des Heeres GenStdH/Ausb. Abt. (Ia), 21.3.41. Richtlinien für die Ausbildung der Sicherungsdivisionen und der dem Befehlshaber des rückwärtigen Heeres-Gebiets unterstehenden Kräfte", pp. 4, 6.

[19] Ibid., pp. 3-5.

[20] Hesse, *Partisanenkrieg*, pp. 80-2.

[21] See above, pp. 6-7.

[22] On the GFP, see: Geßner, *Geheime Feldpolizei*, and its updated summary, "Gestapo der Wehrmacht". With abundant material from post-war criminal investigations of former GFP members, conducted by both the West and East German authorities, there is much potential for low-level case studies of GFP units along the lines of Christopher Browning's *Ordinary Men*.

[23] In Byelorussia two million hectares were covered by forests and swamps. Schulte, *German Army*, p. 47.

[24] Schulte, *German Army*, pp. 43-5. Schulte quotes from a contemporary German translation of *Ekonomitscheskaja Geografija SSSR* (Economic Geography of the Soviet Union) from 1939.

[25] NA T-315/1667, file 16748/9. RHGeb. Mitte Abt. Ia, 18.7.41.

[26] NA T-315/1666, file 16748/7. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 20.7.41. KTB, 6.5.-13.12.41.

[27] Slepyan, *Avengers*, pp. 25-50.

[28] Shooting of Soviet prisoners by German soldiers during the opening weeks of the campaign was widespread and greatly complicated the task of mopping-up. An order issued by General von Schenckendorff on 16th August strictly forbade such practices among his security units. Heer, "Die Logik", p. 106, footnote 5. How

widespread the phenomenon was in the case of particular security divisions is impossible to quantify as it took place at a level below the attention scan of divisional offices.

[29] Förster, J., "The Relationship", p. 94.

[30] Idem., "Das nationalsozialistische Herrschaftssystem", p. 42.

[31] Idem., "Die Sicherung", p. 1233.

[32] Ibid., pp. 1234-5.

[33] Förster, J., "Wehrmacht, Krieg und Holocaust", p. 953.

[34] Heer, "Die Logik", pp. 105, 107; NA T-315/1666, file 16748/7. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 2.9.41. KTB, 6.5.-13.12.41.

[35] Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*, p. 801. The limitations of the sources used in this thesis prevent the compilation of reliable equivalent figures for the 221st specifically.

[36] Ibid., p. 802.

[37] See Figure 2.

[38] On the evacuations and uprooting of industry by the Soviet authorities in Byelorussia, see: Gerlach, *Kalkulierte Morde*, pp. 371-85.

[39] In October, the SD reported that the urban population perceived the Germans as caring markedly more about the situation of the rural population. NA T-175/234. Der Chef der Sipo etc., 7.10.41. EM Nr. 106, p. 5.

[40] On the major degree to which partisan groups were nonetheless stifled in their effectiveness and destroyed during the autumn of 1941, see: Mavrogordato and Ziemke, "Polotsk Lowland", pp. 527-32; Cooper, *Phantom War*, pp. 11-18; Wilenchik, *Partisanenbewegung*, pp. 150-78. Almost certainly the main reason for the partisans' failure at this stage was lack of support from the wider population. Schulte, *German Army*, p. 121. Even as early as 25th July 1941, however, the Army High Command had recognised them as constituting a danger to supply lines. Cooper, *Phantom War*, p. 15. On rising partisan numbers and activity in the late summer and autumn of 1941, see: Hesse, *Sowjetische Partisanenkrieg*, pp. 113-17; Wilenchik, *Partisanenbewegung*, pp. 150-78; Slepyan, *Avengers*, pp. 36-50.

[41] Translated from: *"Die Partisanenbewegung macht vor dem Leben und Gut der eigenen, unbeteiligten Volksgenossen nicht Halt. Das russische Volk, insbesondere der Bauer, lehnt diese aus dem Terror geborene Kampfesart ab. Der heutige Partisanenkampf ist ein Kampf für den Bolschewismus, er ist keine Volksbewegung."* NA T-501/2, file 14684/3. RHGeb. Mitte Abt. Ia, 12.10.41. "Der Partisan, seine Organisation und seine Bekämpfung", p. 14.

There were similar calls to cultivate the population from other field commands. In October for example the 2nd Army urged that the population be treated decently as a means of ensuring its co-operation against the partisans, and that villages should be burned down only in "exceptional" cases. Förster, J., "Die Sicherung", p. 1239.

[42] Hesse, *Partisanenkrieg*, p. 121.

[43] Förster, J., "Die Sicherung", pp. 1253-8.

[44] Ibid., "Die Sicherung", p. 1253.

[45] See below, pp. 82-3 for further discussion of these.

[46] Förster, J., "Die Sicherung", p. 1240.

[47] Ibid., p. 1236.

[48] Translated from: *"Der Feind muß vollständig vernichtet werden. Die ununterbrochene Entscheidung über Leben und Tod gestellter Partisanen oder Verdächtiger ist auch für den härtesten Soldaten schwer. Es muß gehandelt werden. Richtig handelt, wer unter vollkommener Hinansetzung etwaiger persönlicher Gefühlsanwandlungen rücksichtslos und unbarmherzig zupackt."* NA T-501/2, file 14684/3. RHGeb. Mitte Abt. Ia, 12.10.41. "Der Partisan, seine Organisation und seine Bekämpfung", p. 14.

[49] On the ideologically-coloured orders issued by Field Marshal von Reichenau, Field Marshal von Manstein and General Hoth, see: Förster, J., "Die Sicherung", pp. 1246-50.

[50] Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*, p. 806.

[51] Förster, J., "Die Sicherung", p. 1252. Whilst Christian Gerlach has assigned partially economic motives for the massacres perpetrated by the 707th - the desire, in the wake of growing food and accommodation shortages for the population, to cull several thousand Jews - there can be little doubt that the particularly fanatical ideological proclivities of the divisional commander and his operations officer played a major role in facilitating such murderous conduct. Most of the division's victims were after all Jews. On the 707th in the autumn of 1941, see: Heer, "Killing Fields", pp. 69-73; Hilberg, "Wehrmacht und Judenvernichtung", p. 34; Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*, pp. 562-79; Förster, "Wehrmacht, Krieg und Holocaust", pp. 958-9.

[52] Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*, p. 557.

[53] The division's losses, not including the wounded, constituted 2.2% of partisan losses. They constituted 5.4% including the wounded.

The main source for the figures of both tables is the divisional *Tagesmeldungen*, which were sent on a daily basis to General von Schenckendorff's office. The total figures of partisan dead recorded in the divisional *Kriegstagebuch* is about 400 lower than the figure which the *Tagesmeldungen* give. There is a risk in selecting the higher figure, as it is no doubt attributable in part to some cooking of the books. The higher figure was chosen for this table because it was felt that the shortfall in the KTB was due in part to a simple lack of systematic reporting of partisan casualties and prisoners which was common for 1941 (see above, Section 2.5.1.). Some of the gaps are quite striking; in the KTB, for example, there are hardly any prisoners recorded for August. NA T-315/1666, file 16748/7. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia KTB, 6.5.-13.12.41; NA T-315/1671, file 16748/16. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 20.5.-14.12.41. Tagesmeldungen an RHGeb. Mitte.

[54] NA T-175/234. Der Chef der Sipo etc., 15.12.41. EM Nr. 146, p. 9.

CHAPTER 4: SUMMER 1941

The behaviour of the 221st Security Division during the relatively "quiet" summer of 1941 was not marked by the mass killing which was to characterise it that autumn. That said, the attitudes both ideological and military which in large part were to drive that killing were all too clear during the summer months. This chapter considers how they might have originated, and how they manifested themselves in conduct which even at this stage could be excessively ruthless.

4.1. The ideological dimension: the *"Jude gleich Bolschewik gleich Partisan"* equation[1]

That the German officer corps *as an institution* harboured deep antagonism toward Jews and Bolshevism, and a view which linked the two together, seems clear.[2] More complex is the issue of how far individual officers in the field not only subscribed to this belief but also allowed it to influence their behaviour in the security effort.

How far, and why, did officers genuinely believe that Jews, as the principal carriers of Bolshevism, were indeed actively supporting a burgeoning partisan movement? If officers genuinely subscribed to the Jew-Bolshevik-partisan link, they might have arrived at this view through motives which, though misguided and ideologically-coloured, contained at least a grain of military sense borne of concern for security.[3] On the other hand how far do the facts support Hannes Heer's argument that ideological conviction drove many officers to use the *imaginary threat* of a burgeoning partisan movement as an excuse to blood their troops in an all-exterminating race war?[4] In considering where a particular security division and its individual officers stood it is important to examine every aspect of their anti-Bolshevism and anti-Semitism, not just those relating to the anti-partisan effort. How sufficient was the well of anti-Bolshevik and anti-Semitic hatred for a campaign based purely on race and ideology, and how far, conversely, were officers persuaded on other "pragmatic" or careerist grounds?

Before considering the intricacies of the 221st Security Division's anti-Bolshevism and anti-Semitism during the summer of 1941, it needs to be understood that, *as an institution if not as individual officers*, the division solidly propagated the view from the outset that "Jewish Bolshevism" did indeed lie behind every challenge to security in the German rear. The body with direct responsibility for co-ordinating the division's anti-partisan effort, and for injecting it with such a notion, was Major Karl Haupt's operations section.[5] Haupt was propagating the notion as early as 8th July, two days after the division had begun its security duties, when no significant challenge to German authority yet existed.[6] He wrote:

> *"It has been firmly established that, wherever Jews live, the cleansing of the area encounters difficulties. For the Jews support the training of partisan groups and the destabilising of the area by escaped Russian soldiers. The immediate and*

complete evacuation of all male Jews from the villages north of Bialowieza has therefore been ordered."[7]

What happened to these Jews is not specified, but even if they were not killed immediately their eventual extermination by the SD or Order Police was virtually inevitable. Haupt seems on the basis of this to have been the kind of officer whom Hannes Heer believes would have had no qualms about disguising a campaign of racial and ideological annihilation in the trappings of anti-partisan warfare once the opportunity arose.[8] How far this was actually the case is considered later in the chapter. Regardless of Haupt's precise motives in plugging such a viciously ideological line, however, it is not easy to generalise from his behaviour to that of the whole division. This becomes clear when scrutinising the 221st's anti-Bolshevik and anti-Semitic motives and actions during the summer of 1941.

4.1.1. Anti-Bolshevism, and the division's response to Soviet brutality.

Certainly the top levels of the 221st Security Division displayed apparently compelling evidence of anti-Bolshevism during the summer of 1941. Firstly there is no indication, either in the divisional files or in the SD reports, that the 221st's division-level officers supplied anything but the fullest co-operation in the SD's liquidation of commissars in the POW camps in the division's area. This, conforming as it does to a similar pattern across *Ostheer* security divisions, comes as no surprise.[9] Up to mid-July, moreover, the division's files record the shooting of commissars by its own troops.[10]

Who set the agenda for the 221st's conduct of the *Kommissarbefehl*? Almost certainly General Pflugbeil, as divisional commander, would have played a pivotal role. There is evidence, furthermore, that Pflugbeil had at least one fellow traveller at the division's higher levels. On 6th September, Lieutenant Helmut Meyer's[11] intelligence section issued a decree designed to thwart any attempt by captured commissars to evade what was coming to them. In the face of imminent execution, a number had been protesting their innocence by claiming they had been responsible only for training and morale rather than political indoctrination. Meyer rubbished this claim, maintaining that the commissars in question had been unable to demonstrate any of the necessary military knowledge,[12] and he urged the utmost vigilance in ensuring that commissars were identified as such and given the according treatment.

Further down the divisional structure, however, the picture is less clear. It is almost certain that anti-Bolshevism amongst the division's officers existed to an at least considerable degree from the outset of the campaign. As well as the conduct of the *Kommissarbefehl*, the divisional *Kriegstagebuch* (war diary) and communiqués from subordinate units show clearly that communists were being identified as a security threat, and were being shot for agitation accordingly.[13] How representative such instances were of the whole division, however, is difficult to gauge. It is also possible that communists were targeted less for ideological reasons than out of the more expedient motive of keeping the general population sweet. The 221st

would scarcely have been the only unit to act so calculatingly; for example, LI Army Corps, inspired by an OKH directive of 12th July, ordered its troops to select hostages from communist and ethnic minority circles so as not to antagonise the wider population.[14]

There are reasons for supposing however that, even if the anti-Bolshevism of some officers was not especially intense at the outset of the campaign, it was likely to become so in response to the conditions of the war in the East. For one thing, the *Kommissarbefehl* and other criminal orders lent anti-Bolshevism its own dynamic, for a Red Army commissar who could expect no mercy if captured would, naturally, resist with all his fury and try to terrorise his men into doing likewise. Time and again, therefore, German troops and officers came up against Red Army units which resisted them with animal-like ferocity.[15] Such experiences reinforced existing anti-Bolshevik hatreds and may even have created new ones. Certainly the Army's own propaganda exploited such sentiments for all they were worth, as the following, oft-quoted extract from the *Mitteilungen für die Truppe* ("Memos for the Troops") clearly shows:

> *"Anyone who has ever looked at the face of a red commissar knows what the Bolsheviks are like....We would insult the animals if we described these mostly Jewish men as beasts. They are the embodiment of the Satanic and insane hatred against the whole of noble humanity....The masses, whom they have sent to their deaths by making use of all means at their disposal such as ice-cold terror and insane incitement, would have brought to an end all meaningful life, had this eruption not been dammed at the last moment."*[16]

Fear of Bolshevism may also have been strengthened by contact with the civilian population; as the 221st's occupation duties took it into eastern Byelorussia, it became more apparent that communist ideology enjoyed some following among the population. Lieutenant Meyer, for one, recognised that despite anti-Bolshevik sentiments among the population in general, Soviet ideology had taken root among much of the Russian youth, and that co-operation from this source therefore was far from guaranteed.[17]

Soviet brutality and underhand methods may also have played their part in shoring up anti-Bolshevik sentiment. The 221st does not itself seem to have had first-hand experience of any of the atrocities such as the torture and mutilation of German prisoners which Hitler and the generals were so fond of citing. It is virtually certain, however, that second-hand accounts of the undoubtedly worse atrocities committed against German troops elsewhere in Russia had already seared themselves into the minds of the division's officers and men[18] The effect would have been reinforced by directives such as that issued by Field-Marshal von Brauchitsch on 25th July, which made particular play of Bolshevik bestiality.[19]

As well as considering reasons for anti-Bolshevik ruthlessness which go beyond already-existing ideological conviction, it is worth noting one incident which suggests that not all officers in the 221st were keen to follow an anti-Bolshevik lead. On 26th July, Army Group Rear Area command wrote to the division ordering the immediate handing-over of 20 communists to the SD. The communists, it transpired, had contrary to instructions been held in

prison by one of the division's units.[20] It is difficult to know quite what to make of this affair, but it does seem that the mind of at least one officer was not so poisoned by anti-Bolshevism that he did not still believe partisan suspects should be dealt with in a just and proper manner. It is easy to exaggerate the significance of this incident, but it is another indication that sweeping generalisations should not be made. Whether this officer's actions were borne of pragmatism - an early realisation that criminal treatment of commissars could only stiffen resistance - or of humanity remains unclear; the official nature of the sources means that the 221st's files are silent on the particular matter of motivation. The differentiated nature of the picture needs however to be acknowledged.

As will become clear, this differentiated picture has important implications for analysing the causes of the eruption of killing in the division's anti-partisan effort that autumn. Similarly complex, meanwhile, was the make-up of the 221st's anti-Semitism during summer 1941.

4.1.2. The division's campaign against the Jews

It would be improper, if not immoral, to play down the role which the 221st Security Division played in the extermination of Soviet Jewry during the summer of 1941. Like other security divisions it rendered extensive assistance to the *Einsatzgruppen* and other agencies involved in mass killings and was therefore party to a massive criminal undertaking, one which it does not seem to have entered into reluctantly. As Lieutenant Meyer wrote at the beginning of September:

> *"The division did everything in its power to pacify its jurisdiction. An essential precondition was the total* Beseitigung *of the treacherous, subversive and rabble-rousing Jews."*[21]

The active anti-Semitism which the 221st Security Division displayed during the summer of 1941 seems, however, to have been almost as complex as it was immoral, driven as it seems to have been by forces such as self-interest and moral weakness as well as by ideological belief. It could only have taken place in the kind of twisted moral environment which deemed it morally acceptable, but this does not detract from the fact that explaining it is far from simple. The aftermath of the battle of Bialystok is the scene for the grisly opening act.

The massacre of Bialystok's Jews, 27th June 1941

On 27th June 1941, in the aftermath of the taking of Bialystok, 2 000 to 3 000 Jewish men, women and children were massacred by Police Battalion 309, an Order Police unit, at that time subordinated to the 221st, which had been charged with cleansing the city of escapees and potentially subversive elements. The massacre which followed was carried out on the initiative of some of the unit's junior officers who, fervent in their National Socialist and anti-Semitic beliefs and drunk on triumph and liquor after the fall of the city, rampaged through Bialystok's Jewish quarter. Men of 3rd Company roamed through the streets killing residents indiscriminately, whilst the commander of 1st company ordered his unit to shoot systematically

hundreds of the Jews in its area of jurisdiction. Probably almost 2 000 Jews perished in the shootings. A further 500 to 700 were herded into the synagogue and burned alive.[22]

The massacre seems to have taken place, with barely a murmur of protest, under the 221st Security Division's nose. Major Haupt justified the burning of the synagogue in the most grotesque terms: *"It was established clearly that the synagogue was set alight because shots were fired from it."*[23] No less nauseating is the attitude of General Pflugbeil himself, who saw fit to put a stop to the shootings only when they were taking place literally outside his own HQ.[24] If Pflugbeil did not necessarily approve of the massacre with wholehearted enthusiasm, his moral failure on this occasion was nonetheless remarkable. Indeed, subsequent events suggest that many officers positively approved of the motives behind the slaughter; units of the 350th Infantry Regiment and *Wach-Battailon* 701, for example, indulged themselves in humiliating the city's surviving Jews, setting them to work toppling monuments to Lenin and Stalin in full view of the town's population.[25] A flavour of this method of degradation is provided by a letter from Gunner Heinz B. to his parents, in which he jovially describes similar events which took place in the Baltic town of Libau under supervision of the 291st Infantry Division:

> *"All the town Jews were got together and put in a room which the Bolsheviks had used for their conferences. This room was stuffed full of oversized portraits and busts of Stalin and co., and all sorts of Soviet symbols and paraphernalia. The Jews had to carry the lot out and walk in procession through the town streets to the River Windau, where a pyre was lit and the Jews, naturally, were made to feed the flames with all the stuff they'd been carting. Today we had half a dozen Jewesses peeling potatoes for us - another job we don't have to bother ourselves with any more!"*[26]

The conduct of officers throughout the 221st Security Division at Bialystok was reprehensible. It may be, however, that there was more to it than undiluted ideological belief. Granted, the way in which the men of the 350th Infantry Regiment and *Wach-Bataillon* 701 were authorised to humiliate the city's Jews suggests that the officers of these units were indeed fired by gratuitous anti-Semitism. Less straightforward however was the conduct of General Pflugbeil.

Born in 1882, Pflugbeil hailed from an age cohort of officers which to some extent retained an "old-fashioned aftertaste". Even in June 1941, by which time the reservations about SS methods in Poland were long forgotten, these more traditional sentiments might have been expected to provoke at least some disapproval of the kind of wild excess which the policemen perpetrated in Bialystok.[27] If nothing else, Pflugbeil should have realised that the discipline of his own troops was endangered by the spectacle unfolding under the 221st's nose.[28] So potent moreover was the combination of inebriation and anti-Semitic hatred which possessed the policemen that the savage and indiscriminate nature of the massacre which they perpetrated was without parallel among SS and Police units at such an early stage in the campaign.[29] This means that Pflugbeil could perhaps have intervened sooner without fear of reprimand from either the SS or higher military offices.[30] That he failed to do so suggests either a particularly

extreme anti-Semitic fanaticism or a kind of moral cowardice. Such cowardice was augmented by a measure of ideological agreement and by diminished critical faculties in the wake of Hitler's military successes of 1940. It was certainly displayed by other *Ostheer* units through their non-intervention in the anti-Semitic pogroms carried out under their noses by local militias during the first weeks of the invasion.[31]

Pflugbeil's particular motives are considered later in the chapter. If however moral cowardice did indeed lie behind Pflugbeil's non-intervention on this occasion, it may also have eased the process of barbarisation within the 221st itself by lowering the threshold of what was deemed permissible. Ideological conviction on its own, then, was not necessarily sufficient explanation for the harshness of the 221st's anti-Semitic conduct during 1941. This becomes even more apparent when considering the other anti-Semitic measures which the division employed that summer.

Discrimination, exploitation, co-operation with the SD and reprisal-taking

The grim details of the 221st's persecution of the Jews in its jurisdiction are easily established. Supplements to the files of the division's intelligence section report how a comprehensive raft of discriminatory measures were enacted against the Jews, whilst other documents, generated by *Feldkommandantur* 528 (V), describe these measures in detail. Among this unit's numerous occupation duties was that of *Judengesetztzgebung* (framing "Jew laws"), which included supervision of *"Jewish councils, marking the Jews out, banning ritual slaughter, putting the Jews to work, criminal penalties* (for Jews), *confiscation of Jewish property,"* and *"accommodation of Jews in special areas."*[32] By early September the *Feldkommandantur* had followed these measures up by interning all Jewish women between 17 and 50, allegedly for fear that they might be assisting the partisans - most of the men, skilled workers aside, having already been killed by the Order Police.[33] In October, this treatment was extended to Gypsies.[34]

The division's persecution of the Jews nonetheless contained a dimension which was not so much ideological as cold and calculating, and this too needs to be considered. Its units at Bialystok and its *Feldkommandanturen* subsequently had both seized Jewish accommodation and property.[35] The 221st also exploited Jews for hard labour. The Jews from the evacuated villages north of Bialowieza, for example, were set to work improving the roads which bestraddled the division's jurisdiction. On 4th July Police Battalion 309 oversaw the improvement of a 300m long stretch of the Bialowieza-Pruzana road using a *Judenarbeitskommando* (Jewish work detail) of 150 men, the 350th Infantry Regiment supplying five officers with special expertise along with men from its pioneer section.[36] The division's administrative section fully endorsed such arrangements, and late in July issued its own order concerning the forced labour of Jews:

> *"Able-bodied males between 14 and 60 years old, females between 16 and 50. Use mayors' registration cards to gather them into labour gangs."*[37]

These practices were borne of pragmatism, however reprehensible its form. They are therefore a further indication of the difficulty involved in analysing the precise relationship between the division's anti-Semitic convictions and the course its security effort consequently took.[38] This becomes even clearer regarding matters of co-operation with the SD.

Co-operation between Army Group Centre units and the *Einsatzgruppen* during 1941 was by any measure extensive and its consequences devastating.[39] Both *Einsatzgruppen* and Army files constantly note the smooth and fruitful co-operation in the region during 1941,[40] and there is no indication that the 221st was any different in this respect. It would have provided various forms of practical support which made the murderous work of the *Einsatzgruppen* possible, and readily handed over "suspect elements". Comparing the 221st's degree of co-operation with that of another Army Group Centre security division, however, suggests that the 221st's anti-Semitism, for whatever reason, was on the whole not quite so strong as it might have been. It was the 286th Security Division, not the 221st, whose units were singled out for special praise by *Einsatzgruppe* B in a report of 24th July.[41] Another indication that there was more poisonous anti-Semitism throughout the 286th as a whole than the 221st was that the 286th's commander had to intervene personally to prevent his troops from taking part directly in the massacre of Jews.[42]

The importance of degree also emerges when considering the 221st's conduct of reprisals. During 1941 Army Group Centre units rarely carried out reprisals against the general Soviet population in retaliation for partisan attacks on German personnel. In part, this was due to a desire on the part of the OKH and many field officers to exploit the initial goodwill shown to the Germans by the Soviet population.[43] In turn, as has been pointed out, this further facilitated the killing of Jews in the name of security because it created an incentive to target such reprisals as were carried out upon selected population groups such as Jews.[44] Targeting Jews was justified by the claim that the Jews of a particular area had "supported" the partisans who had carried out a particular attack. Selecting Jews as reprisal victims, then, was a measure driven significantly by ideology, but not exclusively, callous and reprehensible though it was. It may have been the cold and calculating logic of it which prompted General Pflugbeil's order of 18th July for the seizure of hostages in Bialystok:

> *"Seizure of hostages (especially Jews), to be shot at the slightest sign of troublemaking."*[45]

Still unresolved, however, is the concrete extent to which the 221st's subordinate units actually carried out reprisal measures against Jews.

There is in fact only one recorded incident in which soldiers of the 221st shot significant numbers of Jews specifically as reprisal victims.[46] Despite this, there were a number of other instances both during and after the summer of 1941 in which conditions for reprisal were met,

but no reprisal was carried out either against Jews or anyone else. On 29th August, for example, a rail building was attacked by partisans and an official killed, and the following day an officer at a road-block was shot dead. However, though these two incidents met the conditions for reprisal, there is no report of reprisals having been carried out. A similar absence of reprisal-taking occurred on 23rd September, when a truck of *Wach-Bataillon* 701 was fired upon.[47]

Though such "non-reprisals" seem to have been common in 1941,[48] it would be wrong to put this down to a reluctance to kill Jews. It is more likely that a lack of Jews ready to hand compelled a unit to try to catch the real culprits of an attack, rather than risk antagonising the wider population by drawing reprisal victims from that source instead.[49] What is significant however about this instance is that, reprehensible though the targeting of Jews was in absolute terms, the actual scale of the reprisal was relatively restrained. On 1st September, *Wach-Bataillon* 701 shot 25 Jews in Suscha, Usakino and Raswada in response to an attack the day before in which 4 men had been killed and 1 wounded in an ambush on a supply wagon.[50] This was an appalling act of victimisation, but in comparison to some of the anti-Jewish reprisals which other security divisions carried out it was small-scale. The 454th Security Division, for example, shot 63 Jews in October 1941 in "reprisal" for an attack on a sugar factory at Chevrone in the northern Ukraine in which not one German soldier had actually been killed.[51]

The actions of the 454th at Chevrone went well beyond the needs of either security or currying favour with the population. Comparing it to the actions of *Wach-Bataillon* 701 does not morally exculpate the latter unit in the slightest, but it does again highlight the importance of *degree* in the anti-Semitism which possessed different officers and their units. The action of *Wach-Bataillon* 701 is yet another indication that, strong though it may well have been, anti-Semitism within the 221st Security Division as a whole did not reach the degree of intensity attained by that of some other units.

Quite what lay behind this somewhat less virulent degree of anti-Semitism is an issue which is considered later in the chapter. It is worth noting, however, that there were "shades" of anti-Semitism among *Ostheer* officer generally. This was clear from the apparent reservations about the treatment of Jews which at least a few officers expressed. In the Army Group South Rear Area, for example, the commander of the 444th Security Division wanted rations for Jews to be regulated uniformly so as to prevent the anti-Semitic Ukrainian population from depriving them. On another occasion a Colonel Groscurth of the 295th Infantry Division tried to prevent, unsuccessfully as it turned out, the shooting of Jewish children by the SD.[52]

Assessing why, how and how far anti-Bolshevism and anti-Semitism drove the 221st Security Division is a task which clearly is fraught with difficulty. Strong though both almost certainly were, there seem to have been variations both in cause and degree. These findings, as will be seen in the following chapter, have important implications for analysis of the division's killing

in the anti-partisan effort of autumn 1941. Before that, however, attention needs to focus on a set of influences which shaped ruthlessness from a rather different direction.

4.2. The "military" dimension

The second potential source of ruthlessness related to the immense practical difficulties which the security divisions faced, and the harsh military attitudes, albeit coloured by racism and ideology, which to a large extent predetermined a "hard-line" response to such problems.

4.2.1. Terrain, climate and fighting power

The geography problem

Jürgen Förster's study of the German pacification effort of 1941 stresses the daunting nature of the task of administering such vast areas as were placed under the security divisions' wing; the entire Army Group Centre Rear Area came to cover an area of roughly 145 000 square kilometres, about the same size as the federal German states of Bavaria, Baden-Württemberg, Rhineland-Palatinate and Hessen put together. At the end of July 1941 the 221st Security Division's jurisdiction alone, at 35 000 square kilometres, was almost as large as Baden-Württemberg.[53] The sheer practical difficulties of the security divisions' task, then, were immense. With forces at their disposal which were insufficient in both quality and quantity, they were responsible for garrisoning towns and villages; guarding supply routes, prison camps and POW columns, and pursuing active security operations across an enormous area.

One of the most detrimental aspects of administering an area of such size was the isolation of individual units, a phenomenon which in the case of the 221st Security Division is illustrated clearly, as it was in the case of other units, by the severe difficulties which were encountered in getting the divisional *Feldpost* to its intended recipients.[54] It was not only communications that suffered, however. Within smaller units isolation bred fear, for it increased the likelihood of casualties against partisans, particularly in the wooded and swampy areas which covered large tracts of the Army Group Centre Rear Area. According to Dallin et al., "(a)*mong the scant German forces responsible for the security of the vast alien areas, partisan activity, regardless of its military significance or failure, was bound to promote a state of nervousness and insecurity....The initial impact was greatest on the lower German ranks who came into physical contact with the partisans and the effects of their operations.*"[55] A vivid illustration of the likely state of mind and conduct to which this situation reduced the troops is provided by *Gefreiter* (corporal) Hans B. in a letter to his wife.

> "(The forests are teeming with danger). *Any snipers who fall into our hands are of course shot; their bodies lie everywhere. Sadly though many of our own comrades have been lost to their dirty methods. We're losing more men to the bandits than in the fighting itself.*

> *Hardly any sleep to be had. We're awake and alert almost every night; you have to be in case they attack suddenly. If the sentry drops his guard just once then it could be over for all of us. Travelling alone's out of the question."*[56]

Fear - along with frustration at the inability to capture partisans and, more commonly at this stage, Red Army stragglers - increased the propensity for brutality, and the 221st's files for summer 1941 do contain instances of brutality which seem explicable in these terms. One example was the actions of a company of *Landesschützen-Bataillon* 352 at the end of August. It was fired upon with the loss of 1 dead and, unable to catch the culprits, torched the nearest farmstead in reprisal and shot six of the male inhabitants.[57] In another incident, *Wach-Bataillon* 701 encountered a 30-strong group of Russian soldiers during an extensive operation around the areas of Bazewitschi and Klitschew. Two of the group were killed in combat and 11 prisoners taken, 9 of whom were reported as having been "shot trying to escape" - the usual cover-up for shooting prisoners out of hand, this time probably out of frustration that 17 of the enemy had escaped.[58]

Terrain, overstretch and isolation were not the only ways in which the severe difficulties of rear area security might translate into brutality. Another nest of problems was generated by the state of fighting power, be it in terms of equipment and manpower, discipline and morale, or mobility.

Fighting power

It was the 221st Security Division's *Landesschützen* who, unsurprisingly, were worst afflicted by problems of inferior arms and equipment. The 221st did claim in September that its *Landesschützen* units had performed considerably better than had those of the 213th Security Division, whose particularly miserable condition seems to have been the yardstick by which other security divisions measured themselves.[59] There are indications, however, that the 221st's *Landesschützen* were in absolute terms encountering ever-greater difficulties in fulfilling even the passive task of guarding supply routes. On 17th September, for instance, *Landesschützen-Regiment* 45 informed the division that it urgently needed better-equipped railway guards; of the eight men on duty in Teluscha, for example, only one man had a pistol and two men rifles.[60] The fact that *Landesschützen-Bataillone* were composed of personnel which were inferior even by security division standards probably lent particular potency to their exasperation at their inability to carry out their duties properly. Instances such as the brutality of *Landesschützen-Bataillon* 352 at the end of August were a possible outcome.[61]

The cumulative strains upon the rank-and-file inevitably affected discipline and morale within the 221st Security Division. There is no sign in the division's records that deteriorating discipline seriously afflicted overall fighting power during 1941, but by late summer signs of disquiet were creeping into discipline reports. On 29th August the operations section reported that officers and NCOs were lacking an eye for the finer details of fighting and marching. It

drew attention to how such apparently small details as the manner with which a unit arrived and left, how it carried its weapons, the condition of its trucks and the state of its uniforms all revealed a great deal about the state of discipline. It also ordered that a crisp, smart salute be cultivated, not just to officers but also among the rank-and-file itself.[62] Whilst there is no sign that discipline worsened beyond this point during 1941, it does seem that the rank-and-file of some units were by late summer being adversely affected by both the trials of their situation and probably also by the sheer boredom of it.[63]

The division made strenuous but not altogether successful attempts to bolster morale. The focal point was Lieutenant Meyer's intelligence section which, along lines pursued across the *Ostheer* in general, conducted a rigorous campaign of *geistige Betreuung* generating theatrical entertainment and films, civilian and military radio programmes, and written material of an often ideological nature.[64] Though such material was reportedly well-received by those troops to whom it could be provided, however, the vast distances involved created severe distribution problems. The popular *Nachrichten des OKW* (Armed Forces High Command News) often arrived weeks late, by which time its content was long out of date, and the lack of a mobile film truck meant that many units went for weeks without seeing a *Wochenschau* (weekly newsreel).[65] The division's campaign of *geistige Betreuung* therefore did not bolster morale to the extent that it might have done, and in this sense too the state of fighting power seems to have left something to be desired.[66]

All security divisions, founded as they had been on units which had previously been envisaged for garrison duty, were blighted by mobility problems to some extent.[67] The 221st Security Division was no exception; the 286th Security Division, for example, complained that sixty-five per cent of its trucks were of foreign make and plagued by breakdowns and a lack of replacement parts.[68] Until the beginning of September 1941 the 221st's mobility was in fact relatively high, due in no small measure to the presence of a major motorised element in the shape of Police Battalion 309. Indeed, when it was not massacring Jews on the streets of Bialystok this unit proved extremely valuable to the 221st, a fact which was not lost on General von Schenckendorff. The general's 15th August deadline for all remaining Soviet troops west of the Beresina to give themselves up was extended to 31st August, largely in the light of Police Battalion 309's success in co-operating with local headmen in the rounding up of fugitive Soviet troops. The battalion had held villagers and policemen equally responsible, and just so as to ensure the villagers' co-operation it had been arranged that truck-borne units of the battalion's 3rd Company would traverse the area making daily checks on the progress being made in each village. The result, it was claimed, had been an unqualified success, with 180 Soviet soldiers surrendering to the company over the following days.[69]

Motorisation was not uniform throughout the 221st, however, and this for many units was another aspect of the low fighting power that blighted them. It was the *Landesschützen-*

Bataillone who again were especially badly-off, possessing as they did no motorised transport of any kind. Nor did all units of the 350th Infantry Regiment, the 221st's main body of *Eingreiftruppen*, benefit from the inadequate supply of trucks with which they had to manage; a report of 18th August by the commander of the second battalion pointed out that the long distances involved in marching from the troops' accommodation meant that they were often exhausted before they had arrived in the area in which they were to operate.[70]

It is clear that the 221st, like all security divisions, faced an uphill struggle in trying to meet its security obligations in the teeth of all these difficulties. When it came to situational difficulties translating into ruthlessness and brutality, however, the situation as it was was only one half of the equation. The other was how the situation was perceived by the "German military mind". This mind-set, as has been seen, was characterised by attitudes which fed a harsh and distrustful mentality.[71] When combined with a situation such as would be experienced by the 221st from September on, rising brutality was definitely on the agenda. Even the relatively favourable circumstances of the summer, however, threw up sufficient difficulties from which this mentality was able to feed. In order to illustrate properly the context in which the division's approach grew more ruthless to an eventually murderous degree, the steady hardening of attitudes over the summer needs to be considered.

4.2.2. Officers' attitudes: frustration, fear and racism

The effect of "demodernisation"

Such technical benefits as the 221st enjoyed did not detract from the fact that, like all security divisions, it operated from a relatively low technological base across a huge area bestraddled to a great extent by difficult terrain. For many officers and men, such a situation contrasted vastly with previous combat experience. General Pflugbeil and many other officers and men of the 221st had during earlier *Blitzkrieg* campaigns experienced first-hand how superior tactics and technology could secure rapid, overwhelming victory.[72] This factor should be seen in the context of the increasingly technocratic nature of the officer corps during the inter-war period,[73] its general desire to "finish the job quickly" against the Soviet Union during 1941,[74] and the stunning successes being achieved further east by front-line troops that summer. Seen against this background, it is easy to see how the contrast between earlier campaigns and the current situation would have stoked frustration and resentment on the part of the 221st's officers and been a further spur to a hardening in their attitude. For more ambitious officers, of whatever age, the situation is likely to have been particularly galling.[75] The process of "demodernisation", to which Omer Bartov attaches great importance in his explanation of the barbarisation of front-line units, is therefore equally applicable to rear area units.[76] Furthermore, the 221st's even more recent front-line success in the first week of the Russian campaign, in particular its capture of Bialystok, may have ensured that its "comedown" was even more rapid than that of other security divisions.

The course of the battle of Bialystok in fact sheds further light on where General Pflugbeil himself stood with regard to these issues. On the night of 26th/27th June Pflugbeil elected independently to storm the city, and is reported to have personally led the attack on the main government building in the fierce fighting that followed.[77] Though no longer a young man by 1941, Pflugbeil's seizure of Bialystok, effectively in contravention of orders, is indicative of a veritable "man of action", one who among other things may well have harboured ambitions to command a front-line division. When it came to effective, long-term prosecution of rear area security, however, this quality was a double-edged sword. On the one hand it suggests the energy, ruthlessness and inventiveness which General von Schenckendorff deemed essential to the successful combating of partisans.[78] On the other hand, it is possible that Pflugbeil felt particularly frustrated by the drab and difficult nature of his new undertaking. This feeling may have been further heightened by the inevitable sense of soldierly pride which Pflugbeil and many other officers would have felt at the taking of Bialystok, a military achievement which after all was to remain unmatched by any other security division.

This then was another potent source of the kind of frustration which could stoke brutality. More potent still was the German Army's long-standing fear of and contempt for guerrilla warfare.

Francs-tireur *phobia*

Directives from above, and not just the major ones issuing down from the highest command levels, subjected the 221st Security Division to suspicious and fearful interpretations of the situation and thereby reinforced the ruthless attitude toward guerrilla warfare which had marked the German officer corps since 1870 and been further encouraged by National Socialist doctrine.[79] The commander of VII *Armeekorps*, to which the 221st was subordinate during the first week of the campaign, ordered his divisions to regard any civilian carrying a weapon, even a razor blade, as a *Freischarler* to be shot accordingly.[80]

Developments in the 221st's jurisdiction during the opening weeks of the campaign seem to have further intensified the jumpiness which such directives provoked. On 14th July Major Haupt informed the 350th Infantry Regiment and *Landesschützen-Regiment* 45 that, despite strict orders to the contrary, many civilians, some of whom were "obviously" Red Army soldiers in disguise, had been caught wandering on the road from Bialystok to Baranowicze.[81] That same day, a lone soldier was killed on the Lida-Grodno road by civilians who, it was reported, had approached him asking for a cigarette. Then on 19th July Haupt's office ordered that, with Soviet paratroops armed with explosives having landed in the area of Berez Kartuska, the division should brace itself for an increase in attacks and sabotage acts.[82] Haupt's office repeatedly issued orders emphasising that all officers and NCOs down to section commanders be informed of these developments, and that they be responsible for drumming the necessary vigilance into their troops.[83]

Contact with the civilian population in general, even at this relatively favourable stage, had the potential to fuel apprehension and uncertainty further.

The population's "double game"

At least some units of the 221st Security Division, even from the outset, experienced complex difficulties in trying to establish exactly where they stood with the civilians whom they encountered. It is easy to see how such uncertainty might combine with anti-Slavism and fear of guerrillas as a further spur to hardening attitudes and eventual brutality.

Whilst the Soviet rural population during 1941 generally adopted a "wait and see" policy concerning the German occupation, thus rejecting the partisans in their midst, the view of relatively small German units often was not so clear-cut. On a personal level, the undetected presence of a small number of communists or other partisan sympathisers in a particular village - plenty of individuals had after all benefited from the Soviet regime - might lead to the forging of stronger links between the village and the partisans. Evidence from the files of the 221st suggests there was a difference between an impression at divisional level or higher of a reasonably accommodating and malleable civilian population, and the sometimes more threatening impression gleaned by subordinate units. On 14th October for example the 350th Infantry Regiment's reconnaissance section reported that whilst the inhabitants in the area north-west of the highway near Klitschew were anti-partisan and of great assistance to the German cause, those in the nearby area around Chodunj were pro-partisan. Special care should be taken, it was emphasised, over villages near forests and rivers. Here, it was reported, partisans were posing as harmless civilians to carry out spying.[84]

Reports by the 286th Security Division voiced similar concerns; one of its subordinate battalions reported on 23rd September that many of the local administrative posts were still occupied by Bolshevik functionaries.[85] Reports by the 281st Security Division, operating in northern Russia, were similarly unsettled in tone. On 24th September, for example, *Feldkommandantur* 611 presented a report from an informer describing a number of villages as hotbeds of partisan support. The inhabitants of Koroljew, it was reported, "*...are helping the partisans and threaten to shoot any inhabitants who report them. Major assistance is also being rendered by Archipoff Nikolaj, the village elder of Kirilow....He is a communist.*"[86] In the village of Lodischkino, meanwhile, the inhabitants had been so accommodating that, according to the informer, the partisans had set up a radio station there. This village was especially impervious to German control; the poor state of the roads in the area prevented motor vehicles from patrolling it, and the village was surrounded by thick undergrowth and swamp.[87]

To some extent uncertainty was justified, for it is likely that many civilians were in fact playing a double game. Though in 1941 most rural civilians might have taken the long-term view that the Red Army was defeated, the short-term situation involved factoring in the presence of marauding bands of Red Army soldiers and, from September, more numerous partisan groups.

As Truman Anderson writes of the civilian population in his study of the 62nd Infantry Division:

> *"(A) pragmatic day-to-day calculus of personal survival played a much more important role than did either pro-German sentiment.....or Soviet patriotism."*[88]

This involved not just providing partisans with accommodation and food, but also appearing to do so willingly for fear of inviting partisan retribution. Indications of these tactics are found in a partisan diary for September and October 1941, captured by the 281st Security Division.[89] At many villages the peasants appear to have been delighted to share their food: *"Everywhere the population goes out of its way to support us."*[90] More commonly, requests (demands?) for food by the partisans were refused, but the villagers employed heart-rending stories in order to convince the partisans where their "true" sympathies lay:

> *"The farmers' attitude is that they'd gladly help us and have no reason to be pleased at the arrival of the Germans, but unfortunately "nothing doing". The Germans frighten them that much. Peasants are even threatened with the burning down of their villages if they supply the partisans."*[91]

The villagers also described how sex-starved German soldiers, unable to find any women, had raped some farm animals. [92] This may have been a story concocted to further convince the partisans that the villagers were indeed disgusted by the Germans.

The distrust with which German units may increasingly have viewed the civilian population as a result of this kind of situation would almost certainly have been reinforced by long-standing notions of German superiority over the "eastern races".

Contempt for eastern races[93]

Anti-Slavism, which even in 1941 contributed to the often harsh treatment of civilians by German troops,[94] may well have been reinforced by the fact that the 221st, like most other security divisions, came from Silesia - a region of Germany particularly affected by the legacy of centuries-long confrontation with "the East".[95] For many officers it was probably reinforced further in the opening weeks of the eastern campaign by experience of the extremely primitive living conditions of the Russian peasantry. Lieutenant Meyer describes this as having had a significant impact upon the troops once the division had crossed the old Polish-Russian border in July.[96] Similar conditions are described in a letter from Heinz H., an NCO of the 6th Infantry Division, dated 17th July 1941.

> *"This is a primitiveness which you can't comprehend. A landscape almost empty of people stretches off into the distance. There's the odd settlement here and there, but the houses are made out of branches and the gaps filled in with earth and moss. Many have only got the one room, or two at the most, where the women, kids, poultry and pigs are all thrown in together. One bed, perhaps, made out of a couple of grubby furs. Often it's impossible to breathe. But there are kids of all shades and sizes, many suffering from rickets. Plenty of pregnant women as well, from barely mature girls to older women. Often not a father in sight."*[97]

If feelings of racial superiority were not always sufficiently strong to translate into harsher conduct, it was likely to be a different matter when they were combined with the frustration felt at having to fight a very primitive kind of war, fear of armed civilians, and general distrust of the population.

The 221st's actions during summer 1941 demonstrated that this infernal brew did indeed lead to a hardening of attitudes.

4.2.3. Attitudes in action, July to September 1941

Harsh and distrustful attitudes are exemplified by the case of the *Leutnant Marx*, the armoured locomotive put at the 221st's disposal during July and August. Major Haupt ordered the train to employ fierce and ruthless measures in order to ensure the pacification of the areas assigned to it. The civilian population should be shaken out of any complacency it felt that normally thinly-patrolled areas were somehow out of the division's reach, for the *Leutnant Marx* was a highly mobile unit able to strike fast and hard.[98] It was ordered to swoop on suspect villages to conduct lightning searches for weapons in the middle of the night; what constituted a suspect village was left to interpretation by the military units concerned and their native informers from neighbouring villages.[99] On 26th July the division contacted the *Leutnant Marx* to inform it that local mayors were to be cajoled on pain of death into preventing sabotage upon railway stations, bridges and technical installations.[100] Other units followed this example, even when it was clear that there was a need to get the civilian population actively involved in the anti-partisan effort. *Feldkommandantur* 551, for example, held entire villages responsible for any failure to capture saboteurs: *"If no culprit is caught, the German Wehrmacht will enforce order and security with counter-measures against the general population."*[101] The same directive declared that anyone failing to participate in gathering the harvest or relinquishing livestock in line with regulations faced a charge of sabotage.[102]

However, another point with important implications for analysis of the intensified killing which ensued later is that there seems to have been no inevitable straight line between harsh opinions and active ruthlessness. This is clear in a comparison of two officers who, whilst both apparently holding the "eastern races" in contempt, nonetheless behaved towards the population in markedly different ways. It was the 221st's operations officer, Major Haupt, whose active harshness toward the population seems to have been directly linked to his personal contempt for it. His depiction in the divisional war diary of the reception received by the troops at the outset of the invasion of Russia describes the usual euphoric scenes in which ecstatic peasants showered the German "liberators" with copious quantities of bread, salt and flowers.[103] Within ten days, however, Haupt's assessment of the situation had changed; by now the population's initial euphoria had vanished, to be replaced by passivity.[104] By 19th July, his view had deteriorated drastically:

> *"The mood and manner of the population, the Poles included, is hostile through and through. There is no place for trust, chumminess or letting one's guard down."*[105]

This assessment is all the more striking for the fact that it contrasts with reports made by other military agencies. During July, for example, *Wirtschaftsinpektion Mitte* described the attitude of the civilian population as being at worst indifferent and at best friendly.[106] Haupt's contrasting view may therefore have been borne of his contempt for eastern races generally. Certainly his treatment of civilians suggests this. On 13th August he called for all *Feldkommandanturen*, *Ortskommandanturen* and other units to involve village headmen in drawing patrols (*Streifendienste*) from the local population to oversee the harvest. This was a necessary and practical task, but Haupt's desire to subjugate the Slavic sub-humans of his imaginings is reflected by his instruction that headmen be ordered to *compel* the peasants to employ all available labour in this task.[107]

Haupt does not seem to have been the only top-level divisional officer in the 221st to hold eastern races in contempt. The intelligence officer, Lieutenant Meyer, took the same cue. Meyer's depiction of the Red Army prisoners taken at Bialystok leaves little doubt on this score:

> *"It is a tattered, ragged, almighty mish-mash of European and Asiatic races. Only a few wear boots where the leg isn't made out of leather...This, then, is the Red Army soldier of the Soviet paradise. Two worlds are colliding, one of cleanliness and order, the other filthy and chaotic in every respect.* (The prisoners) *are fearful and suspicious, taught for decades as they have been to distrust both outsiders and their own relatives. The senses of many seem completely dulled. Horror propaganda, fear and then the sudden release of tension after the battle have reduced them almost to the state of wild animals."*[108]

However, whilst Major Haupt's contempt and distrust seem to have got the better of him in his dealings with the population, Lieutenant Meyer does not appear to have allowed his own feelings to cloud his more sensible judgement. Meyer's report of 28th July on the population's mood described both Byelorussians and Poles as having been friendly, and as having neither antagonised nor sabotaged the *Wehrmacht*. By 18th August the division was well into eastern Byelorussia, but here too Meyer described the population as generally quiet, friendly in places, but on the whole conducting itself in a way which was *"reserved yet correct"*.[109] Above all, as will be seen, Meyer saw the vital necessity of cultivating partnership with the population, and this was eventually to manifest itself in a variety of initiatives.[110]

Having considered the particular causes and extent of the ideological and military ruthless which characterised the officers of the 221st Security Division during the summer of 1941, what - necessarily speculative - conclusions can be drawn about the mind-set of those officers?

4.3. The 221st's "mind-set"

At the head of the 221st's security effort were three officers - the divisional commander General Pflugbeil, the operations officer Major Haupt and the intelligence officer Lieutenant Meyer - who whilst seemingly united in a ruthless interpretation of the "Jew/Bolshevik problem" appear to have reached this conclusion for different reasons. It is virtually certain that all three had been subjected to the institutionalised anti-Semitism, anti-Bolshevism, imperialism, technocratic ruthlessness and *francs-tireur* phobia of the German officer corps. They also belonged to a Silesian unit, composed of officers and men likely to be particularly contemptuous of a "shifty, primitive" eastern population. Each however had undergone different life experiences and it may well be that these helped shape both their attitudes and their response to the situation.

Pflugbeil, an older, "continuing" *Reichswehr* officer, may have been influenced by the "collective experience" of the 1918 collapse which had been shared by his peers and perpetuated in the *Reichswehr*'s institutional anti-Bolshevism and anti-Semitism. Moreover, his shameful failure to intervene in the massacre of Bialystok's Jews, less than a week into the campaign, suggests that his ideological convictions were already in place. Though it has been argued that ideological conviction might not have been a sufficient condition for such conduct, it is likely that it was a necessary condition. Assuming this was the case, it follows that Pflugbeil's ideological convictions were not intensified decisively by experiences such as prolonged and ferocious resistance by commissar-led Soviet troops. Thus, whilst his order of mid-July to seize Jewish hostages may have been borne to some extent of the practical desire not to alienate the population, the anti-Semitism which he may well already have harboured would have eased the task of writing it.

Anti-Semitic and anti-Bolshevik convictions are not the only possible explanation, however, for the ruthlessness which Pflugbeil displayed in 1941. He is also likely to have been the kind of officer with a particularly ruthless attitude to rear area security generally. His daring conduct at the battle of Bialystok suggests an officer who would have felt particularly frustrated by the drudge and primitiveness of rear area security. He may therefore have been particularly contemptuous of an "unreliable" population, regardless of the strength or otherwise of his own anti-Slavism. He may have harboured ambitions to command a front-line division; indeed, though retired in June 1942 as commander of the 221st - the background to which is explored later - he was back three months later to take charge of another security division, and in 1945, in his sixty-third year, he was commanding the *Kurland* Division at the front line.[111] Perhaps he was also have been hardened by the experience of front-line combat in the First World War; he had begun it as a company commander, was a captain a month later, a deputy battalion commander by September 1916 and battalion commander by July 1917.[112] Whilst perhaps having therefore reached a level of seniority too early to have been as extensively blooded in the

killing fields of the Western Front as were more junior officers, he had shared some of the brutalising experience of the younger *Frontkämpfergeneration.*[113]

Also significant is Pflugbeil's non-intervention at Bialystok when, at the very least, the discipline of his own troops could have been afflicted by witnessing the massacre. The picture which emerges is of an officer whose attitude to "degeneration" among his troops was somewhat more relaxed than that of others.

Major Haupt, of whose earlier life nothing is known other than his date of birth in 1908,[114] may well have been affected by his experience, as a young officer, of economic crisis and the collapse of Weimar democracy - experiences which, in the context both of the times and the institutional environment in which he worked, were likely to reinforce anti-Semitic and anti-Bolshevik convictions. It could be speculated that, as a still relatively young officer, he perhaps felt particularly stifled by the fact that rear area security was hardly the best outlet for his ambitions. His directive of early July, which identified Jews as a security threat very early on in the campaign, may therefore have been influenced by the desire to get noticed by his superiors by displaying the necessary ruthlessness.[115] Haupt's particular contempt for the population, already likely to have been strong in view of the fact that the 221st came from Silesia, may have been reinforced by this frustration. In any case, whether his motives were careerist or ideological - probably they were a mixture of the two - the lack of any real trouble at this early stage suggests that the real source of Haupt's ruthlessness was not to be found in the severe situational difficulties which the division was to experience.

There is plenty of evidence, meanwhile, that Lieutenant Meyer actively identified the Jews with Bolshevism and regarded both as a deadly menace.[116] Moreover, his actions seem to have been borne of conviction rather than "careerism"; his resort to ideological indoctrination of the population in 1943, a time when such an effort could bring nothing in terms of practical achievement or career advancement, suggests that the measures which Meyer took during 1941 were not made primarily with a view to finding favour with superiors.[117] However, Meyer does not actually seem to have been brutalised by any contempt he felt for the "eastern population" - and his description of the prisoners at Bialystok suggests that he felt plenty. Instead, he seems even at this early stage to have favoured cultivating the population.[118] Thus Meyer appears to have been brutalised in some respects but less so in others; he seems in this sense to have been an officer in the mould of General von Mackensen, commander of III (motorised) Corps, whose advocacy of sensible treatment of the wider population was coupled with calls to root out mercilessly all sources of Bolshevik influence.[119]

Thus, though the sum of the ideological and military ruthlessness in the directives issued by these officers was similar to the wider pattern throughout the *Ostheer*, their individual motivations were not necessarily similar. This is not the only sense in which the case of the 221st bears out a differentiated view of the causes of brutality, however; also varied was the

degree to which ruthlessness at the top levels was replicated throughout the division as a whole. Further down, a "filtering" process seems to have taken place, shaped by the particular perceptions of lower-level officers. Colonel Koch, the commander of the 350th Infantry Regiment, had as early as mid-August urged that the *"Jewish question....be tackled far more radically. I suggest that all Jews living in rural areas be put under guard in labour camps. Suspect elements must be eliminated".*[120] By contrast, the reprisal actions of *Wach-Bataillon* 701 were altogether more restrained, morally indefensible though they still were.[121] Similarly, the ideological convictions of some *Orts-* and *Feldkommandanten* within the 221st Security Division seem to have been *somewhat* less intense than those of their counterparts in the 286th.[122] A lack of personal officer files available in sufficient quantities means that the individual motives for such varied behaviour must for now remain the stuff of speculation, but that behaviour was indeed varied is clear.

4.4. Conclusion

In analysing the 221st Security Division and comparing it to other units, an intricate and differentiated picture emerges of the ruthlessness which would eventually help power the explosion of killing in the *Ostheer*'s anti-partisan effort of autumn 1941. Identifying Jews with Bolshevism, and therefore as the source of all unrest in the German rear, is too simple an explanation on its own. So are the immense difficulties of the security divisions' situation and the ways in which technocratic, paranoid German military attitudes perceived them. All these forces were at work, and yet the picture is complicated further by the diverse personal influences which brutalised individual officers via different routes - as in the contrasting cases of General Pflugbeil, Major Haupt and Lieutenant Meyer - or even acted as something of a brake on brutalisation. Moreover, there seems to have been no straight line between any one potential explanation and the actions which might have resulted.

In all this there is a very strong element of "And these are the *good* guys?". None of it morally exculpates Pflugbeil, Haupt and Meyer in the slightest, nor can there be any justification for plenty of the acts which many of the 221st's lower level officers clearly did commit, or at least were implicated in. Indeed, a very great deal of the 221st's conduct, such as murdering commissars, actively discriminating against Jews and colluding with the *Einsatzgruppen*, closely resembles the criminal undertakings engaged in so widely by other *Ostheer* units during 1941.[123] For the purpose of historical explanation, however, the points about variation and degree are crucial to understanding the process which resulted in mushrooming brutality across the 221st's jurisdiction from September 1941 on. This will become clearer in the next chapter.

Endnotes to Chapter 4

[1] "Jew equals Bolshevik equals partisan". Wilenchik, *Partisanenbewegung*, p. 209.

[2] See above, pp. 2-3.

[3] Browning, "Wehrmacht Reprisal Policy", pp. 38-40; Förster, J., "Die Sicherung", pp. 1235-7, 1246-8; Müller, R.-D., "Die Wehrmacht", pp. 22-3.

[4] Heer, "Killing Fields"; idem., "Die Logik", esp. pp. 105-18.

[5] Not his real name. Federal German data protection laws prevent the naming of officers who either are still alive or died within the last thirty years, or for whom no date of death or proof that they are still alive could be found but who were born within the last 110 years.

The operations section was responsible for communicating tactical orders to a division's subordinate units.

[6] The SD's first mention of partisan warfare in the central sector was not to come until a week later, by which time it had compiled another seven *Ereignißmeldungen*. NA T-175/233. Der Chef der Sipo etc., 8.-15.7.41. EM Nrn. 16-23.

[7] Translated from: *"Auf Grund der Feststellung, daß überall dort, wo Juden leben, die Säuberung des Raumes auf Schwierigkeiten stösst - denn die Juden unterstützen die Bildung von Partisanengruppen und die Beunruhigung des Raumes durch versprengte russ. Soldaten - wird mit sofortiger Wirkung die Evakuierung sämtlicher Dörfer nördlich Bialowieza von allen männlichen Juden angeordnet."* BA-MA, RH 26-221-10. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 8.7.41.

[8] Heer, "Die Logik", pp. 111-15.

[9] Whilst there remains a lack of a thorough quantitative study on the degree to which the *Kommissarbefehl* was carried out, it seems clear from existing research that security divisions at least carried it out thoroughly until it became clear that it was contributing to a stiffening of Soviet resistance. On the conduct of the *Kommissarbefehl*, see: Streit, *Keine Kameraden*, pp. 83-105 esp. table pp. 88-9; Förster, J., "Die Sicherung", pp. 1258-65; idem., "The German Army and the Ideological War", pp. 22-3; Rohde, "Politische Indoktrination".

[10] Establishing how many commissars were handed over to the SD is complicated by the fact that, after 16th July, the division was instructed by General von Schenckendorff to pass on instructions concerning the *Kommissarbefehl* by word-of-mouth rather than in writing. NA T-315/1667, file 16748/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 16.7.41. For further examples of commissars being apparently shot by *Ostheer* units, see table in: Streit, *Keine Kameraden*, pp. 88-9.

[11] Not his real name.

[12] BA-MA, RH 26-221/17. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 6.9.41.

[13] NA T-315/1671, file 16748/16. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 20.7., 19.8., 13.9, 16.9, 17.9.41. Tagesmeldungen an RHGeb. Mitte; NA-T315/1672, file 16748/19. IR 350, 21.10.41. Betr.: Ia-Meldung.

[14] Förster, J., "Die Sicherung", pp. 1234-5.

[15] Idem., p. 1264.

[16] Bartov, *Hitler's Army*, p. 126.

[17] NA T-315/1673, file 16748/23. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 18.8.41. Betr.: Lagebericht an Sich.-Division 221 Abt. VII, p. 3.

[18] Joachim Hoffmann cites instances from the first days of the campaign of the maltreatment and shooting of German prisoners by Soviet units. Hoffmann, *Stalins Vernichtungskrieg*, pp. 216-32. It remains unclear however as to what the precise cause and effect was in the barbarisation process; Hannes Heer, by contrast, cites the widespread shooting of Soviet prisoners by German units. Heer, "Die Logik", pp. 105-7.

[19] See above, p. 45.

[20] NA T-315. Roll 1667, file 16748/9. RHGeb. Mitte Abt. Ia, 26.7.41. Betr.: Tagesmeldung vom 25.7.41.

[21] Translated from: *"Alles, was in Kräften der Division stand, wurde getan, um den Div.-Bereich zu befrieden. Die restlose Beseitigung der Juden war dabei Vorbedingung. Sie waren die Zuträger, Hetzer und Zersetzer."* NA T-315/1673, file 16748/23. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 14.12.41. Tätigkeitsbericht, 10.5. - 14.12.41, p. 5.

The term *Beseitigung* could be taken to mean either "removal" or "elimination"; it is not entirely clear in which sense it is meant here. In any case, in common with most other security divisions at this stage, it was other agencies rather than the 221st itself which carried out the mass killings which took place in the divisional jurisdiction.

[22] Longerich, *Politik*, pp. 345-9.

[23] Translated from: *"Es ist eindeutig geklärt, daß die Synagoge in Brand geschossen wurde, weil aus ihr geschossen worden war."* NA T-315/1666, file 16748/7. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 28.6.41. KTB, 6.5.-13.12.41.

[24] Longerich, *Politik*, p. 347.

[25] NA T-315, Roll 1666, file 16748/7. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 30.6.41. KTB, 6.5.-13.12.41.

[26] Translated from: *"Sämtliche Juden der Stadt hatte man zusammengeholt und in einen ehemaligen Stizungssaal der Bolschewisten geführt. Dort befanden sich überlebensgroße Portraits von Stalin usw., desgleichen große Gipsbüsten dieser Knaben und derglcichen sowjetische Symbole mehr. Die Juden mussten sich nun mit diesen Insignien beladen, und in langer Prozession ging es durch die Straßen der Stadt an die Windau, wo auf einer großen Wiese ein Scheiterhaufen errichtet wurde, der dann angezündet wurde. Dieses mußten natürlich auch die Juden besorgen. Heute hatte man 1/2 Dutzend Judenweiber zum Kartoffelschälen beordert. Das brauchen wir jetzt also nicht mehr selbst zu machen."* BfZ, Sammlung Sterz. Heinz B., 10.7.41.

[27] See above, pp. 3 (Poland), 27 (older, traditional values).

[28] The danger that the troops might be reduced to a more wild state by witnessing the mass killing of Jews was certainly a concern for other units during 1941, to the extent that the commander of Army Group South, Field-Marshal von Rundstedt - in other respects an officer apparently firmly convinced of the "threat" which Jews posed to security - forbade his troops to witness mass shootings of Jews perpetrated by the SD and other agencies. Safrian, "Komplizen", p. 104.

[29] Reserve Police Battalion 309 was one of the Order Police battalions which were composed largely of younger, ambitious volunteers. Among the battalion's personnel was a large number of fanatical Jew-haters. Longerich, *Politik*, pp. 309-10; Pohl, "Holocaust-Forschung", p. 26.

[30] This is a qualified judgement. Whilst the Orpo battalions were under the divisions' tactical command, they were in reality "on loan" from the Higher SS and Police Leaders attached to the various Army Groups under which the battalions were operating. This meant, presumably, that the ultimate power of reprimand and discipline lay with the regional Higher SS and Police Leader, von dem Bach-Zelewski, rather than with General Pflugbeil himself. Longerich, *Politik*, p. 303; Birn, *Die Höheren SS- und Polizei-Führer*, pp. 220-1. However, whilst the drunken revellers of the battalion's 3rd company arguably were too far gone for their killing orgy to have been halted by anything less than armed force by the 221st itself, Pflugbeil might have been able to impose upon the commander of 1st company, Captain Behrens, to halt his portion of the killing, if only for the sake of discipline among the 221st's own troops.

[31] The main instances of this particular phenomenon occurred in the Baltic states. See: Krausnick, *Hitlers Einsatzgruppen*, pp. 179-83; Hilberg, "Wehrmacht und Judenvernichtung", p. 26.

[32] Translated from: *"Judenräte, Kennzeichnung der Juden, Schächtverbot, Arbeitseinsatz der Juden, Sühnemaßnahmen, Erfassung des von Juden verwalteten Vermögens, Unterbringung in gesonderten Wohnräumen."* NA T-315/1672, file 16748/18. Feldkommmandantur 528 (V), no date; around 23rd July. Geschäftsverteilung für Feldkommandantur 528 (V) für den Einsatz im Osten.

[33] NA T-315/1672, file 16748/18. Der Kommandant der Feldkommandantur 528 (V), 5.9.41. Betr.: Lagebericht, p. 2.

[34] NA T-315/1672, file 16748/19. "Auszug aus dem Kommandanturbefehl Nr 25 der FK 528 (V)", 8.10.41, p. 2. On the actions of Police Battalion 322, which also served in the 221st's jurisdiction during 1941, see: Angrick et. al, "Tagebuch"; Kwiet, "Auftakt".

[35] NA T-315/1666, file 16748/7. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 27.6.42. KTB, 6.5.-13.12.41; NA T-315/1672, file 16748/18. Feldkommmandantur 528 (V), no date; around 23rd July. Geschäftsverteilung für Feldkommandantur 528 (V) für den Einsatz im Osten.

[36] NA T-315/1667, file 16748/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 4.7.41. Anlage 278.

[37] Translated from: *"Arbeitspflichtig männliche Personen von 14 bis 60 Jahren, weibliche von 16 bis 50 Jahren. Zusammenstellung in Zwangsarbeitstrupps auf Grund Erfassungskartei beim Bürgermeister."* NA T-315/1669, file 16748/13. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. VII, 27.7.41. Hinweis auf Verwaltungsanordnung Nr. 3, p. 3.

[38] For examples of similar anti-Jewish measures undertaken by *Ostheer* units across the board, including registration, ghettoization, seizure of property and procurement for forced labour, see: Müller, R.-D., "Das Scheitern", p. 1184; Heer, "Killing Fields", pp. 59-60; Hilberg, "Wehrmacht und Judenvernichtung", pp. 26-8; Gerlach, "Deutsche Wirtschaftsinteressen", pp. 274-6.

[39] *Einsatzkommando* 8, which operated in the 221st's area, seems to have been *Einsatzgruppe* B's "star unit", the *Kommando* which during 1941 was most extensively involved in the extermination of the Jews. Its reports in the SD *Ereignismeldungen* made the most grotesque excuses for the massacres which it perpetrated, disguising them as necessary security measures. Thus in October the murder of 627 Jews was justified on the grounds that Jews from the area of Schklow, north of Mogilew, had taken part in sabotage acts; the murder of 279 Jews outside Mogilew was justified as prevention of sabotage acts, and the fearful massacre of 3 726 in Mogilew itself was described as a response to sabotage, refusal to work, and support for the partisans. NA T-175/234. Der Chef der Sipo etc., 25.10.41. EM Nr. 124, p. 2; ibid., 14.11.41. EM Nr. 133, pp. 24-5.

[40] Förster, J., "Die Sicherung", p. 1241.

[41] The report described the particularly fruitful co-operation between *Einsatzkommando* 8 and the units around Baranowicze, in the 286th's jurisdiction. NA T-175/233. Der Chef der Sipo etc., 24.7.41. EM Nr. 32, p. 4.

[42] Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*, p. 807.

[43] See above, p. 45.

[44] Förster, J., "Die Sicherung", pp. 1234-5.

[45] Translated from: *"Geiseln (besonders Juden) festnehmen und ihre Erschiessung für den Fall geringster Unruhestiftung anordnen."* BA-MA, RH 26-221/12. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 18.7.41. Anlage 381. It is not entirely clear whether this order was written by Pflugbeil or Haupt (see below, footnote 47, Ch. 7).

[46] Time constraints prevented a quantitative comparison of the Jew-targeted reprisals committed by the 221st and the other Army Group Centre security divisions. The security divisions in the Ukraine, who if anything had a yet greater incentive to focus reprisals on Jews, (see below, footnote 49, this chapter) themselves seem to have had only two or three such reprisals each to their name, so the figure of one such reprisal for the 221st probably was not that exceptional. Anderson, *Conduct of Reprisals*, Ch. 7.

Though there may have been some under-reporting of reprisal-taking, this phenomenon is unlikely to have been significant due to efforts by Rear Area commanders to ensure the comprehensive reporting of such incidents, and to the lack of shame involved in the act of reprisal-taking. Ibid., pp. 244-54.

[47] NA T-315/1666, file 16748/17. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 29.8., 30.8. and 23.9.41. KTB, 6.5. - 13.12.41.

[48] Anderson, *Conduct of Reprisals*, pp. 244-50.

[49] Anderson's explanation as regards the German forces in the Ukraine is that they assumed that the Ukrainians, whom it was felt were generally anti-Soviet, were innocent of such actions and that the Jews were guilty. Anderson, *Conduct of Reprisals*, pp. 244-50. Friedrich's thesis, that the Jews were targeted mainly as a means of impressing the majority by visiting German terror upon the minority, may well also have played a role; certainly it is likely to have played well with the strong anti-Semitic tradition in the Ukraine (see above, p. 6). Whilst German Army units in Byelorussia may have viewed the general population there in somewhat less rosy terms, there was still widespread realisation of the need to foster goodwill. See above, p. 45.

It may also be that some officers perceived the "eastern mentality" as failing to understand the concept of hostage-taking. Theo Schulte, for one, has unearthed evidence of this in Army Rear Area 532, in which officers argued that hostage-taking in Russia failed to exert the necessary "emotional pressure" which was the normal result in the West. Schulte, *German Army*, p. 143.

[50] NA T-315/1666, file 16748/7. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 1.9.41. KTB, 6.5.-13.12.41.

[51] Anderson, *Conduct of Reprisals*, p. 254.

[52] Ibid., p. 223; Hilberg, "Wehrmacht und Judenvernichtung", p. 34.

[53] Förster, J., "Die Sicherung", pp. 1253-4.

[54] NA T-315/1673, file 16748/23. Feldpostamt 221, 12.8.41. Betr.: Einsatz des Feldpostamts 221 während des Monats Juli 1941. Similar problems were reported in Army Rear Area 532. Schulte cites Ortwin Buchbender and Reinhold Sterz on this: *"Soldiers in the East were told that they would receive letters from home within the space of a couple of weeks, but in practice delivery dates often ran into months."* Schulte, *German Army*, p. 261.

[55] Dallin et al., "Psychological Warfare", pp 218-19. On the effects of isolation upon morale, see also: Kellett, *Fighting Power*, pp. 97-101.

[56] Translated from: *"Heute sind wir 200 km hinter der Front, morgne vielleicht wie auch sonst zwischen den Panzern und der Infanterie. Beides ist durch die dazwischenliegenden Wälder mit erheblichen Gefahren verbunden. Natürlich werden die Waldschützen sofort erschossen, und tote Russen liegen überall in Mengen herum, aber leider leider sind schon zahlreiche Kameraden auf diese hinterlistige Art und Weise gefallen. Der eigentliche Kampf kostet nicht so viele Opfer wie das Bandenwesen.*

Schlaf gibt es wenig. Fast jede Nacht noch Wache. Also muß man in den paar Ruhestunden noch auf und äußerst wachsam gegen Überfälle sein, denn durch die Unachtsamkeit eines Postens können wir alle verloren sein. Das Alleinfahren ist gar nicht zu verantworten." BfZ, Sammlung Sterz. Hans B., 2.7.41.

By 1942 a popular ditty going the rounds among rear area security units went: *"Vorne Russen, hinten Russen, und dazwischen wird geschussen"* (*"Russians ahead, Russians behind, and shooting in between"*). Dallin et al., "Psyschological Warfare", p. 219.

[57] NA T-315/1666, file 16748/7. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 2.9.41. KTB, 6.5.-13.12.41.

[58] Ibid., 3.9.41. This, it will be remembered, was before the expiry of General von Schenckendorff's ultimatum concerning the shooting of Red Army stragglers west of the Dnjepr. See above, p. 49.

[59] NA T-315/1667, file 16784/10. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 18.9.41. Betr.: Stellungnahme zum Erfahrungsbericht der Sich.-Div. 213.

[60] NA T-315/1667, file 16748/10. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, Anlage 715. LSR 45, 17.9.41. Complaints by subordinate units which were as specific as this are likely on balance to have described genuine grievances. Concocted stories of hardships ran the risk of being exposed as fabrication by division-level officers sent to inspect the unit. Two cases of such versatility with the facts were unearthed by the 221st during the Jelnja-Dorogobush operations of spring 1942, and the division promised to penalise future cases severely. NA T-315/1676, file 22639/2. Betr.: Ständiges Überprüfen der Gefechtstärken unf Pferdebestände, p. 1.

[61] See above, this page.

[62] NA T-315/1667, file 16748/10. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 29.8.41. Betr.: Ausbildung der Truppe, p. 1.

[63] On the demoralising effect of boredom upon combat morale, see: Kellett, *Combat Motivation*, pp. 251-4.

[64] BA-MA, RH 26-221/70. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 1.10.41. Betr.: KdF Betreuung; NA T-315/1673, file 16748/23. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 30.10.41.

[65] BA-MA, RH 26-221/70. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 5.11.41. Anlage 34, p. 6.

[66] On the *geistige Betreuung* effort across the Army Group Centre Rear Area during 1941, which encompassed similar measures and encountered similar problems, see: NA T-501/1, file 14684/4. RHGeb. Mitte, Abt. Ic. Tätigkeitsberichte, Juni - Dezember 1941.

[67] Müller-Hillebrand, *Das Heer*, vol. 1, pp. 69-70.

[68] BA-MA, RH 26-286/3. Sich.-Div. 286 Abt. Ib, 3.8.41. Betr.: Bericht über die Versorgungslage und den Einsatz der Versorgungstruppen seit Beginn der Operationen in Rußland, p. 8.

[69] NA T-315/1667, file 16748/10. RHGeb. Mitte Abt. Ia, 16.8.41. Korpsbefehl Nr. 40, p. 1.

[70] NA T-315/1672, file 16748/18. II/IR 350, 18.8.41, pp. 1-2.

[71] See above, pp. 4-5.

[72] The 350th Infantry Regiment had served under the 221st in the Polish campaign. Tessin, *Verbände*, vol. 9, p. 255.

[73] Geyer, "Professionals and Junkers".

[74] Wilhelm, "Motivation", pp. 165-6.

[75] The degree to which anti-partisan warfare was disparaged back in the Reich, and the negative effect of this upon anti-partisan troops, was noted by the 203rd Security Division in a report of February 1943. NA T-315/1586, file 16748/6. Sich.-Div. 203 Abt. Ia, 5.2.43, Betr.: Monatsbericht, p. 4.

[76] Bartov, *Hitler's Army*, pp. 12-28. The 286th Security Division recorded similar problems of "demodernisation" to those experienced by the 221st. At the beginning of August the 286th's quartermaster reported that the division's area was an inadequate source of food supply and that there were severe problems in clothing and equipment. BA-MA, RH 26-286/3. Sich.-Div. 286 Abt. Ib, 3.8.41. Betr.: Bericht über die Versorgungslage und den Einsatz der Versorgungstruppen seit Beginn der Operationen in Rußland.

[77] NA T-315/1673, file 16748/23. Sich.-Div. 221, Abt. Ic. "Eine schlesische Division erstürmt Bialystok".

[78] BA-MA RH 22-225. RHGeb. Mitte Abt. Ia, 24.9.41. Einleitungsworte zum Partisanen-Bekämpfungs-Lehrgang, p. 4.

[79] See above, pp. 4-5, 8-9, 23.

[80] Förster, J., "Die Sicherung", p. 1232.

[81] NA T-315/1667, file 16748/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 14.7.41. Anlage 345.

[82] NA T-315/1667, file 16748/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 19.7.41. "Divisionsbefehl für die Übernahme des erweiterten Sicherungsraumes", p. 1.

[83] Ibid..

[84] NA T-315/1672, file 16748/19. Voraus-Abteilung IR 350, 14.10.41, p. 1.

[85] BA-MA, RH 26-286/3. III/IR 354, 23.9.41. Bericht über das Sonderunternehmen im Raume nördlich des R3=Abschnittes Pogost-Woly, pp. 2-3.

[86] Translated from: *"...helfen den Partisanen und drohen, alle Einwohner zu erschiessen, die das anzeigen werden. Eine große Hilfe gibt ihnen auch Archipoff Nikolaj, der Dorfälteste von Kirilow....Er ist Kommunist."* NA T-315/1869, file 15954/2. Feldkommandantur 611, 24.9.41. Betr.: Partisanentätigkeit.

[87] Ibid..

[88] Anderson, "Incident", p. 52.

[89] NA T-315/1870, file 15954/4. Tagebuch eines Partisanen.

[90] Translated from: *"Überall unterstüzt uns die Bevölkerung in liebenswürdiger Weise."* Ibid., 10.9.41.

[91] Translated from: *"Die Einstellung der Bauern ist folgende: Sie würden uns gern helfen und sind unzufrieden mit dem Erscheinen der Deutschen; es ist aber nichts zu machen, sie können nicht. So sehr schüchtert der Deutsche sie ein. Es wird den Bauern sogar bedroht, man würde ihre Dörfer abbrennen, wenn sie den Partisanen Vorschub leisten."* Ibid., 12.10.41.

[92] Ibid..

[93] Whilst anti-Slavism obviously was a racial-ideological influence upon conduct rather than one spawned of military mentality, it was not part of the more centrally important "Jew=Bolshevik=partisan" equation which was to be the driving ideological force behind the killing of 1941. Its inclusion in this chapter under "the military dimension" is arguably more warranted, because of the contribution which it made over an issue which was practical rather than ideological, namely the German distrust of the population concerning the population's relations with the partisans.

[94] On anti-Slavism see above, p. 4.

[95] Whether the Army High Command deliberately assigned mainly Silesian units to security divisions because of the "harshness" with which they were likely to treat the population is not entirely clear. What is almost certain, however, is that a major reason for their selection was the assumption that they would have a greater understanding of the "eastern mentality", in much the same way that the overwhelmingly Austrian units selected for security duty in Yugoslavia had a greater understanding, it was believed, of the "Balkan mentality". Manoschek, "Vernichtung", pp. 210-11.

[96] NA T-315/1673, file 16748/23. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 18.8.41. Betr.: Lagebericht an Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. VII, p. 3.

[97] Translated from: *"Du kannst Dir diese Primitivität überhaupt nicht vorstellen. Weithin beinahe menschenleeres Land. Hin und wieder kleine Siedlungen: Häuser aus Baumstämmen, die Fugen notdürftig mit Erde oder Moos verkleistert. Vielfach aus einem, höchstens zwei Räumen bestehend. Darin leben nun diese Menschen mit Frauen, Kindern, Geflügel, und Ferkel. Vielleicht ein Bett, bestehend aus ein paar schmutzigen Fellen. Die Räume vielfach luftarm. Aber Kinder aller Grade und aller Schattierungen, oft mit der englischen Krankheit behaftet. Und dazu viele schwangere Frauen - vom kaum erwachsenen Mädchen bis zur älteren Frau. Vielfach ohne Vater."* BfZ, Sammlung Sterz. Heinz H., 17.7.41.

[98] NA T-315/1667, file 16748/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 26.7.41. Anlage 438, p. 2.

[99] Ibid..

[100] Ibid..

[101] Translated from: *"Wird ein Täter nicht ergriffen, so wird sich die deutsche Wehrmacht ihre Sicherheit und Ruhe und Ordnung mit Gegenmaßnahmen erzwingen, die die Gesamtheit der Bevölkerung treffen."* NA T-315/1672, file 16748/18. Feldkommandantur 551, 8.9.41. "Merkblatt für die Bürgermeister", p. 2.

[102] A similarly heavy-handed approach to the population was displayed by the 403rd Security Division, which used beatings with sticks as a punishment for various transgressions. BA-MA RH 26-403/2. Sich.-Div. 403, Abt. Ic. Monatsbericht Oktober 1941, p. 4.

[103] NA T-315/1666, file 16748/7. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 23.6.41. KTB, 6.5.-13.12.41.

[104] NA T-315/1667, file 16748/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 4.7.41, p. 2. Anlage 266.

[105] Translated from: *"Die Stimmung und Haltung der Bevölkerung - auch der polnischen - ist durchaus feindlich. Vertrauensseligekiten, Anbiederung und gutgläubige Nachlässigkeit sind nicht am Platze."* NA T-315/1667, file 16748/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 19.7.41. Anlage 392, p. 1.

[106] NA T-501/2, file 14768/3. Wi. In. Mitte Fü. Chef, 22.7.41.

[107] NA T-315/1667, file 16748/10. Sich.-Div. 221, Abt. Ia, 13.8.41.

[108] Translated from: *"Es ist ein tolles asiatisches und europäisches Völkergemisch. Abgerissen, zerlumpt. Nur wenige tragen Stiefel, wobei der Schaft nicht aus Leder besteht....Die zerfranste Rubaschka ist dünn und schmützig. Das also ist der Rotarmist aus dem Sowjetparadies. Zwei Welten tun sich auf. Die eine der Sauberkeit und Ordnung, die andere des Chaos und des Schmutzes in jeder Beziehung. Jahrzentelang zum Mißtrauen gegenüber dem Dritten, ja schon gegenüber dem nächsten Verwandten erzogen, machen sie durchweg einen scheuen, aus Angst und Mißtrauen zusammengesetzten Eindruck, der bei vielen bereits zur völligen Abgestumpftheit geführt hat. Greuelpropaganda, Furcht und die plötzliche Entspannung nach dem Kampf, lassen sie zu fest willenlosen Tieren werden."* NA T-315/1673, file 16748/23. Sich.-Div. 221, Abt. Ic. "Eine schlesische Division erstürmt Bialystok", p. 2.

[109] NA T-315/1673, file 16748/23. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 18.8.41. Betr.: Lagebericht, p. 2.

[110] Meyer's constructive conduct is detailed in Chapters 6 to 10. On the argument that Meyer's depiction of the POWs at Bialystok seems to have been inspired by genuine feelings of racial superiority and not by the calculating need to pay "lip service" to Nazi ideology, see below, pp. 73, 207-9.

[111] BA-MA, RH7/714 Pers 6. Personal file on General Johann Pflugbeil.

[112] Ibid..

[113] See above, p. 74.

[114] BA-MA, RH7/Pers 6. Personalbesatzung der 221. Sich.-Div..

[115] The lack of a personal file meant that it unfortunately was not possible to find out Haupt's subsequent career trajectory after leaving the 221st in November 1941.

[116] Another possible indication of Meyer's anti-Semitism was his comments in a report of 28th July, intended for units about to take over the western parts of the 221st's old jurisdiction: *"The tensions between the two population groups* (Poles and Russians) *were exploited by the Jews for their own ends. They* (the Jews) *are now getting the payback for all their swaggering and oppression."* (Translated from: *"Die Juden haben von der zwischen beiden Volksgruppen bestehenden Spannung bisher ihren Nutzen gezogen. Sie bekommen jetzt für alle Angebereien und Drangsalierungen der Bevölkerung nur die wohlverdiente Quittung."*) NA T-315/1673, file 16748/23. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 28.7.41. "Übergabebericht", p. 2. The original copy of this document is

missing from the Federal German Military Archive (BA-MA) (see below, p. 243). On Meyer see also: Förster, J., "Die Sicherung", p. 1242, footnote 91.

[117] See below, pp. 207-9.

[118] It cannot be argued with certainty that Meyer's description of the prisoners at Bialystok is firm evidence of anti-Slavic conviction. Moreover, his propaganda measures in the summer of 1943 (see below, pp. 207-9) can be taken as evidence of anti-Semitism and anti-Bolshevism but not of anti-Slavism, and it may therefore be that the Bialystok report was indeed written with an eye to presenting an anti-Slavic appearance. In the absence of any firm evidence either way, however, it seems more likely that Meyer did indeed harbour genuine anti-Slavism. Anti-Slavism was after all another feature of the National Socialist doctrine to which Meyer seems to have adhered in a number of respects, and the fact that Meyer came from Silesia is more likely to have predisposed him towards it.

[119] Förster, J., "Die Sicherung", pp. 1250-1.

[120] Translated from: *"Die Judenfrage muß radikaler gelöst werden. Ich schlage Erfassung aller auf dem Lande lebenden Juden in bewachte Sammel- und Arbeitslager vor. Verdächtige Elemente müssen beseitigt werden."* NA T-315/1672, file 16748/18. IR 350 Abt. Ia, 19.8.41. Betr.: Erfahrungen bei Säuberungsaktion. This seems to have been interpreted at divisional level as a call for the kind of killing which *Ostheer* units were still keen to avoid dirtying their hands with, preferring instead to leave it to the *Einsatzgruppen* and the Orpo, and was rejected accordingly. Förster, "Wehrmacht, Krieg und Holocaust", p. 955, footnote 36.

[121] See above, p. 62.

[122] See above, p. 61.

[123] Headland, *Messages*, pp. 135-45; Heer, "Killing Fields"; Vestermanis, "Ortskommandantur Libau"; Boll and Safrian, "Auf dem Weg"; Hilberg, "Wehrmacht"; Safrian, "Komplizen".

CHAPTER 5: AUTUMN 1941

From early September 1941 a veritable orgy of killing took place in the 221st Security Division's jurisdiction. To a large extent it mirrored a larger effort which ensued during the autumn of 1941 across so much of the German-occupied Soviet Union.[1] Analysing the 221st's conduct during this period nonetheless also highlights important points about the role of local conditions and individual initiative in setting the form and pace of the German Army's intensified anti-partisan campaign during this period.[2] In the 221st's area the killing seems to have progressed in phases, each shaped to an important degree by different combinations of the circumstances and attitudes which had already helped shape the division's conduct during the summer of 1941. This chapter sets the scene by outlining the general forces to which responsibility for the killing is ascribed, and then analyses the 221st Security Division across the different phases of its own intensified killing process.

5.1. The German "security" effort, autumn 1941

Precisely what caused the massive intensification of the German anti-partisan effort in the autumn of 1941 is a matter of great contention. Matters are not helped by the vagueness of the German Army files at this stage, which make it next to impossible to quantify exactly who was being killed.[3] It is clear for one thing, however, that there was a centrally important ideological dimension to the killing.

From the outset the security divisions had identified Jews as trouble-makers and singled them out as reprisal victims, and there is much to indicate that the intensification of autumn 1941 was linked to the development of the Final Solution. Within weeks of the invasion of the Soviet Union, the Nazi regime's ideological aim of "solving" the problem of the Jews in Europe was interacting with the economic and practical contingencies faced by the SS forces and Reich economic authorities in the German-occupied areas. It created a dynamic which, though it varied in form and timing across regions, eventually resulted in the extension of mass killing by the *Einsatzgruppen*, Order Police and other agencies to encompass all Jewish men, women and children.[4] Hitler and the Armed Forces High Command seem to have been intent on ensuring that the *Ostheer*'s security effort become one of the means by which the extermination of the Jews was to be achieved. Decrees such as Field-Marshal Keitel's of 12th September, which among other things ordered *"ruthless, energetic and drastic measures above all against the Jews, the main carriers of Bolshevism"* and forbade the employment of Jews as labour under most circumstances, seem to have been issued with this murderous aim in mind.[5] The testimony of senior German generals at the Nuremberg trials make an ideological dimension even clearer. Hans Röttiger, who was Chief of Staff to the 4th Army and later to Army Group Centre, wrote in an affidavit submitted to the court that:

> *"I have now come to realise that the order from the highest authorities for the harshest conduct of partisan war can only have been intended to make possible a ruthless liquidation of Jews and other undesirable elements, by using for this purpose the military struggle of the Army against the partisans."*[6]

Röttiger was not alone; General Heusinger, former Chief of the Operations Section of the General Staff, wrote that:

> *"It had always been my personal opinion that the treatment of the civilian population and the methods of anti-partisan warfare in operational areas presented the highest political and military leaders with a welcomed opportunity of carrying out their plans, namely, the systematic extermination of Slavism and Jewry."*[7]

There was a "twisted path", however, between conception at the highest levels and implementation in the field. Thus whilst ideology almost certainly was a necessary condition for much of the killing, there is uncertainty as to how far it can be said to have been a sufficient condition on its own,[8] and how far the killing grew out of interaction between ideology and other forces. These include the ruthless character of such partisans as there were and indeed of the Soviet system as a whole;[9] an element, whether real or perceived, of military necessity, borne of the failings of the security divisions themselves and of the partial, temporary emergence of more organised partisan groups in the late summer and autumn;[10] an attempt to destroy all possible bases of future partisan activity including Jews, refugees and Red Army fugitives,[11] and an economically calculated attempt to butcher those same groups as a means of closing "surplus mouths" and easing food problems of growing acuteness.[12]

The sum of analysis of individual units and jurisdictions which has been carried out so far, meanwhile, is one which highlights the importance of ideology but also suggests that a complex interaction was at work between not just the elements just cited but also particular conditions and the inclinations of individual officers.[13] Detailed analysis of the 221st Security Division over the last four months of 1941 clarifies the issues further by considering the different forces which were at work both at different levels of the division and over different phases during this period.

The first phase of the division's autumn campaign brought to the boil the mixture of ideological hatred, difficult circumstances and ruthless military attitudes which had been simmering over the summer.

5.2. The first killing wave in the 221st's jurisdiction, 6th September - 25th October 1941

Perhaps the first point at which the 221st Security Division's killing process intensified decisively came on 6th September 1941. It was on this date that Major Haupt issued a directive which appears to have consciously attempted to push the division to new heights of ruthlessness:

> *"The underhandedness of the partisans, and the proven collusion of the Jewish population, mean that commanders must exercise their power even more intensively and severely than before if set-backs for the troops are to be avoided."*[14]

The contrast between the division's conduct prior to the issuing of the directive and its conduct afterwards demonstrates the devastating effect which Haupt appears to have achieved. From late August on, in response to the apparent rise in partisan activity borne of unfavourable circumstances in eastern Byelorussia,[15] there had already been a small but perceptible rise in the numbers of dead which the 221st was inflicting in the course of security operations. Between 10th and 23rd August, according to the division's daily communiqués to General von Schenckendorff's command, the only individuals whom it killed were a lone communist and two Red Army soldiers. 43 people were killed in the fortnight leading up to 6th September, with *Wach-Bataillon* 701 and *Landesschützen-Bataillon* 230, operating in the Osipowitschi-Bazewitschi-Klitschew area, recording four instances in which a total of 23 Red Army soldiers were "shot trying to escape". After 6th September, however, the figures spiral. For one thing, there are only two more instances of prisoners being "shot trying to escape" recorded in both the daily divisional communiqués and in the divisional *Kriegstagebuch*. What both sources record for the very next day, 7th September, is the first major instance in which partisans, the first time they are named as such, were taken prisoner and then shot. 43 perished on this occasion; the total figure for the following fortnight was 304.[16] Whilst problems of reliability in these figures need to be appreciated,[17] this apparent development does fit into the overall pattern of rising death tolls in the anti-partisan effort at this time.

All told, then, the 6th September directive seems to have played a significant role in the development of the particular killing process in the 221st's area. Admittedly, it would be going too far to claim that its effect was necessarily greater than that of the higher-level directives, such as Field-Marshal Keitel's of 12th September and General von Schenckendorff's of a month later.[18] These are likely to have been crucial to sustaining the intensifying brutality of the 221st's security effort, just as they did across the rest of the Army Group Centre Rear Area. Moreover, Haupt's directive in many ways reflected some of the higher-level directives which had gone before, and the pattern of killing which followed was also shaped by the "opportunities" presented to different subordinate units.[19] In terms of what it reveals about the role played by particular circumstances and personalities in intensifying ruthless conduct, however, the directive is important. It shows a lower-level agent acting on his own initiative in pushing forward the ruthless agenda set from above and, moreover, at a time when his division's particular circumstances had just grown especially conducive to fostering harsher attitudes. For these reasons, the question of the directive's particular background and the consequences which it unleashed warrants further examination.

What, firstly, were the particular motives of Major Haupt himself? It has already been shown that, however purely ideologically-driven or, alternatively, "career-minded" Haupt's own

convictions were, his ruthlessness probably did not stem primarily from the practical difficulties of the 221st's situation.[20] Assuming, as seems most likely, that Haupt's motives mixed both ideology and careerism, early September 1941 was arguably the ideal time to issue a directive urging the kind of harsher conduct across the division which could further his agenda.

Why, from this point of view, was the timing of the directive so fortuitous? As will be recalled, ideological conviction within the 221st Security Division seems to have been neither monolithic in cause or extent nor quite so powerful in absolute terms as that of some other security divisions.[21] Haupt therefore probably felt that the wholehearted participation of most officers in greater ideologically-driven killing was far from guaranteed. It was likely to be a different matter, however, if an ideological appeal to greater ruthlessness could be fused with an appeal to "military sensibilities", or at least the mix of frustration, distrust and fear which passed for such sensibilities in the minds of German officers. The conditions which the division had faced during the summer had been sufficient, as has been seen, to fortify such a mentality and the harsher approach which it was likely to generate. The sudden deterioration in the 221st's situation from the end of August may therefore have been judged by Haupt as an opportunity to stoke harshness into outright brutality, for suddenly an appeal to ruthlessness on "military" grounds was likely to enjoy much more resonance.[22]

Examining the causes of this deterioration sheds much light on the particular mechanisms by which individual *Ostheer* security units became embroiled in greater killing during the autumn of 1941. The first element was the loss of the 221st's principal motorised contingent, Police Battalion 309, to 2nd Army. True, both *Wach-Bataillon* 701 and the 350th Infantry Regiment retained motorised elements after this stage, and the division reported itself as being in better shape to fulfil its security tasks than the 213th Security Division. The 221st's situation regarding mechanised transport was now, however, a serious one; it no longer possessed any trucks capable of travelling across land, and there was also a need for despatch riders and a divisional spotter 'plane.[23] These circumstances could only intensify the 221st's practical problems. The second development, to which an apparently alarmed General Pflugbeil drew attention in a directive of 31st August, was a small but significant rise in partisan-related incidents at the end of that month, including an attack on a rail building on 29th August, the killing of four members of *Wach-Bataillon* 701, and the death of an officer in an attack on a roadblock on the 30th.[24] Overall, such attacks were a pinprick; on an individual level, however, they may have tapped into long-standing fear and hatred of guerrillas. Pflugbeil's response typified this attitude, and there is every likelihood that it was shared across the division. Indeed, the slight rise in partisan dead prior to 6th September may have been a result. Finally, the imminent expansion of the division's area on 6th September as far as the River Dnjepr could only exacerbate tensions further.[25] Although the division was to be aided in its new jurisdiction by SS and Order Police elements, it was almost certain that the expansion of the divisional area would on top of these other developments subject the 221st to even greater strain than before.

Units at the sharp end, as has been seen, were more likely to "lash out" in such circumstances, employing brutal methods either out of frustration or as a means of covering for an increasing lack of genuine success, be it against partisans or in mopping up Red Army stragglers.[26] Officers were perhaps also more likely to consider ways in which possible future sources of partisan activity might be destroyed - a death sentence for many of the refugees, Jewish or otherwise, and Red Army fugitives in the division's jurisdiction. Indeed, the expansion of the jurisdiction was in itself a further facilitator of more intensified killing, simply because it made available a new source of people to kill.[27] If, as appears likely, such a hardening of attitudes did take place in early September, then Haupt 's directive seems to have been perfectly timed to exploit them. As well as highlighting the "proven collusion of the Jewish population", the directive therefore also drew attention to the "partisan underhandedness" which was liable to lead to "set-backs for the troops". Haupt's directive seems however to have been intended not just to appeal to ideological and "military" sentiment, but also to fuse the two. The main way in which this was done was to make the link between the Jews and the partisans more explicit, in a way similar to directives such as the oft-quoted "Reichenau Order" issued a month later by the commander of 6th Army:

> *"....the soldier must have complete understanding for the necessity of the harsh but just atonement of Jewish subhumanity. This has the further goal of nipping in the bud rebellions in the rear of the Wehrmacht which, as experience shows, are always plotted by the Jews."*[28]

Though Haupt had himself attempted to make such a link before, the argument was more likely to fall upon receptive ears in the situation which the 221st now faced. Sure enough, there is abundant evidence from across the 221st that units did indeed identify the partisans with the Jews in the wake of Haupt's directive. Indeed, at least some officers, such as Colonel Koch, seem to have needed no persuading anyway.[29] Certainly by October, in the wake of Haupt's directive, harsh anti-Semitic measures were widely pursued across both the division's regiments. On 21st October, for example, the 8th company of the 350th Infantry Regiment shot four Jewish communist youth members whom it had seized attending a secret meeting. Eight days later, the regiment reported the shooting of a Jewish bank director caught with false papers. On 31st October 8th company, again, shot seven Jews whom it labelled partisan accomplices. A yet greater "success" had already been achieved by the 350th's third battalion, which on 12th September reported that it had shot a Jew and 22 communists for supporting the partisans.[30] A similar script was read by *Landesschützen-Regiment* 45. The regiment reported on 31st October that it had tried to locate an armed band of 60 to 70 Jews south-east of the town of Retschitza. It had greater "success" over the following days, however. On 2nd November it reported the shooting of six Jews, and on the 8th, it reported that three fugitive Jewish Red Army soldiers had been "shot trying to escape" by *Landesschützen-Bataillon* 302.[31]

These orders were generated by a range of units across both of the division's regiments, so if they do not represent the entire division then they certainly represent a great deal of it. They also conform to a wider picture across *Ostheer* security units as a whole during 1941.[32] At first sight they call into question the proposition, made in the previous chapter, that anti-Semitic conviction within the 221st Security Division was not necessarily monolithically murderous. Here, however, it is crucial to distinguish between officers such as Major Haupt and Colonel Koch, who seem to have been influenced by anti-Semitism from an early stage, and officers who, whilst probably also anti-Semitic to a certain extent, may have needed more persuading before they fully subscribed to the Jew-partisan link and behaved with according ruthlessness. After all, the summer had seen only one instance across the entire division of significant reprisal action against Jews, and even this instance, awful though it was in absolute terms, had paled in comparison to the actions of other divisions.[33] For the most part, however, ideological conviction across the division was probably sufficient for Major Haupt to tap and convert into intensified killing by effectively blaming Jews for the worsening security situation which the division was facing. In this way military necessity, be it real or perceived, provided a bridge between ideological conviction and increased brutality.

Careerism was another ingredient. Haupt's directive was not a clear-cut order; it was sufficiently precise to convey Haupt's wishes, but sufficiently vague to allow the division's officers to compete in how radically they chose to implement it. One officer who seems clearly to have seen that ruthlessness brought career rewards was Captain Brandt.[34] As late as October, when the 221st's intensified killing campaign was well underway, Brandt was bemoaning the failure of his men to behave with the "harshness" which anti-partisan warfare demanded:

> *"That officers have to do the shooting whilst the men watch is simply unacceptable. The mass of the men are too weak; this is a sign that the true meaning of "partisan warfare" is something they have never learned, or at least have been badly taught."*[35]

It seems from this that Brandt was shooting prisoners personally. That Brandt was a particularly ruthless officer therefore seems clear, and he may well have had this attribute to thank for his appointment as commander of the 221st's specialised, mobile *Partisanen-Bekämpfungs-Bataillon*, at that time the 221st's most dynamic unit, on 7th September. Similarly the remarks of Colonel Koch, the commander of the 350th Infantry Regiment, in urging a stronger line against the Jews, may to some extent have been driven by careerist considerations;[36] Koch too was eventually promoted and awarded command of the 454th Security Division in December.[37] Career-minded officers at all levels of the division, amongst whom both General Pflugbeil and Major Haupt can probably be numbered, may also have been mindful of the likelihood that they were being compared for "effectiveness" with the SS Cavalry Brigade, which in early September was appointed to cleansing operations in part of the 221st's administrative area.[38] For the SS Cavalry Brigade, "effectiveness" meant vicious

butchery on a massive scale, as its operations in the Pripjet area in August had shown all too clearly.[39]

Finally, General Pflugbeil's "look away and whistle" act at the Bialystok massacre suggests that the divisional commander was unlikely to intervene against atrocities perpetrated by his troops. This was a further possible green light to greater brutality than might otherwise have been the case.

The first wave of the 221st Security Division's killing campaign of autumn 1941 therefore did not simply correspond to the general murderous development of the German Army's anti-partisan effort. Major Haupt's endeavour to take advantage of deteriorating circumstances and create a fusion of ideologically-driven and militarily-driven ruthlessness seems to have been an example of a lower-level agent exploiting local conditions to further his ideological and careerist agenda. The bloody consequences may have been perpetuated not only because of the receptiveness of subordinate officers to Haupt's arguments, but also because of their own careerist drive and General Pflugbeil's "blind eye" mentality. In all these ways, vague agenda-setting and the free hand enjoyed by ruthless and ambitious individuals, which fed the process of cumulative radicalisation so characteristic of the Third Reich as a whole, were replicated within the 221st Security Division.

A different combination of causes, however, was to feed the further intensification of killing from late October.

5.3. The second killing wave, 26th October - 14th December 1941

In part, the killing of late October on was fuelled by further expansion of the divisional area on 9th November, and by the arrival of a new unit, the 192nd Infantry Regiment, which served with the 221st Security Division between early November and early December. It is likely that ideological ruthlessness, military ruthlessness, careerism and tolerance of excess, all of which may well have helped fuel the killing of early September on, were at work here also; indeed, they can be seen as having constituted a "building block" of existing ruthlessness. However, whilst the numbers of dead ballooned even further, the numbers of arrested civilian suspects fell markedly. It seems from this that new forces were at work also - forces which predisposed units toward killing "partisans and suspect elements" with even less pretext than before. The nature of these forces becomes clearer in the light of further developments in the 221st Security Division's situation at this time.

For one thing, the task of ensuring a minimum supply of food for the civilian population became yet more pressing in the face of the severe shortages which could be expected during the winter. One unit whose killing certainly seems to have been influenced by this consideration was another rear area security unit, the 339th Infantry Division; the fugitive Red Army soldiers in its jurisdiction, many of whom had recently been employed by farmers in harvest-gathering,

were now regarded by that division as "surplus mouths to be culled".[40] Whilst there is no actual evidence that the need to cull surplus mouths prompted more killing by the 221st, it is certainly possible that it did. For one thing, it would help explain why more people were being killed immediately, and fewer being arrested as suspects first.[41]

A second possible explanation, however, receives greater support from the sources. As autumn 1941 drew on, the need to destroy the basis of any future partisan movement grew more acute. The 221st Security Division fully identified with General von Schenckendorff's belief that such action could and indeed must be taken before the winter.[42] In fact, strangling the partisan movement at birth by destroying all potential sources of future trouble was by definition a recipe for the intensified killing of non-combatants, as the following communiqué from the 286th Security Division makes clear:

> *"In part these people are prisoners who have escaped from or been left behind by the POW columns marching through the locality; in part, they've been sent to the rear by front-line troops accompanied not by German personnel but only by the general instruction "go west". Most were wandering around weaponless. However this doesn't rule out the possibility that wandering individuals, particularly officers, join partisan groups that they stumble across."*[43]

Groups such as these were therefore likely to be targeted in any drive to destroy potential sources of future partisan activity. If the 221st was indeed thinking along these same lines, it almost certainly meted out such treatment to any Red Army soldiers found to have escaped from its own POW columns;[44] if nothing else, the manpower overstretch suffered by all security divisions is often likely to have precluded accompanying apprehended Red Army soldiers to the nearest transit camp. In common with other security divisions, the 221st did not share the optimism of Schenckendorff, and also of the SD,[45] that the partisan movement could indeed be destroyed soon. Major Benke, who had replaced Major Haupt as operations officer in early November,[46] asserted on the 13th that the genuine, active partisans in the divisional area were adequately supplied and benefiting from an injection of Soviet parachutists into the area, and that they would survive into the winter because the division was incapable of preventing them from doing so.[47] Benke is unlikely to have been exaggerating; once the division moved to the front in mid-December, when it would have had nothing to gain from embroidering the facts, it presented a similar assessment to the units which were replacing it.[48] It was clear then not only that preventative action was needed, but also that the division's situation might prevent it from conducting such action to the necessary degree.

What caused the 221st's situation to deteriorate further? On the surface, the division enjoyed considerable advantages from mid-September in comparison to the period before. The arrival of the 339th Infantry Division to the west of it meant that, even when taking into account further expansion to the east, the 221st was now responsible for a considerably smaller geographical area. Furthermore, the division received temporary help at various points from additional units, such as the 192nd Infantry Regiment and the 1st SS Infantry Brigade. For these reasons, along

with the division's relative success in the recruitment of former POWs to various duties,[49] the unremittingly bleak picture of fighting power presented in divisional reports should not be believed in its entirety. It still seems, however, that the 221st was now under even more strain than before. It was not alone; the 286th Security Division reported that each of its companies - at almost certainly no more than 80 to 100 men per company and perhaps considerably fewer - was having to guard an area averaging a thousand square kilometres in size.[50] In October the 221st was burdened by the addition of particularly partisan-infested areas to its jurisdiction.[51] Moreover, at a time when partisans were targeting rail supplies to a greater extent than before in an effort to disrupt Army Group Centre's offensive against Moscow, the division was also made responsible for guarding a greater number of railways.[52]

Motorisation, meanwhile, was hamstrung by orders from Army Group Centre for its units to be as sparing as possible of fuel in order to ensure sufficient supplies for the impending German offensive against Moscow.[53] Moreover, manpower was becoming increasingly deficient. The inadequacy of the 221st's *Landesschützen-Bataillone* in particular was due not just to their arms and equipment, but also to the quality of the men themselves. The 221st's report of 4th November stated that, along with excessive "variation" in equipment, the main source of deficiency was the advanced age of many *Landesschützen* troops. Problems of manpower quality seem to have been both genuine and acute across the Army Group Centre Rear Area; on 19th September, General von Schenckendorff issued guidelines for the "training of troops in difficult conditions".[54] These guidelines stressed the importance of keeping the troops sharp, and ensuring that training, be it of newly-arrived units or of units already in the field and growing "stale", be maintained even in the midst of the myriad occupation duties which the troops were now straining to fulfil. Under no circumstances were the troops to go for weeks without firing a shot, and officers and NCOs must be thoroughly trained to ensure that they provide the necessary leadership.

All this took place, furthermore, at a time when genuine partisans seem finally to have been biting back. Whereas for example the 221st's *Partisanen-Bekämpfungs-Bataillon* had from 28th September to 9th November killed 178 "partisans" at absolutely no loss to itself, developments from early November tell a different story. On 3rd November, for example, the 350th Infantry Regiment sustained two dead in an engagement with partisans. Near Domaschewo on the 18th, the 192nd Infantry Regiment lost 7 dead and 7 wounded. These engagements were extremely one-sided; in Bluda, 20 to 30 partisans were killed; near Domaschewo, 195.[55] The vast disparities between recorded German and partisan dead indicate that most of the "partisans" killed in these engagements would have been non-combatants, but in the circumstances of overstretch in which the 221st was operating it could ill-afford any casualties. A report of 12th October to Army Group Rear Area command maintained that, other than the *Partisanen-Bekämpfungs-Bataillon* and the forward unit of the 350th Infantry Regiment, the division lacked any forces for the active combating of partisans; the great

majority of the 350th Infantry Regiment and of *Landesschützen-Regiment* 45 were tied up protecting the railways and roads.[56] The fact that by 4th November the 350th Infantry Regiment and *Landesschützen-Regiment* 45 were both missing ten per cent of their full strength was therefore a serious source of worry.[57]

By early November the 221st's operations section was reporting that the division now possessed the fighting power of a "badly-equipped brigade".[58] Thus, though the operations section may have been exaggerating somewhat on this occasion, security of the rear areas does seem to have been growing harder still. This is likely to have reinforced the kind of mind-set liable to translate into yet greater brutality. It was even more likely in a situation in which problems of overstretch, transport, equipment and manpower were hindering the task of destroying the partisans before the imminent onset of winter. It is possible under these circumstances that, if the 221st Security Division had accepted it could not completely wipe out the currently active partisans or destroy all potential bases of future partisan activity, it had decided simply to try its best by killing as many people as possible.

Careerism, meanwhile, seems to have played an important role in this phase of brutalisation also. As has already been seen, General von Schenckendorff himself issued a number of directives during 1941 which fitted the pattern of radical agenda-setting, vague in detail, which spurred subordinates to a mixture of ideological and career-driven ruthlessness.[59] On 24th October Schenckendorff sent the 221st Security Division a copy of a document generated by the operations section of the 707th Infantry Division, which had by then assumed security duties in the General Commissariat of White Ruthenia to the west of the Army Group Centre Rear Area. The document, dated 10th October, detailed the specific pacification measures which the 707th had been carrying out.[60] It described how, as a result of various patrols, battalions of the 707th had taken 74 prisoners and shot no less than 49 of them. Of the six battalions involved, furthermore, four had shot all the prisoners who had fallen into their hands. Schenckendorff ensured that the point sank in by underlining the figures with red ink. In doing so, he seems to have wished to spur the 221st to even greater feats of brutality. Most strikingly, however, the report went out on 24th October and would have been received, presumably, a day or two later - the very point at which the 221st moved its brutality up a gear.[61] Though it would be wrong to ascribe central importance to this document, Schenckendorff's gentle suggestion to radicalise conduct further seems to have played successfully to careerist notions of displaying the necessary ruthlessness to superiors.

5.4. Conclusion

The killing in which the 221st Security Division engaged from early September 1941 was part of a similar, general explosion across the entire Army Group Centre Rear Area. What is also apparent, however, is that varied local conditions and the initiative of officers at low operational

levels played an important role in the development of the process. Major Haupt, the 221st's operations officer, seems to have been driven by a combination of ideological conviction and careerist ambition to concoct a directive which rallied the 221st's disparately motivated officers around a call for greater ruthlessness appealing to ideological, military and careerist sentiments. To a great extent these sentiments had been bolstered by the division's experiences of summer 1941, and the timing of Haupt's directive for early September took full advantage of a deterioration in circumstances which was likely to fuel brutality even further.

The second intensification in killing, from late October, was driven partly by the same combination of ideology, military ruthlessness and careerism, but by other factors also. The deteriorating food situation and, as is clearer from the records, the 221st's growing realisation of its inability to destroy the partisans before winter, created the kinds of conditions whereby the division was likely to be come predisposed to killing with even less pretext than before. The apparent preference of the 221st's commander to turn a blind eye to atrocity may also have played a part in facilitating the brutalisation process.

The case of the 221st therefore not only supports Jürgen Förster's argument that "(t)he behaviour of the Wehrmacht in the occupied areas was shaped by a network of the impetus which it received from above, the reaction of the enemy, approval from above and its own initiative".[62] It also suggests that fully understanding the picture requires breaking it down further. The following chapters examine the complexities of the 221st Security Division's conduct in the context of the very different situation which the security divisions faced during 1942 and 1943.

Endnotes to Chapter 5

[1] See above, pp. 49-50.

[2] Whilst time constraints prevented a systematic comparison between the 221st and the other security divisions active in the Army Group Centre Rear Area at this stage, this is one of the directions in which the research could develop. See below, pp. 239-40.

[3] Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*, p. 557.

[4] There is an ever more extensive literature on the emergence of the Final Solution in the months following the invasion of the Soviet Union. The current consensus is that the actual decision to annihilate the European Jews was taken some time after the invasion rather than before it, and that it was preceded by a process of radicalised killing, primarily in the east, committed by the *Einsatzgruppen* and other agencies and shaped by a complex interaction of directives from above, ideology, personal factors and situational developments. There remains much disagreement however on the timing, course and degree of uniformity of events, and the most recent research points to a differentiated explanation of the process across regions (see above, Section 1.4.2.). Major recent additions include: Browning, *Path to Genocide*; Cesarani (ed.), *Final Solution*; Aly, *Endlösung*; Ogorreck, *Einsatzgruppen*; Wilhelm, *Einsatzgruppe A*; Longerich, *Politik*; Klein (ed.) *Einsatzgruppen*; Gerlach, *Kalkulierte Morde*. See also the contributions to the recent collection edited by Ulrich Herbert, which among other things refer to further important research of recent years. Herbert (ed.), *Nationalsozialistische Vernichtungspolitik*. Recent overviews of the debate include: Kershaw, *Nazi Dictatorship*, pp. 80-107; Herbert, "Neue Antworten". Still retaining much of its value regarding this issue is the old standard: Hilberg, *Destruction*, esp. vol. 1 pp. 274-367.

[5] Translated from: *"ein rücksichtsloses und energisches Durchgreifen vor allem auch gegen die Juden, die Hauptträger des Bolschewismus."* Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*, p. 557. Gerlach attaches greater importance to this directive than to the more widely-cited Reichenau Order of 10th October, which the initial intensification of the *Ostheer*'s killing actually preceded.

[6] Cooper, *Phantom War*, p. 56.

[7] Ibid..

[8] Heer, "Die Logik", pp. 105-18.

[9] Hoffmann, "Die Kriegführung", pp. 889-95, 918-30; Friedrich, J., *Das Gesetz*, pp. 420-3, 514-45.

[10] Förster, J., "Die Sicherung", pp. 1232-7, 1246-50; idem., "Das nationalsozialistische Herrschaftssystem", pp. 41-3; "The Relation", pp. 90-7; "Wehrmacht, Krieg und Holocaust", p. 953.

[11] Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*, pp. 805-13.

[12] Ibid..

[13] Boll and Safrian, "Auf dem Weg"; Safrian, "Komplizen"; Anderson, *Conduct of Reprisals*; idem., "62. Infanterie-Division", "Incident".

[14] Translated from: *"Die Hinterhältigkeit der Partisanenkämpfer sowie die erwiesene Mithilfe jüdischer Einwohner erfordert zur Vermeidung von Rückschlägen für die Truppe eine noch intensivere und schärfere Handhabung der den Truppenkommandeuren überlassenen Befugnisse."* NA T-315/1667, file 16748/10. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 6.9.41. "Divisionsbefehl für die am 6.9.41 erfolgende Übernahme des erweiterten Div-Bereiches."

[15] See above, pp. 45-6.

[16] NA T-315/1671, file 16748/16. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 7.-20.9.41. Tagesmeldungen an RHGeb. Mitte.

[17] See above, pp. 28-9.

[18] See above, pp. 49, 82.

[19] The particularly large recorded body count of 252 "partisans" for the period 14th to 20th September, for example, was attributable largely to a major encirclement operation conducted by the 350th Infantry Regiment in co-operation with other units outside of the 221st. This operation, similar in form to the later *Großunternehmen*, created the circumstances conducive to a particularly high death toll. See above, Table 3, p. 50; below, pp. 106-7.

[20] See above, p. 73.

[21] See above, pp. 55-63, 73-4.

[22] It is distinctly possible that Haupt's directive was issued in co-operation with other sections of the division. It may be no coincidence, for example, that Lieutenant Meyer's directive for tightening up execution of the *Kommissarbefehl* was also issued on 6th September. See above, p. 56.

[23] This particularly hapless division, which was operating in the Army Group South Rear Area, deemed its state of motorisation so inadequate that by September it was reporting several cases of the enemy having had time to simply disappear by the time its own troops arrived on the scene. NA T-315/1667, file 16748/10. RHGeb. Mitte Abt. Ia, 15.9.41. Auszug aus dem Erfahrungsbericht der Sich.-Div. 213; Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 18.9.41. Betr.: Stellungnahme zum Erfahrungsbericht der Sich.-Div. 213, esp. p. 2. If anything, the fact that the 221st's assessment of itself was considerably less doom-laden suggests that it was essentially accurate, rather than being primarily an attempt - as is perhaps more likely in the 213th's case - to attract reinforcements.

[24] NA T-3I5/1667, file 16748/10. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 31.8.41. Anlage 618.

[25] NA T-315/1666, file 16748/7. Sich-.Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 6.9.41. KTB, 6.5.-13.12.41.

[26] See above, pp. 22-3, 63-7.

[27] Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*, p. 806.

[28] For the full text of the Reichenau Order, see: Wette and Ueberschär (eds.), *Überfall*, pp. 285-6. The translation here is taken from: Bartov, *Hitler's Army*, p. 130.

[29] See above, p. 74.

[30] NA T-315/1666, file 16748/7. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 12.9.41. KTB, 6.5.-13.12.41.

[31] NA T-315/1672, file 16748/19. LSR 45, Abt. Ia, 31.10.41; LSR 45, Abt. Ia, 8.11.41. Betr.: Tagesmeldung.

[32] For further examples drawn from German Army records, see: Heer, "Killing Fields", p. 117.

[33] See above, pp. 61-2.

[34] Not his real name.

[35] Translated from: *"Es geht nicht an, daß Offiziere erschiessen müssen, Männer zusehen. Die Masse der Männer ist zu weich - Zeichen dafür, daß sie nie oder nur schlecht darüber unterrichtet wurden, was "Partisanenkrieg" bedeutet."* NA T-315/1672, file 16748/19. Voraus-Abteilung IR 350, 14.10.41, p. 2. *Partisanen-Bekämpfungs-Bataillon* translates roughly as "partisan combat battalion".

[36] See above, p. 74.

[37] BA-MA, RH 7/704 Pers 6. Personal file on Hellmuth Koch.

[38] BA-MA, RH 22/225. RHGeb. Mitte Abt. Ia, 5.9.41. "Anweisung für SS-Kav. Brigade".

[39] Büchler, "Kommandostab", pp. 15-17.

[40] Christian Gerlach argues that German Army units covered their murderous intentions over this by claiming that it was the farmers themselves who, with the onset of winter, would start to see the former Red Army soldiers as "surplus mouths". This, claimed the 286th Security Division, would create a new source of manpower for the partisans, for the former Red Army soldiers would have no choice but to join them or starve. The 286th claimed that it was solving this problem not by killing the soldiers but by ensuring that they were transported to transit camps. Gerlach cites the 339th, however, in support of his argument that the former Red Army soldiers were regarded as surplus mouths not by the farmers, for whom there is no evidence of such a view, but by the Germans themselves. Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*, p. 807.

[41] Unfortunately, there is also a lack of material generated by the relevant *Wirtschaftskommandos* at this particular time.

[42] Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*, p. 794.

[43] Translated from: *"(es sind) z T Gefangene, die aus den hiesigen Gefangenenkolonnen entlaufen oder abgekommen sind, z.T. Gefangene, die von der kämpfenden Truppe ohne Begleitpersonal zurückgeschickt worden sind mit der allgemeinen Marschrichtung "Westen". Die Masse wanderte waffenlos. Das schliesst nicht aus, daß einzelne, die bei dieser Wanderung auf Partisanenbanden gestossen sind, sich diesen angeschlossen haben, besonders Offiziere...."* BA-MA, RH 26-286/3. Sich.-Div. 286 Abt. Ia, 7.11.41. Betr.: Partisanentätigkeit, p. 1.

[44] The problem of escaping POWs was considerable at this time. NA T-315/1672, file 16748/18. LSR 45, 24.9.41. Betr.: Erfahrungsbericht über den Transport von Kriegsgefangenen.

[45] Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*, p. 794.

[46] From the divisional files it is not clear whether Haupt was actually promoted.

[47] NA T-315/1668, file 16748/12. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 13.11.41. Divisionsbefehl!. The 286th Security Division, whilst not anticipating much general partisan activity during the winter, certainly anticipated an increase in plunder. BA-MA, RH 26-286/3. Sich.-Div. 286 Abt. Ia, 7.11.41. Betr.: Partisanentätigkeit, p. 3.

[48] NA T-315/1668, file 16748/12. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 14.12.41. Betr.: Übergabe des Raumes der. Sich.-Div. 221 an die Sich.-Div. 286.

[49] See below, pp. 127-8.

[50] BA-MA, RH 26-286/3. Sich.-Div. 286 Abt. Ia, 7.11.41. Betr.: Partisanentätigkeit, p. 2.

[51] NA T-315/1668, file 16748/11. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 12.10.41. Anlage 854.

[52] NA T-315/1668, file 16748/11. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 11.10.41. Betr.: Eisenbahnlage; ibid., 21.10.41. Betr.: Eisenbahnlage.

[53] NA T-315/1673, file 16748/25. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ib, 9.10.41. Besondere Anordnungen für die Versorgung Nr 140/41.

[54] NA T-315/1668, file 16748/11. RHGeb. Mitte Abt. Ia/IIa, 19.9.41. Ausbildung der Truppen unter schwierigen Verhältnissen.

[55] NA T-315/1666, file 16748/7. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 3.11, 18.11.41. KTB, 6.5.-13.12.41.

[56] NA T-315/1668, file 16748/11. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 12.10.41. Anlage 854.

[57] NA T-315/1668, file 16748/12. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 4.11.41, p. 2. Betr.: Lagebeurteilung.

[58] Ibid., p. 3.

[59] See above, p. 49.

[60] NA T-315/1668, file 16748/11. RHGeb. Mitte Abt. Ia, 24.10.41.

[61] See above, Table 2, p. 43. In the fortnight before 26th October, 211 partisans were killed. The figure was 497 during the fortnight after. Such is the incompleteness of the files of other Army Group Centre security divisions at this time that it is not clear whether Schenckendorff sent them all a copy of the same report. If he did not then this may suggest he was concerned that the 221st was somewhat "softer" than the other divisions.

[62] Förster, J., "Wehrmacht, Krieg und Holocaust", p. 954.

CHAPTER 6: THE PARTISAN WAR, 1942 - 1943: HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

From the spring of 1942 the situation which the *Ostheer*'s security effort faced in the Army Group Centre Area was vastly different to that of 1941. The partisan movement enjoyed increasingly favourable circumstances in which to re-emerge and then flourish; growing disillusionment with the German occupation and the stripping of German security forces to the bone during the winter of 1941/2 created a situation in which sizeable partisan groups were finally able to establish themselves and build a base of power from which they were later able to strike out and inflict significant blows upon German supply, administration and economic exploitation in the rear areas. The confused institutional set-up of the German anti-partisan effort, pressure of circumstances and the contrasting approaches of different officers all fuelled a contradictory response by the *Ostheer* in which the effectiveness of a necessary hearts and minds campaign was blunted massively by a parallel intensification of pitiless terror against the population. This chapter outlines both the main developments of the partisan war in the Army Group Centre area from early 1942 to summer 1943 and the activities of the 221st Security Division itself during that period.[1]

6.1. The partisan war in the Army Group Centre area, January 1942 - August 1943.

6.1.1. The population's changing mood and the emerging partisan movement to early summer 1942.

In the winter of 1941/2 fierce Soviet counter-attacks were unleashed upon the Germans and drove them back hundreds of miles. As part of the effort to stem this tide, Army Group Centre's security divisions had to relinquish their *Eingreiftruppen* to front-line duty, and the *Landesschützen-* and *Wach-Bataillone* were thus forced to carry out active security as well as guard supply lines and other installations. The Germans' worst fears now came true; the partisans were given a breathing space in which to rebuild and come back with greatly enhanced organisation and fighting power. Table 4 shows a time-line for the January 1942 to August 1943 period, set out in the same way as Table 1. Figure 3 shows the Army Group Centre Rear Area during this period.

The inroads which the winter 1941/2 offensives had made into German-occupied territory had brought the already-existing fledgling partisan groups into closer proximity with the front-line, and now the Red Army and Red Air Force seized the opportunities which this presented. Ground-based and airborne Red Army detachments, officers and specialists were sent into German-occupied territory to make contact with partisan groups, train them in guerrilla warfare and sabotage techniques, co-ordinate them, and expand them using local recruits.[2]

Table 4: Developments (January 1942 — August 1943)

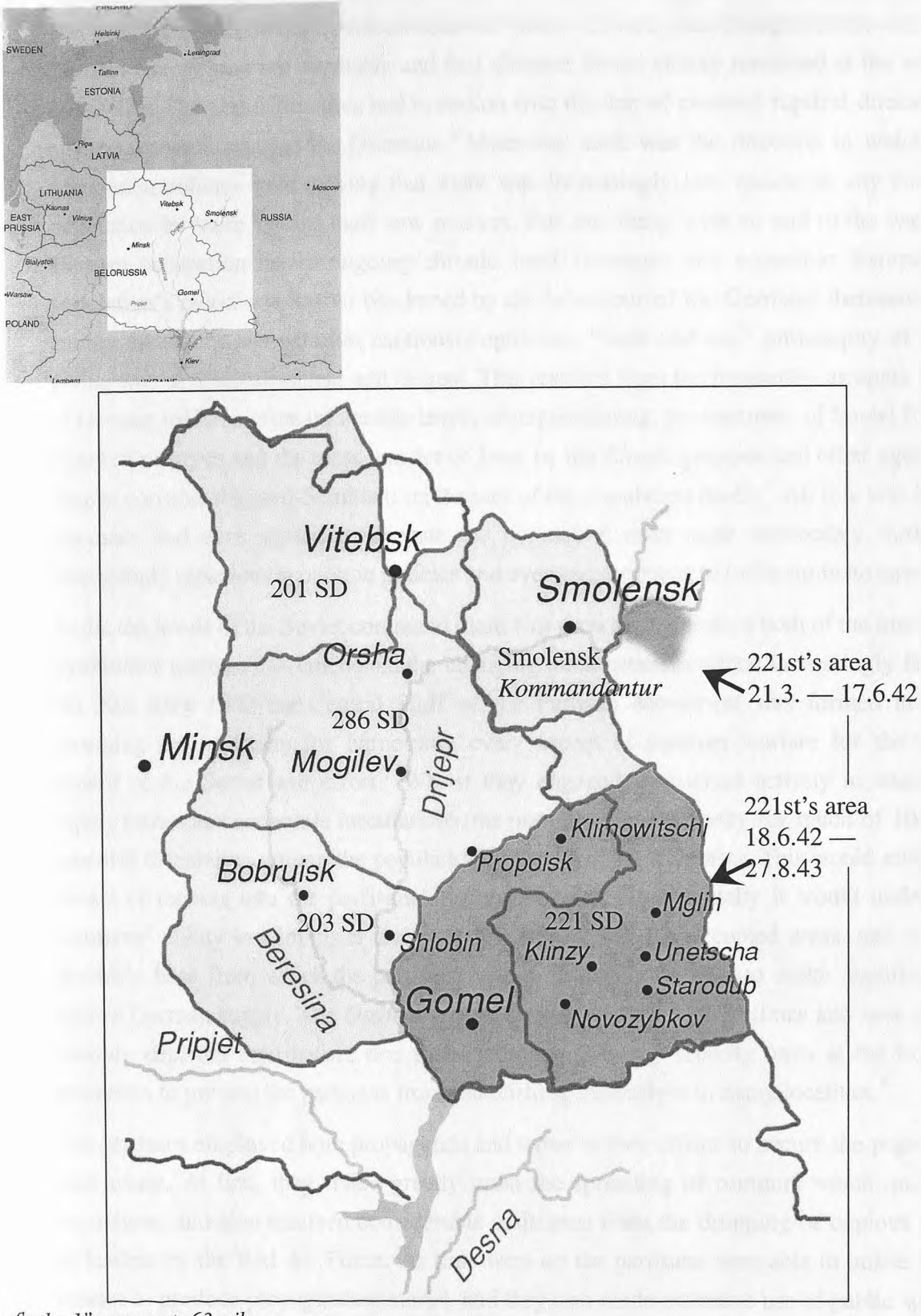
Year Month	Eastern Front	Security campaign in Army Group Centre	Security campaign of 221st Security Division	Composition of 221st Security Division
1942 January	Major Soviet offensives against German 9th Army.	Partisan groups in rear assisted and reinforced by Red Army instructors; expansion using local recruits.	Service at front in Orel sector (to 21st March).	
February	German front stabilising from mid-February; start of German counter-attacks and encirclements of Soviet troops (to April).	Announcement of German agricultural reforms to woo rural population.		
March		Further increase in partisan numbers, and disruption of German administration in rear areas.	Divisional command returns to Army Group Centre Rear Area; committed to operations in Jelnja-Dorogobush region (to 17th June).	Commander: General Pflugbeil Operations officer: Major Benke *Landessch.-Rgt.* 45 (Cdr.: Col. Wiemann), plus *Wach.-Btl.* 722.
April		*Operation Bamberg* (Bobruisk area). First of the large-scale German anti-partisan operations.		Operations officer: Major Friedrich (date of appt. unclear) Receives *Landessch.-Rgt.* 44 (5 btlns.) & Police Battalion 323 (4th). Receives two more *Landessch.-Btlne.* (14th).
May	Capture of Sebastopol; final German conquest of Crimea.	Major anti-partisan operations in Bobruisk area. Formation of Central Partisan Committee in Moscow.		
June	Launch of Operation *Blau* by Army Group South to capture Caucasus oil-fields and Stalingrad (advance continues into following months).	Major anti-partisan operations in Bobruisk area. All *Landesschützen* units redesignated *Sicherungs-* units.	Transfer to Gomel area (18th).	Commander: General Lersner (from 18th). Operations officer: Major Friedrich *Sich.-Rgt.* 45 (2 btlns.. Cdr.: Col. Wiemann). *Sich.-Rgt.* 27 (3 btlns.). *Sich.-Rgt.* 44 (1 btln., from 20th). 3rd btln., 368th (French) Inf.-Rgt.. Reserve Police Battalion 91 (later renamed as I/Pol. Rgt. 8 and then again as I/ SS Pol. Rgt. 8.)
July		Major anti-partisan operations in Bobruisk area.	Initial operations to comb new jurisdiction, codenamed *Hamburg* , *Süd* , *Dreieck and Viereck.*	Operations officer: Major Kriebel (date of appt. unclear)

Table 4: Developments (January 1942 — August 1943)

Year	Month	Eastern Front	Security campaign in Army Group Centre	Security campaign of 221st Security Division	Composition of 221st Security Division
	August		Re-organisation of anti-partisan warfare; *OKH* responsible for Army-administered zones. Major anti-partisan operations in Bobruisk area.		
	September	Start of Battle of Stalingrad.		Temporary cessation of all active security; main focus on security of railways.	*Sich.-Rgt.* 44 leaves division (precise date unclear).
	October		Major anti-partisan effort in Bryansk Forest area (ongoing to early summer 1943). *Kommandobefehl* issued; Hitler urges more ruthless treatment of irregulars. Göring directive on economic anti-partisan warfare.		
	November	Soviet counter-attack in south; 6th Army encircled at Stalingrad; German retreat from Caucasus.	Issue of OKW guidelines to "square the circle" between ruthlessness and constructive engagement in security policy.		*Sich.-Rgt.* 36 takes over 221st's north-eastern sector, 1st Battalion, *Fallschirmjäger-Ausbildungs-Regiment* the south-western (precise dates unclear). *Ost-Bataillon* 604 in active security duty in 221st's area (from 30th). Units of 930th Gren. Rgt. assigned to north-eastern sector (11th).
	December	Rosenberg Conference in Berlin urging more constructive occupation policies.	Ruthless anti-partisan guidelines "against women and children also" issued by Hitler through OKW.	Operation *Ankara;* first of 221st's larger-scale operations of the late 1942-1943 period in which significant numbers of "partisans' recorded killed.	
1943	January		Major anti-partisan operations in Polotsk-Vitebsk area (to March).	Operations *Ankara II* and *Klette II* (units of 221st in op. in rear area of 2nd Panzer Army).	
	February	6th Army surrenders at Stalingrad - turning point in Eastern War.		Operations *Zugspitze* and *Hasenjagd* ; the latter is part of the division's failed attempt to trap and destroy the large Grischin partisan group.	Security Battalion 242, under command of 183rd Security Regiment, assigned to 221st's north-western sector (precise date unclear).

Table 4: Developments (January 1942 — August 1943)

Year	*Month*	*Eastern Front*	*Security campaign in Army Group Centre*	Security campaign of 221st Security Division	Composition of 221st Security Division
	March	Field-Marshal von Manstein recaptures *Kharkov. Partial German withdrawal in* central sector.	Major increases in partisan disruption throughout spring and summer.	Significant increase in partisan disruption throughout spring and summer.	Loss of three battalions to other duties (1st). Hungarian 108th & 201st Light Divisions take over some static security duty from *Sich. Rgt.* 45 and Gren. Rgt. 930 (17th).
	April			Operation *Osterhase* ; bloodiest anti-partisan operation under 221st's command during 1943.	
	May		Army Group Centre units take part in SS-led Operation *Cottbus* , the bloodiest anti-partisan operations of the eastern campaign.	Further increase in partisan disruption. Operation *Nachbarhilfe* (units of 221st in rear area of 4th Army).	Loss of two battalions to other duties; temporary halt to mobile ops. in 221st's area.
	June			Operation *Junikäfer* .	
	July	Germans defeated in major tank battle at Kursk; Soviet offensive launched in Bryansk and Orel region.	Massive increase in partisan attacks on railways. OKH and OKW endorse more moderate anti-partisan guidelines.	Operation *Csobo* (Hungarian anti-partisan operation in 221st's area). Operation *Sommerfest* .	I/ SS Pol. Rgt. 8 and *Sich.-Rgt.* 45 leave division mid-July.
	August	German retreat and "scorched earth" campaign in central sector.	Continued massive partisan disruption, especially against railways.	Transfer west to new jurisdiction (28th August) and preparation for Operation *Orloff* .	



Scale: 1" represents 63 miles.

Figure 3: Jurisdictions of the 221st Security Division and the Army Group Centre Rear Area, March 1942 to August 1943. There were only minor changes to the jurisdictions during this period. Dark grey denotes the 221st's area; light grey denotes the rest of the Army Group Centre Rear Area. This map was based on a photocopy taken from the Army Group Centre Rear Areas intelligence, files NA T-501/27 file 31491/4.

By now, moreover, the mood of the population was beginning to move against the Germans. For one thing, the Soviet counterattacks of winter 1941/2 had brought home the fact that German victory was not inevitable and that ultimate Soviet victory remained at the very least a possibility. The population thus had to reckon with the fear of eventual reprisal directed against anyone who had assisted the Germans.[3] Moreover, such was the direction in which German occupation policies were moving that there was increasingly less reason in any case for the population to warm toward their new masters. For one thing, with no end to the war in sight, German occupation meant ongoing chronic food shortages and economic disruption.[4] The population's mood was further blackened by the behaviour of the Germans themselves; by the spring of 1942 the co-operative, cautiously optimistic "wait-and-see" philosophy of 1941 was giving way to disillusionment and disgust. This resulted from the frequently arrogant behaviour of German soldiers, often intolerable levels of requisitioning, the treatment of Soviet POWs, the plight of refugees and the mass murder of Jews by the *Einsatzgruppen* and other agencies (this despite considerable anti-Semitism on the part of the population itself).[5] All this was before the Germans had even started to alienate the population even more irrevocably through their increasingly rapacious economic policies and ever greater resort to indiscriminate terror.[6]

At the top levels of the Soviet command there was growing realisation both of the importance of an effective partisan movement and the changing circumstances which increasingly favoured it. On 30th May 1942 the Central Staff of the Partisan Movement was formed in Moscow, assuming responsibility for harnessing every aspect of partisan warfare for the maximum benefit of the Soviet war effort.[7] Whilst they engaged themselves actively in attacking both supply routes and economic installations, the partisans' main priority for much of 1942 was to establish themselves among the population of the occupied territories. This would ensure a vital stream of recruits into the partisans' ranks, but most fundamentally it would undermine the Germans' ability to administer and economically exploit the occupied areas, and would also provide a base from which the partisans would ultimately be able to strike significant blows against German supply. The *Ostheer* forces, stretched at the best of times and now even more severely depleted than before due to the absence of many security units at the front,[8] were powerless to prevent the partisans from establishing themselves in many localities.[9]

The partisans employed both propaganda and terror in their efforts to secure the population for their cause. At first, they relied greatly upon the spreading of rumours which unsettled the population, and also received considerable assistance from the dropping of copious quantities of leaflets by the Red Air Force. As time went on the partisans were able to utilise their own presses to produce propaganda material, and they also made extensive use of public speakers in the villages which they controlled. Partisan propaganda made great play of the hardships which the Germans had inflicted with their occupation policies and the promises which they had broken, such as their failure to honour the pledges they had made in their announcement of agricultural reform in February 1942.[10] Emphasis was also placed on alleged devastating

German defeats and major Soviet victories, and on an appeal to patriotic sentiments - to love for "Mother Russia" - rather than less effective political-ideological language. Propaganda also trumpeted the prospect of a golden era of reform, encompassing measures such as the re-privatisation of state farms which Stalin would enact once the war was over. Indeed, the partisans were often quick to enact such measures themselves in the areas they controlled, hoping in the process to create a showcase of Soviet reforming zeal.[11] Though Stalin had been initially distrustful of the idea of a mass movement drawn extensively from what to his mind was a politically suspect rural population, the Soviet leadership's endorsement of the concept in the September 1942 directive "On the Tasks of the Partisan Movement" was a further boost to the partisans' cultivation effort.[12]

Whilst the partisans promised much to those who participated in the "Great Patriotic War", they also went after pro-German collaborators with a vengeance. Those who collaborated with the Germans were targeted and killed mercilessly, sometimes along with their families. Terror was employed selectively, however; from autumn 1942, whilst they still showed no mercy to collaborating civilian administrators, the partisans' efforts to present themselves as a popular movement compelled them to entice defection among members of armed native units in German service.[13] Meanwhile, whilst callous excesses certainly took place in the course of partisan requisitioning and recruitment, both were to a large extent conducted on an orderly, systematic basis in partisan-controlled areas.[14] A considerably darker side of partisan conduct was the apparently deliberate provocation of harsh German reprisals against the population as a means of cementing the population even more strongly to the partisan cause.[15] In contrast to the ever-worsening excesses of the German occupation, however, the view which seems to have been growing within much of the population was that the partisans were on balance the lesser of two evils.[16]

The degree to which the partisans established themselves in the area of Army Group Centre during the spring and early summer of 1942 is reflected all too clearly in the increasing disruption they managed to cause. Such a state of affairs was doubly alarming for a command such as General von Schenckendorff's, the order of battle for which was now even less impressive than it had been during 1941. Of the twenty-five *Landesschützen-Bataillone* active in the Rear Area in May 1942, eleven were judged by General von Schenckendorff as possessing zero fighting worth.[17] Other German agencies expressed similar alarm; the SD reported on 19th June that in many areas *"the lack of sufficient security forces means that it is not always possible to persecute the partisan war with the necessary severity. This shakes the confidence of the population and feeds the (partisans') rumour mill."*[18] A report of the 203rd Security Division of 16th April maintained that *"(l)isting all the individual attacks, all the disturbances inflicted by the partisans and bandits upon rear area security, would take up pages."*[19]

The reinforcements which eventually were forthcoming - mainly a limited number of German Army training formations, Luftwaffe ground troops and Hungarians - fell far short of what was required. The training formations were ill-equipped and undermanned, but even they were an improvement on most of the Hungarian troops.[20] Of considerably better quality were the mechanised and well-equipped Luftwaffe ground troops, but with quality came a particularly vicious approach to anti-partisan warfare which was guaranteed to alienate the population even further.[21] Some success was achieved by the end of 1942 in reducing the number of successful partisan attacks against the railways - static security being the only task many of these units were fit for - but the success was of a limited nature.[22] For the Germans, then, the rules of engagement had taken a dramatic turn for the worse, and this is borne out by the overall picture of rising partisan activity, presented below in Table 5.

Table 5: The partisan war in the Army Group Centre Rear Area, June - December 1942.[23]

	April	May	June	July	August	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
No. of clashes between partisans and Germans / auxiliaries / allies.	42	100	162	266	299	252	275	191	217
No. of villages attacked by partisans.	75	130	174	168	140	193	260	194	262
No. of killings of civilians.	21	6	14	103	77	137	79	98	61
No. of cases of rail sabotage.[3]	30[1]	79	129 (39)	156 (76)	208 (119)	431[5]	201 (113)	162 (118)	147 (160)
No. of partisan dead.	5273[2]	1445	2424	1970	2145	1205	2018	1977	1699
No. of German / auxiliary / allied dead.[4]	173	219	336	230	295	287	176	142	166
German / auxiliary / allied dead as percentage of partisan dead.	3.3%	15.0%	13.8%	11.7%	13.8%	23.8%	8.7%	8.4%	9.8%

1. Incl. destruction of bridges.
2. Incl. 3423 during Op. *Bamberg* .
3. NOT incl. no. of prevented cases: these are given separately in brackets where recorded. Bracketed figures for October and November incl. prevented road explosions (these constituted a very small portion of the total. In November for example the number of successful road explosions was 12.).
4. Includes only combat troops; does not include German agricultural administrators.
5. Prob. incl. successful and prevented partisan attacks, but separate figure for prevented attacks not given.

In the area of Army Group Centre the German security effort would no longer be a ruthless ideologically-coloured drive to exterminate Jews, Red Army stragglers and refugees.[24] The *Ostheer* no longer faced a "potential partisan threat", but a real and growing danger to its ability to secure its jurisdiction for the service of the war effort. Moreover, pressures generated by the ruthless nature of German occupation, clashing approaches, difficult circumstances and

institutional chaos combined to frustrate all attempts at a genuinely effective long-term response to the partisan challenge.

6.1.2. The German response

Cultivation and its obstacles

As early as 1941 a number of figures within the German Army had recognised that evaporating prospects of a rapid victory over the Soviet Union necessitated a much more sensible and constructive handling of the population.[25] At the most basic level, cultivating the population was essential both for the smooth administration and economic exploitation of the occupied areas and for the increasingly necessary business of recruiting locals into the native auxiliary force, the *Ordnungsdienst.* The OD, initially envisaged as a source of passive security and local knowledge in the combating of partisans, would during 1942 come to play a far more extensive and active role in the German security effort. Widespread recruitment both of civilians to the OD and of former POWs to the new eastern battalions (*Ost-Bataillone*) ensued in the autumn of 1941 and gathered pace throughout 1942.[26]

Engaging the population, thereby denying the partisans its support, nonetheless meant that the original, ideological National Socialist conception of the Soviet Union - purely a source of economic wealth and expendable labour - needed to be challenged. Several initiatives did move some way in this direction. The announcement in February 1942 of reforms to break up the Soviet collective farming system was seen as heralding a "flagship" occupation policy which would ensure that the population remained faithful to the German cause.[27] Indeed, the announcement won the overwhelming approval of farmers and left the partisan propaganda machine momentarily stunned.[28] Meanwhile, Colonel Reinhard Gehlen of *Fremde Heere Ost* was at the forefront of efforts to rally the population against the partisans.[29] A comprehensive raft of propaganda measures was enacted across the Army Group Centre Rear Area, including theatre shows, cultural exhibitions and a massive leafleting effort designed to convince the population of the benevolence of German occupation policies and the criminal nature of both the Soviet regime and the partisans themselves.[30]

The effectiveness of such efforts was to be blunted, however, by the fact that they did not pose the necessary fundamental challenge to racist German preconceptions of the Russian population. Gehlen himself, for example, maintained that whilst he felt it necessary to woo the population more effectively, he fully acknowledged its racial inferiority.[31] Indeed, it was the ruthless, ideological and exploitative dynamic of Nazi occupation policy as a whole which was itself to prove by far the most implacable obstacle to any effective effort at cultivation. Two cases exemplify this with particular force - the failure of agricultural reform and the mass procurement of eastern labour for the German war effort. The promised break-up of collective farms was implemented in a patchy, half-hearted way. This was due considerably to partisan

disruption of agriculture, but it was also due to the fact that German agricultural officials were often contemptuous and cynical about how far "docile" Russian peasants possessed the competitive spirit necessary for the system of private enterprise which land reform was supposed to bring about. A more fundamental reason for the reforms' failure was that the Germans wanted to maintain extensive control of farming to benefit the war effort.[32] In an environment of ever-more acute food shortages such resentment was likely to be especially bitter, and lead to increased support for the partisans.[33]

The issue of eastern workers, or *Ostarbeiter*, was in time to prove an even bigger time bomb for the occupying power. To an increasing extent, the Reich Ministry of Labour looked to the German-occupied Soviet Union as a vital source of manpower. From the start, the German military authorities employed a combination of material promises and coercion, be it financial or physical, to compel young Russian men and women to enrol for *Arbeitseinsatz* (work duty).[34] By early October 1942, for example, *Ostarbeiter* comprised 697 000 of the 3 159 000 foreign workers in the Reich - an increase of 17% over the number of *Ostarbeiter* just two months previously. By the summer of 1943 the figure stood at 1.7 million, comprising over a quarter of all foreign workers. In the recruitment campaign, the alleged comforts and financial benefits of working in the Reich were to be trumpeted vigorously. On the other hand Russians were also to be "encouraged" to work in Germany by setting support allowances, paid out by the German authorities to every Russian family, at prohibitively low levels in order to force Russians to work in Germany. The threat of eventual forced recruitment was also to act as an "incentive". By autumn 1942, moreover, rumours were rife about the often appalling conditions in which *Ostarbeiter* in the Reich lived and worked. *Arbeitseinsatz*, particularly once it became compulsory throughout most of the Army-administered areas over the course of 1943, could only exacerbate the kind of tensions which the partisans were well able to exploit.[35]

Pitiless, exploitative German policies therefore proved a massive obstacle to the realisation of an effective hearts and minds campaign which might yet have turned the population away from the partisans. A further obstacle, however, was the ruthless approach which many *Ostheer* officers adopted toward conduct of the partisan war itself.

Terror

Many officers, possessed of an ideological, anti-Slavic and militarily ruthless mind-set, advocated all manner of severity against the partisans. Typical was an order of the 207th Security Division, stationed in northern Russia, which stated unequivocally:

> *"The fight is to be executed ruthlessly. It is a question of exterminating partisans, not taking them prisoner - unless this is necessary for gleaning information."*[36]

Many advocated an intensified crackdown on the general population, harshness being after all the only language which the "eastern character" was seen to understand and which in any case was still the preferred solution of many officers. In the most extreme cases officers seem to

have been utterly incapable of distinguishing between the partisans themselves and the population at large. General von Bechtolsheim of the 707th Infantry Division left no doubt as to where he stood; in March 1942 he effectively condemned the entire civilian population as criminals:

> *"This criminality has been consciously grown and nurtured here for a quarter of a century. All are guilty, young and old, men and women and not just any individual sector of society. So the battle must be carried out with the utmost ruthlessness!"*[37]

This however was only an extreme expression of a wider inability among very many *Ostheer* officers to distinguish properly between partisans and the rest of the population. Thus villages were often destroyed in the course of the anti-partisan effort, their populations killed or evacuated, on the flimsiest of pretexts. They might be condemned on the basis of dubious information from native informers in German service or from the SD or GFP; often the discovery of a single cache of arms or ammunition was sufficient.[38] The main mechanism which turned such merciless attitudes into murderous reality was the large-scale operation, or *Großunternehmen*. Operation *Bamberg*, conducted by the 707th Infantry Division in the Bobruisk region in March 1942, was in many ways the blueprint for this kind of operation - at least 4 396 partisans were reported killed, at a cost of seven German dead and eight wounded. Somewhat less extreme, though still breathtaking in their brutality and destructiveness, were the operations which the 201st and 286th Security Divisions carried out in the Polozk-Witebsk area between August 1942 and February 1943 - for the 201st, Operations *Schneehase*, *Kugelblitz* and *Donnerkeil* between them exacted a recorded partisan death toll of over 6 500 at a cost to the German units involved of just 159 dead; Operations *Greif*, *Blitz* and *Waldwinter*, in which the 286th participated, inflicted nearly 3 000 recorded partisan dead against 54 German.[39] The massive contrast in casualty figures in all these operations shows where the vast majority of victims came from - the civilian population.

The *Großunternehmen* were possessed of a dynamic which more often than not ensured that they became the embodiment of carnage.[40] A designated area was cordoned off and then, with some troops assigned the task of holding the perimeter to prevent break-outs, the rest advanced to a central point, in theory combing the area for partisans as they went and vetting the villages for suspect elements. It was during this phase that the most encounters with partisans took place, and the most German casualties were sustained. In reality, however, the setting of strict and often unrealistic daily targets (*Tagesziele*) for the insufficient numbers of troops committed meant that the pressure to achieve results in a short space of time was enormous. The partisans and "suspect elements" which ostensibly were the main target of such operations all too often managed to slip the cordon, and the frequent result was that the Germans, either through frustration, pressure or the belief that cowing the population was at least one means of combating the partisans, turned on the population instead.[41] All too often, moreover, any "benefit" which the Germans gained from such operations proved transitory. Due to the

insufficient manpower at their disposal, they constantly proved unable to occupy a recently-cleansed area over a lengthier period and ensure that the partisans did not re-establish themselves there.[42]

Throughout 1942 higher-level attempts were made to "square the circle" between the clear need for constructive policy, the contrasting ruthlessness with which many officers chose to prosecute the anti-partisan effort, and the pitiless dictates of Nazi occupation policy. It was a daunting task and, in an institutional environment of chaos and cumulative, intensifying brutality, it was ultimately to prove impossible. In the meantime however it generated a series of higher-level directives which amply illustrate the destructive contradictions which lay at the heart of the *Ostheer*'s anti-partisan effort.

Ambiguity: the higher-level directives of 1942

In the latter months of 1942 the security divisions were subjected to a series of higher-level directives which together attempted to square the circle between "necessary ruthlessness" on the one hand and a measure of constructiveness on the other. The directives issued by General von Schenckendorff were just one example, however, of how cumulative radicalisation allowed barbarism increasingly free rein at the expense of a genuinely effective anti-partisan effort. Schenckendorff seems on the one hand to have been severely critical of the unjustified burning of villages, the shooting of innocent civilians be they men, women or children, and the "soldiers' urge to see something burning".[43] On the other hand, the wording of his directives was designed clearly to allow brutality "should circumstances dictate". A directive of 3rd August is a case in point:

> *"Collective punishment measures, so far as they involve the shooting of inhabitants and the burning of villages, are without exception to be carried out only by order of an officer at the level of battalion commander or higher, and only then once it has been proven that the inhabitants, or particular individuals, have been supporting the partisans."*[44]

Thus the decision was left to the discretion of the officer on the spot - a recipe with as much potential for unnecessary brutality as for restraint. That Schenckendorff himself realised this is suggested by the discrepancy between the wording of the directive and the language used in the daily war diary of the Army Group Centre Rear Area, which claims Schenckendorff had imposed a total ban on the burning of villages.[45] Some of Schenckendorff's directives cloak their acceptance of all manner of ruthless measures with the language of "moderation":

> *"Anybody, including women, of whom it is proven that they either belong to a bandit group, have actively aided the bandits or carried out reconnaissance for them, is to be dealt with as ordered* (i.e. shot).
>
> *Children fall into this category only when they are old enough to understand the implications of their actions. Such understanding is beyond children of ten; these are to be punished but not shot."*[46]

This then was a directive which allowed a child aged ten or under to be "punished" (the details to be left to the troops on the spot) and a child of eleven to be shot. Regardless of

Schenckendorff's own motives in issuing such directives, the impression which they must have created at the lower levels was that, whilst "restraint" was desirable, officers at a certain level enjoyed a free hand to exercise great ruthlessness. This impression almost certainly was reinforced by a series of directives issued at the highest command levels including that of Hitler himself.[47] The first of these, Directive No. 46, was issued by Hitler on 18th August 1942. As well as "streamlining" the anti-partisan effort - with the OKH made responsible for the Army-administered zones and the SS for the civilian-administered Reich Commissariats - the directive also stressed the importance of just treatment for the population and the recruitment of civilians *en masse* to fight the partisans. On the other hand it urged that reprisals for supporting partisans be made all the more severe and that "misplaced confidence" in the population be guarded against. In other words it stipulated almost in the same breath that whilst the population must be cultivated, it could not be trusted. The "Commando Order" of 18th October 1942 seemed to reinforce a harsh approach, declaring that *"(o)nly where the struggle against the partisan nuisance was begun and carried out with ruthless brutality have successes been achieved...Throughout the eastern territories the war against the partisans is therefore a struggle of total annihilation of one side or the other."*

Attempts by the OKW to square the circle stalled due to that organisation's toadying closeness to Hitler, which stifled all attempts at effective independent thinking. The "Combat Directive for Anti-Partisan Warfare in the East" of 11th November 1942 was extremely vague on the issue of partisan deserters, stipulating merely that they be treated as prisoners-of-war "according to circumstances", and that captured partisans and their supporters should be shot or better still hanged. Officers on the spot, meanwhile, retained the power of discretion over whether to destroy villages. This directive too contradicted itself when it stated on the one hand that *"(u)njust punishment shakes the confidence of the population and creates new partisans"* but on the other that *"the severity of our measures and the fear of expected punishment must restrain the population from aid or support of the partisans."* Most extreme was the directive issued by Hitler through the OKW on 16th December, which ordered *"the most brutal* (allerbrutalsten) *means....against women and children as well"* and declared that any scruples constituted treason against the German people. This order took to its extreme the pitiless principle exhibited in the *Kriegsgerichtbarkeitserlaß* of 1941; whilst that directive had allowed officers the discretion not to punish excesses perpetrated by the troops against the population, the 16th December directive *forbade* punishment of such actions.[48]

Thus the sum of ruthlessness and restraint displayed by all these orders did not simply reflect the tension between coercion and cultivation inherent in any counter-insurgency campaign. Even if officers such as General von Schenckendorff might have been genuinely trying to square the circle - in itself a matter of debate[49] - directives such as that of 16th December showed a clear *preference* for a degree of ruthlessness which the objective situation did not call for. The reaction of field commanders, influenced also by the particular situation which they

faced and the ways in which they perceived it, was nonetheless mixed. On the one hand, for example, the commander of the Second Panzer Army stressed the need to avoid *"indiscriminate slaughter"* but the commander of the Third Panzer Army authorised any and every means against the partisans, giving the direct order to shoot all captured partisans, either immediately or after quick interrogation.[50] The *overall* effect of the orders permeating down from the highest levels was to prevent the realisation of an anti-partisan policy which engaged the population effectively.

The situation of a partisan movement of growing influence and effectiveness and a German response characterised by constructive engagement but also by counter-productive ruthlessness became even more pronounced during 1943.

6.1.3. 1943

After the winter of 1942/3 the growth of the partisan movement in the Army Group Centre area mushroomed.[51] For much of the population the end of the battle of Stalingrad in early February 1943 brought home the inevitability of eventual German defeat.[52] The partisans' intensified effort to woo the population more comprehensively, German occupation policies of increasing rapacity and German anti-partisan operations of increasing bestiality were further fuel for the growing perception among civilians that the German cause was no longer worth supporting.[53] An alarmingly extensive proportion of the Army Group Centre Rear Area was now beyond German control and, whilst the areas under solid partisan control were themselves relatively small, the population of the "twilight zones" caught between both sides seemed to be increasingly persuaded of the wisdom of supporting the partisans rather than the Germans. German control, meanwhile, shrank to the towns and cities and the areas immediately surrounding them.[54] By August 1943 Army Group Centre asserted that only 23% of its area could be considered "pacified", whilst 31% could be considered endangered by the partisans and a full 46% was completely under partisan control.[55]

The partisans themselves grew better-trained, organised and equipped, thanks partly to an increasingly favourable front-line situation which allowed the Red Air Force to increase supply of instructors, technical expertise and weaponry. This development, along with growing partisan numbers, allowed German supply to be targeted with ever-greater effectiveness. In the summer of 1943 the number of partisan attacks on the railway network across the whole of the Army Group Centre area leapt astronomically.[56] In July 1943 there were 1114 explosions along the railway tracks, in comparison to 841 during the previous month; with an average of 36 attacks per day. Even greater destruction was wrought between the beginning of August and mid-September as the partisans started to inflict explosions in sequence, using more than ten mines at a time, rather than single explosions.[57]

The response of many German officers was an intensified attempt at constructive engagement, an endeavour shared since late 1942 not only by higher command levels but also by Alfred Rosenberg's Eastern Ministry.[58] Already the OKW directive of 11th November 1942 had reiterated the importance of cultivating the population in the fight against the partisans.[59] Then in April 1943 Colonel Gehlen put forward proposals for better treatment of partisan deserters. Three months later "Basic Order No. 13a" issued by the OKH - which retained a greater semblance of independence than did the OKW - directed that partisans deserting outside of a combat situation would be given preferential treatment, and also that partisans surrendering in the course of combat would not be shot, but accorded the same treatment as prisoners of war.[60] Units in the field, meanwhile, persisted with their propaganda efforts and also endeavoured to reduce the worst excesses of German occupation policy and anti-partisan warfare. Indeed a number of officers, including the commanders of Army Rear Area 532 and the 203rd Security Division and also Colonel Gehlen himself, began advocating a degree of self-government for the occupied territories.[61] Beyond only partially successful attempts to recruit a "Soviet Liberation Army" under the collaborator General Vlasov, however, the Soviet offensives of summer 1943 and the subsequent implosion of the German front scuppered all hope of such plans ever coming to fruition.[62]

Meanwhile, the brutal dynamic of occupation policy and anti-partisan warfare continued to stifle the effects of such constructive measures as were taken. In 1943 the two came together when the anti-partisan effort became increasingly wedded to pitiless economic logic. The Reich's need for foodstuffs and labour from the occupied Soviet Union was increasingly voracious, but it was growing progressively harder to provide them without alienating a growing section of the Soviet population.[63] Meanwhile, the partisans themselves controlled increasingly extensive areas of arable land; in November 1942 the agricultural section of *Wirtschaftsinpsektion Mitte* reported that the partisan situation prevented the requisitioning of *"160 herds of cattle at approximately 600 heads of cattle each, 44 batches of potatoes of 500 potatoes each and 150 batches of grain at 150 tons each. This is calculated as equivalent to the supply of an army of 300 000 men with bread for one year, meat for three months, potatoes for four months."*[64]

Brutal logic dictated that the burden of economic rapacity be borne as far as possible by the so-called *Bandengebiete* (bandit areas). Reich Marshal Göring's directive of 26th October 1942 played a significant role in setting the pace:

> *"1. When combating partisans and clearing of partisan-infested areas, all livestock to hand is to be removed to a safe area and the food reserves likewise cleared away to deprive the partisans of them.*
>
> *2. The entire male and female workforce which may be liable for* Arbeitseinsatz *is to be forcibly recruited and taken to the plenipotentiary for* Arbeitseinsatz, *to be used either in the rear areas or the homeland. Children are to be specially accommodated in camps to the rear."*[65]

Such measures would also serve the "military" purpose of depriving the partisans of food and shelter.[66] It was not until 1943 however, with the Reich's labour shortage having grown particularly acute, that economic anti-partisan warfare was to have its full devastating effect. By 1943, it was the norm for anti-partisan operations to be accompanied by officials from Reich economic agencies, who would oversee the orderly procurement of livestock and crops. As the Reich's labour needs grew more acute, wholesale evacuations became commonplace, with the able-bodied members of the population pressed into forced labour.[67] WiKo officials held the power of life and death over villages; those meeting their agricultural quotas were likely to be spared destruction and evacuation, this being taken as proof not only of the economic worth of their continued existence, but also of their loyalty to the German regime. On the other hand, a shortfall of just one cow might spell the destruction of an entire village.[68] The culmination of this process was the widespread creation of "dead zones", areas which were ordered evacuated and devastated in order to exploit them as fully as possible and deprive the partisans of their economic benefit.[69]

Economics seems therefore, via whichever particular mechanism, to have injected the German anti-partisan effort with a new source of special destructiveness. This then was yet another sense in which the vital effort to woo the population was hamstrung by destructive dynamics. A fitting epitaph to this phase of the anti-partisan effort was an OKW directive of 18th August 1943 which endorsed the conciliatory policy on deserters but again contradicted itself by allowing officers on the spot to shoot prisoners and the "populations of implicated areas" in the event of "particularly malicious partisan acts".[70] Whilst further attempts were made during late 1943 and 1944 to put the anti-partisan effort on a more effective, "constructive" footing, the measures which were enacted - such as the founding of strategic hamlets (*Wehrdörfer*) peopled by pro-German collaborators - were far too little, far too late.[71]

6.2. The 221st Security Division's war, March 1942 - August 1943

On 21st March 1942, General Pflugbeil and the other members of the staff of the 221st Security Division returned from front-line duty to the Army Group Centre Rear Area. Now deprived of the 350th Infantry Regiment, the division was immediately sent into action against the Jelnja-Dorogobush partisans as part of the largest German anti-partisan effort of the eastern war. Two major operations, *München* and *Hannover*, saw the division in action against particularly numerous and well-trained partisans, many of whom were in fact well-armed former Red Army troops. The operations encompassed mobile encircling operations over wide areas, and the division, now consisting almost entirely of second-rate *Landesschützen-Bataillone*, suffered heavily from appalling weather, lack of fuel and low fighting power. It was also plagued by spirited Soviet counterattacks, bitter fighting and heavy casualties. The 221st came under particularly severe strain at the end of May, when it suffered appalling casualties in a disastrous attempt to prevent the breakout of a large partisan group. The division's actual

conduct during the Jelnja-Dorogobush operation resembled that of a two-headed monster; a comprehensive hearts and minds campaign, pursued with vigour by elements at the divisional level, contrasted with the often indiscriminate butchery meted out by the division's subordinate units.[72]

With the end of the operations the 221st, under its new commander General Hubert Lersner,[73] was assigned to the Gomel region on 18th June 1942. Six main partisan areas were identified here, the worst being in the north-eastern sector. 3 to 4 000 partisans, many of whom reportedly were well-equipped, were estimated as being active across the division's area,[74] a combination of Red Army stragglers from the battles of 1941, remnants of destruction battalions, and locally raised partisans, many of whom were reported as having been forcibly pressed into service.[75] The partisans were not yet a co-ordinated entity but, finding itself as it did far down the pecking order for allocation of what additional manpower resources became available to General von Schenckendorff's command,[76] the 221st seems to have found its meagre forces severely stretched. It was nonetheless able to conduct a number of smaller-scale operations in an initial "combing" of its new jurisdiction.

Through the second half of 1942 the 221st, at divisional level at least, seems to have preferred cultivation to coercion as a means of controlling its jurisdiction.[77] A range of media was employed in a comprehensive "battle for hearts and minds", including the written and spoken word, films, exhibitions and other cultural events. Extensive efforts were made both to vilify the partisans and extol the benefits of German occupation. Practical attempts were made, meanwhile, to alleviate some of the worst effects of the occupation and anti-partisan operations. However, the conduct of some subordinate units showed that significant elements of the division still failed to appreciate the wisdom of a constructive approach.

Despite its efforts at cultivation, moreover, the 221st seems to have been unable to halt the rapid growth in partisan numbers and activity. It lacked the troops with which to surround and effectively destroy partisan groups; the operations of July and August 1942 saw many occasions on which the 221st's troops were able only to disperse the partisans. In their aftermath, the division could never spare the German troops to pacify the affected areas over a longer period.[78] The resulting deterioration was made clear in a report of 15th September, which maintained that contact had increased between partisan groups,[79] and in late October it was reported that the division faced over 13 000 disciplined, motivated and well-equipped partisans.[80] In response, the 221st temporarily abandoned active anti-partisan operations and focused instead on guarding the railways. November saw a temporary easing of the situation as reinforcements arrived and allowed the division to prosecute some mobile anti-partisan operations over the winter[81] (see Table 6). But growing disillusionment with the German occupation and the 221st's failure to destroy the partisans conclusively had by now led to a widespread cooling in the population's attitude toward the Germans.[82]

During 1943, there were important changes in the "balance" between constructiveness and ruthlessness in the 221st Security Division's approach, the accent on the latter now growing stronger at all levels at the expense of the former.[83] This was fuelled to a considerable extent by the deteriorating economic and security situation facing both the division itself and the unit responsible for economic exploitation of the area, the *Wirtschaftskommando* in Gomel.[84] If anything, however, greater ruthlessness exacerbated the surge in partisan activity during the spring. By February, in fact, partisan activity effectively spread over the entire divisional jurisdiction.[85] It was coupled with an increase in Soviet air activity, resulting in more propaganda, more supplies for the partisans, and more bombing.[86] The 221st's ability to deal with such a rapidly worsening situation was further crippled when it had to relinquish three battalions, about a quarter of its strength, to commitments elsewhere. In the spring, partisan attacks on the railway lines increased, and the hardships of German occupation, along with the partisans' charm offensive and the increasing likelihood of ultimate Soviet victory, ensured that both the OD and the general population came increasingly to realise that siding with the partisans was a safer bet. Among other things there was an alarming rise in disquiet, desertion and on one occasion mutiny among the OD and native troops.[87]

The arrival of Hungarian troops in April, who at least could fulfil passive security duties, allowed the division to unleash further active operations. These achieved only incomplete success, however, and one, *Osterhase*, seems to have been the most indiscriminately murderous of the 221st's operations that year. The withdrawal of the Hungarian units again hamstrung the 221st's ability to conduct active anti-partisan operations and, though the arrival of further reinforcements at the beginning of July facilitated further mobile operations, the accent seems now to have been on labour procurement rather than on combating partisans - a reflection of a significant shift during 1943 from mass killing to mass deportation in many "anti-partisan" operations.[88] In any case, these operations too could only temporarily arrest the growth in partisan disruption and numbers, and the summer of 1943 saw the partisans become able to extend both their influence and - massively - the scale of disruption which they were able to inflict upon rail supply.[89] By this stage the 221st could do even less to stop them.

Table 6: Larger anti-partisan operations in the 221st Security Division's jurisdiction, December 1942 - July 1943.[90]

NAME	PERIOD	REGION	PARTISAN DEAD	PARTISAN ARMS TAKEN	GER & ALLIED DEAD	UNITS TAKING PART	EC. GOODS SEIZED
ANKARA	19. — 24.12.42	Niwnoje; Lugowka; Katolin; Schirkowka; Chotimsk	See *Ankara* II figures.	No figures given.	See *Ankara* II figures.	Command of SR 36; I / Police Rgt. 8; III / Fr. IR 638; OB 604; 3 / SB 791.	22.12.42: 200 cwt. grain; 74 cows; 122 sheep.
ANKARA II	18. — 20.1.43	Niwnoje; Lugowka; Katolin; Schirkowka; Chotimsk	For *Ankara* I & II: 150 (32 counted); 41 "accomplices" shot.	No figures given.	For *Ankara* I & II: 5	I / SS Police Rgt 8; OB 604; III / Fr. IR 638; Mobile units of SR 45; 3 coys of SB 791; Parts of GR 930; 3 GFP units;	10 tons grain; 300 tons hay; 250 tons potatoes; 67 horses; 53 cattle; 70 sheep; 27 pigs; 8 goats.
KLETTE II	20.1. — 7.2.43	Kletnja forest.	149 killed in action; 34 prisoners killed by division, 159 by GFP.	48 rifles, 5 machine-guns. 707th recorded 67 rifles and 14 machine-guns for whole op.	14	221st Sec. Div. sent Col. Geldern (SR 36) with: SB 791; I / SS Pol. Rgt. 8; III / Fr. IR 638; OB 604; artillery.	244 horses; 79 cows; 9 sheep; 4 pigs; 30 cwt. meat; 4 tons grain.
ZUGSPITZE	3.2.43	Nowa-Buda.	141 *Helfer* shot by GFP; 9 villages destroyed.	No figures given.	0	Command of GR 930; 3 *Jagdkommandos* ; 4 companies; tanks.	200 cows; 140 sheep; 8 horses; 7 foals; 150 kg grain.
OSTERHASE	26. — 30.4.43	S. of Dowsk	250	29 rifles, 5 machine-guns.	5	2 coys I / SR 45; 2 coys SB 242; *Luftwaffen-Gefechts-Komp.* ; *Ost-Reiter-Schwadron* 221; 100 OD; *Ost-Reiter-Schwadron* 203; 1 coy SR 613; GFP 724; artillery.	88 horses; 160 cattle; 200 sheep; 21 heifers; 26 pigs.
NACHBARHILFE	20.5. — 26.5.43	Mamajewka-Kletnja Forest region.	42. ARA 559 recorded 571 for whole of *Nachbarhilfe* I & II.	28 rifles. Army Rear Area 559 recorded for whole op.: 231 rifles; 97 machine-guns.	28 (III / *Radf. Gren. Rgt.* 2). Army Rear Area 559 recorded 66 for whole op..	221st divisional staff, commanding various 4th Army units.	9 cattle; 2 sheep. ARA recorded for whole op. 171 horses; 15 cows.
JUNIKÄFER	Early June	Kamenka-Ryskowo.	2 counted; prob. higher.	47 rifles, 2 machine-guns.	6	SR 45; *Jagdkommando* ; 3.5 security coys; 2 Luftwaffe coys; flak troops; artillery; 3 self-propelled assault guns.	116 cattle; 20 heifers; 83 horses; 77 sheep; 8 pigs.
SOMMERFEST	Early July	Southwest of Chotimsk.	No figures given, but inhabitants of village of Kamenka killed.	No figures given.	No figures given.	1 battalion of SR 930; artillery; GFP 729.	No figures given.

6.3. Conclusion

Between spring 1942 and summer 1943, endeavours to put the German Army's anti-partisan effort on a more "constructive" footing were frustrated by the failure to question fundamentally the destructive principles of National Socialism, the brutalising, radicalising dynamic which permeated the anti-partisan effort and, later, ruthless economic logic. In a situation of low German fighting power and an increasingly effective partisan movement, this was a recipe for ultimate disaster.

As in 1941, however, the conduct of the 221st Security Division during this period also illustrates the complex ways in which these wider forces interacted with the specific situation which a unit faced and the ways in which officers perceived it. The Jelnja-Dorogobush operations of March to June 1942 offer the next opportunity to analyse this process at work.

Endnotes to Chapter 6

[1] See also below, pp. 97-9.

[2] On the "breakthrough" to establishing a significant partisan movement during the winter of 1941-2, see: Armstrong and debit, "Organisation", pp. 89-93; Hesse, *Partisanenkrieg*, Ch. 8; Bonwetsch, "Partisanen", pp. 100-1. For developments in particular regions, see: Weinberg, "Yelnya-Dorogobuzh", pp. 411-22; DeWitt and Moll, "Bryansk", pp. 461-2; Mavrogordato and Ziemke, "Polotzk Lowland", pp. 532-4.

[3] Dallin et al., "Psychological Warfare", p. 322; Schulte, *German Army*, p. 123.

[4] Wegner, "Krieg", pp. 911-12.

[5] Wilenchik, *Partisanenbewegung*, p. 209; Hoffmann, "Die Kriegführung", p. 893.

[6] See below, pp. 105-11.

[7] That the Soviet leadership was late in putting such a central command together reflected Stalin's deep-seated distrust of partisans, who he feared might form the nucleus of future resistance groups against his own government. On the formation and details of the Central Committee, see: Armstrong and DeWitt, "Organisation", pp. 98-103; Wilenchik, *Partisanenbewegung*, pp. 262-84; Slepyan, *Avengers*, pp. 119-127.

[8] Armstrong and DeWitt, "Organisation", p. 92.

[9] NA T-175/235. Der Chef der Sipo etc., 21.4.42. EM Nr. 194, pp. 6-7.

[10] See below, p. 104.

[11] On partisan propaganda toward the population, including "action propaganda" such as the re-privatising of state farms, see: Dallin et al., "Psychological Warfare", pp. 249-319; Wilenchik, *Partisanenbewegung*, pp. 223-31.

[12] Bonwetsch, "Partisanen", p. 104; Slepyan, *Avengers*, pp. 153-9.

[13] On partisan treatment of collaborators, see: Dallin et al., "Psychological Warfare", pp. 227-49; Slepyan, *Avengers*, pp. 281-8.

[14] On partisan recruitment and requisitioning, see: Armstrong and DeWitt, "Organization", pp. 152-5; Dallin et al., "Psychological Warfare", pp. 309-11.

[15] Bonwetsch, "Partisanen", p. 110.

[16] Dallin et al., "Psychological Warfare", pp. 322-6.

[17] NA T-501/15, file 24693/3. RHGeb. Mitte Abt. Ia, 31.5.42. Beurteilung der Lage im Heeresgebiet Mitte, p. 1.

[18] Translated from: *"Da durch den Mangel an ausreichenden Sicherungskräften nicht immer mit der notwendigen Schärfe gegen die Partisanen vorgegangen werden kann, wird das Vertrauen der Bevölkerung erschüttert und die Gerüchtebildung gefördert..."* NA T-175/235. Der Chef der Sipo etc., 19.6.42. MadbO Nr. 8, p. 8.

[19] Translated from: *"Die Aufzählung der einzelnen Überfälle und Störungen der rückwärtigen Dienste durch Partisanen und Banden würde Seiten füllen."* NA T-315/1586, file 29186/3. Sich.-Div. 203 Abt. VII Lagebericht, 16.4.42, p. 3.

[20] Cooper, *Phantom War*, pp. 144-6.

[21] Among Reich Marshal Göring's directives to the Luftwaffe troops engaged in anti-partisan warfare during 1942 was the order to burn down the nearest village in the event of any railway explosion. General von Schenckendorff protested that the rail workers housed in this village would be homeless and compelled to join the partisans, but this protest seems to have been ignored. Heer, "Die Logik", p. 128. See also Gerlach on "Luftwaffen-Infanterie-Regiment Moskau". Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*, p. 885.

[22] Wegner, "Krieg", p. 916.

[23] Source: NA T-501/27, file 31491/6. RHGeb. Mitte Abt. Ia. Monatsberichte, Juni - Dezember 1942.

[24] By contrast the civilian-administered Reich Commissariats, to the west of the Army-administered zones, witnessed a series of SS operations in which many thousands of Jews were killed. The main reason for the concentration of such operations here was the still sizeable Jewish population in these areas; many had been unable to flee in time during 1941, whilst others had been shipped from the east into ghettos there. In the Army Group Centre area, meanwhile, the Jews had for the most part been annihilated already. Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*, pp. 843-80.

[25] Mulligan, *Politics*, pp. 123-35; Förster, J., "Rußlandbild", p. 153.

[26] No figures could be found for OD expansion across the entire Army Group Centre Rear Area for the period. However, the general importance of native troops and auxiliaries to the German security effort is described in: Cooper, *Phantom War*, p. 146, which asserts that well over half of the German-led security forces in the East (a total, at any one time, of no more than 900 000 men) were in fact Eastern volunteers. Jürgen Förster records that by March 1942 Eastern auxiliary policemen outnumbered German Order Police manpower serving in the East by two to one (60 421 to 29 230). Förster, "Die Sicherung", p. 1257. On the initial formation of the OD and *Ost-Bataillone* in 1941, see: ibid., pp. 1253-8.

[27] NA T-175/235. Der Chef der Sipo etc., 3.4.42. EM Nr. 189, p. 17. On the agricultural reform and its particular variant in Byelorussia, see: Wilenchik, *Partisanenbewegung*, pp. 195-201; Mulligan, *Politics*, pp. 93-105.

[28] Dallin et al., "Psychological Warfare", p. 271.

[29] *Fremde Heere Ost*: the army intelligence centre for the Eastern Front. Mulligan, *Politics*, p. 139.

[30] NA T-501/27, file 31491/4. RHGeb. Mitte. Abt. Ic. Tätigkeitsberichte, Juli bis Dezember 1942. On German "cultural policy' in Byelorussia, see: Wilenchik, *Partisanenbewegung*, pp 215-19. On general German Army propaganda directed at the Russian population, see: Buchbender, *Das tönende Erz*, pp. 272-84; Schulte, *German Army*, pp. 150-79.

[31] Wegner, "Krieg", p. 920.

[32] Wilenchik, *Partisanenbewegung*, pp. 197-8; Mulligan, *Politics*, pp. 95-6.

[33] See for example: NA T-175/235. Der Chef der Sipo etc., 24.7.42. MadbO Nr. 13, p. 2.

[34] These measures were to a large extent a continuation of methods which had been employed in Poland. In January 1942 German administrators in the occupied territories were informed that, whilst voluntary labour service remained the ideal, it would be necessary to order, *"with all the requisite vigour, those measures necessary to bolster voluntary recruitment of workers for deployment in Germany."* Herbert, Foreign Workers, pp. 167-71. Whilst from March 1942 Fritz Sauckel, the newly-appointed "Plenipotentiary General for Labour Allocation", enjoyed theoretical power to enforce labour conscription of, commanders in the Army-administered sectors often prevented him from exercising it. Mindful of the likely effect on the mood of the population and also anxious to retain native labour for purposes in their own jurisdictions, they often continued to apply the "voluntary" principle into 1943. Mulligan, *Politics*, pp. 111-16.

[35] Mulligan, *Politics*, pp. 111-16.

[36] Translated from: *"Der Kampf ist rücksichtslos durchzuführen. Es kommt auf die Vernichtung der Partisanen an, nicht auf ihre Gefangennahme - diese nur insoweit, als sie für Vernehmungen notwendig ist.""* Durchführungsbefehl des Kommandeurs der 207. Sicherungsdivision zur Anweisung des Befehlshabers des rückwärtigen Heeresgebietes Nord vom 29.3.42 über rücksichtslose Partisanenbekämpfung, 31. März 1942", in: Müller, N. (ed.), *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, p. 120.

[37] Translated from: *"Dieses Verbrechertum ist hier seit 25 Jahren bewußt als solches aufgewachsen und erzogen worden. Es besteht dabei kein Unterschied zwischen Alt oder Jung, Mann oder Frau, auch nicht irgendwelcher Gesellschaftsschichten. Der Kampf ist daher mit aller Rücksichtslosigkeit zu führen!"* Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*, p. 563.

[38] Heer, "Die Logik", p. 120; Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*, pp. 826-8.

[39] Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*, pp. 826-8.

[40] Ibid., pp. 817-19.

[41] See above, Section 2.2.3.. For an extensive list of the major anti-partisan operations which took place from 1942 to 1944 in the area of present-day Belarus, see: Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*, pp. 826-31.

[42] NA T-315/1679, file 29380/5. SR 45, 1.9.42. Betr.: Erfahrungen bei Befriedung der Räume "Viereck" und "Eule" im August 1942. NA T-315/1585, file 29186/2. Sich.-Div. 203 Abt. Ia, Monatsbericht 6.9.42, p. 2; NA T-315/1586, file 29186/3. Sich.-Div. 203 Abt. VII 16.4.42, p. 3; BA-MA RH 26-201/5. Sich.-Div. 201 Abt. Ia, 5.2.43. Betr.: Monatsbericht für den Monat Januar 1943, p. 1.

[43] Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*, pp. 892-3.

[44] Translated from: *"Kollektiv- und Strafmaßnahmen, soweit sie die Erschiessung von Einwohnern und Niederbrennen von Ortschaften betreffen, dürfen grundsätzlich nur auf Befehl eines Offiziers mindestens in der Stellung eines Btls. Kdrs. durchgeführt werden, wenn eindeutig die Unterstützung der Partisanen durch die Bevölkerung oder bestimmte Personen erwiesen ist."* Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*, p. 892.

[45] Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*, p. 893. Gerlach argues that Schenckendorff's selectiveness can be ascribed simply to his desire to ease his conscience.

[46] Translated from: *"Personen, als auch Frauen, denen Zugehörigkeit zu einer Bande, Bandenbegünstigung durch Taten oder Bandenkundschaftertätigkeit nachgewiesen werden kann, sind wie befohlen zu behandeln. Kinder fallen unter diesen Personenkreis nur dann, wenn sie soweit gereift sind, daß sie sich der Tragweite ihrer Handlung bewußt sein können. Kinder von 10 Jahren können dies nicht. Sie sind zu bestrafen, aber nicht zu erschiessen."* NA T-315/1680, file 29380/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 12.9.42. Betr.: Behandlung von Banditen, Überläufern usw..

[47] On the partisan warfare directives of August to December 1942, see: Cooper, *Phantom War*, pp. 79-81; Mulligan, *Politics*, pp. 137-46; Wegner, "Krieg", pp. 918-23.

[48] Reproduced in: Müller, N. (ed.), *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, pp. 139-40.

[49] See above, pp. 107-8.

[50] Mulligan, *Politics*, pp. 140-1.

[51] Contemporary German figures recorded 57 700 partisans in Byelorussia in January 1943, 80 700 in June and 103 600 in September. Hesse, *Sowjetrussische Partisanenkrieg*, pp. 207-8.

[52] Dallin et al., "Psychological Warfare", pp. 328-9.

[53] See below, pp. 188-90, 202-5.

[54] There were three main areas within the general area of Army Group Centre which were firmly in partisan hands: the Bryansk forests, the Polotsk-Lepel districts, and around Bobruisk. Dallin et al., "Psychological Warfare", pp. 328-32.

[55] Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*, p. 945.

[56] On the "railway war" in the Army Group Centre area during 1943 and the particular devastation wrought during the summer, see: Teske, "Partisanen"; Hesse, *Partisanenkrieg*, pp. 249-55; Gordon, *Partisan Warfare*, pp. 80-120.

[57] Hesse, *Partisanenkrieg*, pp. 250-1.

[58] On these developments, especially the Berlin conference of 18th December 1942 between representatives of the Army High Command, Armed Force High Command and Eastern Ministry, see: Mulligan, *Politics*, pp. 123-46; Umbreit, "Problem", pp. 138-42.

[59] Buchbender, *Das tönende Erz*, p. 281.

[60] Mulligan, *Politics*, p. 141.

[61] Mulligan, *Politics*, p. 140; Wegner, "Krieg", p. 921.

[62] For an introduction to the part the "Vlasov Army" played in German policy, see Mulligan, *Politics*, pp. 163-81. More literature on Vlasov is listed in: Müller and Ueberschär, *Hitler's War*, pp. 333-4.

[63] For the most comprehensive treatment (at time of writing) of the "economic anti-partisan warfare" prosecuted in Byelorussia during 1942 and especially 1943, see: Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*, pp 813-950. See also: Wilenchik, *Partisanenbewegung*, pp. 201-6; Umbreit, "Problem", pp. 142-6; Richter, "Wehrmacht", pp. 855-7. On the organisational set-up of economic exploitation in the Army-administered areas, see: Müller, R.-D. (ed.), *Die deutsche Wirtschaftspolitik.*

[64] Translated from: *"160 Viehzüge zu etwa 600 Stück Großvieh, 44 Kartoffelzuege zu je 500 to und 150 Getreidezüge zu je 150 to. Sie bedeuten umgerechnet etwa die Versorgung einer Armee von 300 000 Köpfen mit Brot für ein Jahr, Fleisch für drei Monate, Kartoffeln für vier Monate."* Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*, pp. 825-6.

[65] Translated from: *"1. Bei der Bekämpfung der Bandengruppen und der Durchkämmung der von ihnen verseuchten Räume sind gleichzeitig sämtliche dort vorhandenen Viehbestände in gesicherte Gebiete abzutreiben, desgleichen die Lebensmittelvorräte so wegzuschaffen und zu sichern, daß sie den Banden nicht mehr zugänglich sind.*

2. Sämtliche männlichen und weiblichen Arbeitskräfte, die irgendwie für einen Arbeitseinsatz in Frage kommen, sind zwangsmässig zu erfassen und dem Generalbevollmächtigten für den Arbeitseinsatz zuzuführen zur Verwendung in den rückwärtigen gesicherten Gebieten oder in der Heimat. Die Unterbringung der Kinder ist in rückwärtigen Lagern gesondert zu regeln."

Der Reichsmarschall d. Großdeutschen Reiches, V.P. 18727/6/3, gezeichnet: Göring. From: Müller, N., (ed.). *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, pp. 134-5.

[66] Umbreit, "Problem", p. 144.

[67] It has been claimed that the search for labour sometimes prompted more killing, with women and children simply being killed due to their unsuitability for hard labour. Gerlach, *Witschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*, pp. 914-24.

[68] Ibid., pp. 902-3.

[69] Ibid., pp. 926-50.

[70] Mulligan, *Politics*, p. 144.

[71] On the *Wehrdorf* project in Byelorussia, see: Hesse, *Partisanenkrieg*, pp. 255-7; Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*, pp. 950-68.

[72] See below, Ch. 7.

[73] Not his real name.

[74] NA T-315/1680, file 29380/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 6.7.42. Betr.: Feindlage.

[75] NA T-315/1680, file 29380/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 6.7.42. Betr.: Feindlage; idem., 16.7.42. Betr.: Feindlage um Krassnopolje; idem., 15.9.42. Betr.: Banditenlage im Raume der Sich.-Divisison 221; De Witt and Moll, "Bryansk", pp. 468-78.

[76] In mid-October, for example, the four security divisions active in the Army Group Centre Rear Area were allocated the following manpower resources: 221st Security Division: 9 battalions; 203rd: 8 battalions; 286th: 14 battalions and a *Kosacken-Abteilung*; 201st: 12 battalions. NA T-501/26, file 31242/2. Kräfteübersicht des Kmd. Generals der Sich. Truppen u. Befh. im H.-Gebiet Mitte, 15.10.42.

[77] See below, Chs. 8 and 9.

[78] NA T-315/1679, file 29380/5. SR 45, 1.9.42. Betr.: Erfahrungen bei Befriedung der Räume "Viereck" und "Eule" im August 1942, p. 2.

[79] NA T-315/1680, file 29380/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 15.9.42. Betr.: Partisanenlage im Räume der Sich.-Division 221, p. 1.

[80] NA T-315/1680, file 29380/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 28.10.42. Betr.: Bandenlage im Divisions-Bereich für Monat Oktober.

[81] NA T-315/1681, file 29380/8. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 30.10.42. Betr.: Feindlage, p. 1.

[82] NA T-315/1681, file 35408/2. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 10.11.42. Betr.: Feindlage, p. 1.

[83] See Chs 10 and 11.

[84] Later renamed *Wirtschaftskommando* Klinzy.

[85] NA T-315/1682, file 36509/4. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 10.2.43. Betr.: Feindlage, p. 1.

[86] Ibid..

[87] NA T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 19.11.43. Tätigkeitsbericht, 1.1.-31.8.43, p. 10. 80 OD men went "missing" in May 1943, compared to just 24 during February. NA T-315, file 36509/24. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 2.4.43. Monatsbericht, 1.-31.3.43, p. 2; ibid., 2.6.43. Monatsbericht, 1.-30.5.43, p. 2. Such increases seem to have been the norm across the Army Group Centre Rear Area; the equivalent figures for the OD in the jurisdiction of the 203rd Security Division were 22 for February and 80 for May. NA T-315/1586, file 29186/6. Sich.-Div. 203 Abt. Ia. Monatsberichte, Februar u. Mai 1943.

[88] Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*, pp. 895-947; Richter, "Wehrmacht", pp. 855-7.

[89] The 221st's intelligence section report for January to August 1943 recorded an average of 33 rail explosions per month over the period January to July, but 1210 during August, reflecting a general change in partisan tactics from single explosions to "sequence explosions". NA T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 19.11.43. Tätigkeitsbericht, 1.1. - 31.8.43, p. 1.

[90] Sources for *Ankara*: NA T-315/1678, file 29380/1. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 22.12.42. KTB, 18.6.-31.12.42; NA T-315/1685, file 36509/11. Sich.-Rgt. 36 Abt. Ia, 26.12.42. Betr.: Unternehmen Ankara. Gefechtsbericht für die Zeit vom 19.-24.12.42, p. 1. *Ankara II*: NA T-315/1682, file 36509/1. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 19.1.43. KTB, 1.1.-1.6.43; NA T-315/1685, file 36509/11. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 16.1.43, p. 1; NA T-315/1685, file 36509/12. Sich.-Rgt. 36 Abt. Ia, 25.1.43. Betr.: Unternehmen Ankara II. Gefechtsbericht, 17.-21.1.43. *Klette II*: NA T-315/1682, file 36509/4. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 12.2.43. Betr.: Unternehmen Klette II; NA T-315/1685, file 36509/12. Sich.-Rgt. 36 Abt. Ia, 9.2.43. Betr.: Unternehmen Klette II. Gefechtsbericht; ibid., 9.2.43. Betr.: Regimentsbefehl für die Sicherung des bei Ankara u. Klette II befriedeten Raumes. *Zugspitze*: NA T-315/1686, file 36509/17. Gren.-Rgt. 930 Abt. Ia, 18.1.43. Betr.: Unternehmen Zugspitze; Ibid., 8.2.43. Bericht über Verlauf und Ergebnis des Unternehmens Zugspitze; Gren.-Rgt. 930 Abt. Ib, 9.2.43. Betr.: Erfassung beim Unternehmen Zugspitze. *Osterhase*: NA T-315/1685, file 36509/13. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 2.5.43. Betr.: Bericht über Unternehmen Osterhase. *Nachbarhilfe*: NA T-315/1686, file 36509/15. Korück 559 Abt. Ia, 13.5.43. Operationsbefehl für das Unternehmen Nachbarhilfe; NA T-315/1686, file 36509/16. Kampfgruppe Nord (Sich.-Div. 221), 25.5.43. Befehl für 26.5.43; Abschlußmeldung, 27.5.43. *Junikäfer*: NA T-315/1686, file 36509/18. Sich.-Rgt. 45 Abt. Ia, 2.6.43. Betr.: Unternehmen Junikäfer; Erfassungsstab Junikäfer, 7.6.43. Betr.: Ib 394/43; Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 11.6.43. Betr.: Gefechtsbericht über das Unternehmen Junikäfer. *Sommerfest*: NA T-315/1687, file 36509/27. Sich.-Rgt. 930 Abt. Ib, 10.7.43. Erfahrungsbericht über Erfassung und Evakuierung beim Unternehmen Sommerfest.

None of the sources for any of these operations record figures for forced labour procured, but labour was procured to some extent in all cases with the exception of *Zugspitze*.

Roman numerals next to unit names refer to battalions (e.g. I / Police Rgt 8 = 1st battalion, 8th Police Regiment).

In addition to the mobile operations listed here, the 221st was also involved in the early months of 1943 in operations against the powerful Grischin partisan group, the result of which was that the group was driven out of the division's jurisdiction but was neither destroyed nor broken up. They seem to have been seek and locate missions directed against genuine partisans, rather than the normal *Großunternehmen*. This, along with the fact that the division failed to get to proper grips with the Grischin group during the operations, meant that casualties on both sides were very negligible. Thus from the viewpoint of motivation and conduct, there is little

to be gained from analysing the Grischin operations. On the Grischin operations of early 1943, see: Kreidel, "Jagd auf Grischin"; Hesse, *Sowjetrussische Partisanenkrieg*, pp. 228-32.

CHAPTER 7: THE JELNJA-DOROGOBUSH OPERATIONS, MARCH - JUNE 1942

The situation in which the 221st Security Division found itself during the spring of 1942 was vastly different to that of 1941. The partisan threat was no longer "potential", but real and growing, and this ensured that the influences which shaped the division's conduct, in both its ruthless and its more constructive forms, underwent significant changes. Not least, the task of wooing the population attained increasing importance. This chapter considers the conduct of the 221st Security Division during the anti-partisan operations in the Jelnja-Dorogobush area, the forces which shaped its behaviour and the varied outcomes which resulted at different levels of the division.

7.1. *"Gerechte Partisanenbekämpfung"* in the Jelnja-Dorogobush operations

Though General von Schenckendorff may have been guilty of some breathtaking duplicity in his apparently less than completely sincere advocacy of a more "decent" form of anti-partisan warfare (*gerechte Partisanenbekämpfung*), the Jelnja-Dorogobush operations were one occasion on which his intentions seem to have been sincere. That this was so is unsurprising in view of the particular nature of the problem which the Germans faced there.

The partisans whom the German forces were to encounter included locally-raised members, but seem to have consisted primarily of Soviet infantry and airborne troops. Many had held out since being cut off back in July 1941 or had escaped from POW camps; others had moved into the area during the Soviet winter offensive and now found themselves cut off after the German counterattack.[1] In mid-April there were 5 000 partisans reported in the Jelnja area alone,[2] recruiting locals extensively and including a large number of ski-troops and Red Army parachutists.[3] The Jelnja-Dorogobush partisans seem therefore to have been a genuinely dangerous prospect, organised and equipped along military lines, and the size of the force which the Germans would eventually commit to the area - the largest they ever committed to an anti-partisan operation in Russia - shows the genuine seriousness with which the threat was viewed.[4]

More important for the purpose of this thesis is the fact that, simply in order to reduce casualties, the Germans had a particular interest in enticing as many partisans as possible to desert in addition to crushing those who did not. The operations would in fact be a testing ground for the new, relaxed version of the *Kommissarbefehl*, the previously murderous stringency of which was now recognised as having contributed to the ferocity of Soviet resistance. For the first time German appeals to deserters were to include the promise that commissars' lives would be spared. Deserters were also to be given decent treatment, and a major propaganda effort was to be employed to tell them so.[5]

A parallel propaganda effort was to be directed at the civilian population. Here too, Schenckendorff's intentions almost certainly were sincere. The partisans in the area had taken on such a military character that the only way to deal with them was to commit German forces in overwhelming strength, and crush the partisans almost in the conventional military way. The military character of the partisans also meant, however, that the Germans would be able to draw a particularly sharp distinction between partisan and population and thereby ensure that excessive measures were not visited upon the latter.[6] In the spring of 1942, moreover, securing the co-operation of the population against the partisans was still relatively easy in comparison to later periods. According to the SD, the German front-line counterattacks of the early spring had reassured the population considerably, albeit not necessarily completely, of the superiority of German arms,[7] and the announcement of agricultural reforms had momentarily caught the partisan propaganda machine on the hop.[8]

Restrained conduct during the Jelnja-Dorogobush operations was therefore a particularly sensible option. The conduct of the 221st Security Division show again, however, that the interaction between a general lead set from above with circumstances on the ground and the perceptions of particular officers was in fact a complex affair with no one outcome guaranteed.

The great disparity between German and partisan dead and the massive disparity between partisan dead and partisan weapons captured suggest in fact that much of the division's conduct flew completely in the face of the "softly softly" approach deemed integral to the success of the operations. On the other hand, a comprehensive effort to win the hearts and minds both of the population and potential deserters was clearly evident. In trying to understand how such an apparently contradictory approach developed, it is necessary to break the picture down, focusing firstly upon the level of the division itself and then upon its subordinate units.[9]

7.2. The division-level picture

7.2.1. The battle for hearts and minds

The means by which the 221st Security Division went about its hearts and minds campaign were left to its own discretion, providing they worked; indeed, the intelligence section of the Army Group Centre Rear Area welcomed propaganda suggestions from its subordinate divisions.[10] The 221st's intelligence section believed, among other things, that a marked and immediate effect could be achieved by urging disciplined and correct behaviour by the rank-and-file. A directive of 24th March declared that:

> *"The troops are to be reminded at frequent and regular intervals that firm but fair and correct treatment of the population is the best weapon for maintaining security and keeping the partisans down. They are also to be reminded that mindless and violent requisitioning, particularly against persons protected by*

> *German pass (local militia men, informers) can effectively destroy all efforts at pacification.*
> *Any officer or man who transgresses this order can expect the harshest punishment."*[11]

In a directive of 8th April, meanwhile, the intelligence section urged that local customs be respected, and that the dignity of Russian women be observed strictly. The grinding poverty in which the population lived, it was asserted, meant that things which seemed of little worth to Germans were of the utmost value to civilians. Requisitions by the troops were to be tolerated, but were to be kept to an absolute minimum and were either to be paid for in cash or have a receipt made out for them. Above all, they were to be conducted in co-ordination with the village headman and, where possible, each family was to be allowed the minimum necessary for survival.[12] In addition, every endeavour seems to have been made to involve civilians in the anti-partisan effort. Pro-German civilians were armed to defend the villages which the division itself lacked the troops to occupy, supporting the local mayors by arresting all non-locals and taking them to the nearest German unit. They could participate in other ways also, *"particularly by eliminating any partisans who enter the village, or arresting them and handing them over to the Wehrmacht, along with any inhabitant who takes partisans in, supplies them or assists them in any other way."*[13] Civilians were also to be rewarded for every partisan whom they brought in - a bounty to be paid immediately rather than later on.[14] Lieutenant Meyer was also anxious to ensure that such transgressions by the troops against the population as did occur were punished.[15]

The other strand of the battle for hearts and minds concerned the partisans themselves. It was recognised that, whilst partisans captured in battle should be shot as *Freischärler*, it was essential to woo potential deserters with promises of preferential treatment. The intelligence section directed that the deserter should, where possible, receive treatment which not only was better than that normally received by POWs, but also improved on his experiences in the Red Army.[16] This appears to have been a particularly far-sighted measure, for it actually seems to have predated similar efforts at higher levels.[17] The deserter, the intelligence section declared, was to receive simple rations as quickly as possible, be allowed to keep his uniform and personal belongings, and receive a pass confirming his deserter status and entitling him to privileges. He was then to be put to one of a variety of uses. He might be employed as a sentry or specialist worker; he was also to be offered the chance to serve in one of the *Ostlegionen* (eastern legions) which the Germans were now forming. In the meantime, he was to be put to work on light labour duties only, and to receive four or five cigarettes or five grams of pipe tobacco daily.[18] Lieutenant Meyer preferred to employ deserters as OD men.[19] He also urged that deserters be allowed, in the wake of abolition of the Kolchos system, to benefit from land re-distribution.[20]

It would seem from all this not only that the 221st Security Division, or its intelligence section at any rate, was fully committed to a comprehensive hearts and minds campaign, but also that it went further - over deserters at any rate - than its superiors had envisaged. This may be partly explained by the division's situation during the operations. Such were the particularly difficult conditions which the 221st faced, relying as it had to upon the worst German manpower operating in the region,[21] that there were compelling reasons for adopting a particularly constructive approach.

7.2.2. Explaining the hearts and minds campaign: the division's situation, March to June 1942

As the only rear area unit involved in the Jelnja-Dorogobush operations, all the 221st had to offer against a formidable enemy was second- and third-rate *Landesschützen-Bataillone*. Worse still, it had just been "reinforced" by a number of *Landesschützen-Bataillone* sent from the Reich whose men had neither fired a shot in anger nor thrown a hand-grenade. The particular details of these units were enough to induce the blackest depression. *Landesschützen-Bataillon* 555 had had its entire training programme stopped between mid-October and mid-March due to a typhus outbreak which had killed 15 men and put another 72 in hospital. *Landesschützen-Bataillon* 573 contained a complement of officers whose average age was over fifty, and most of the companies within the battalions had been equipped so irregularly that they were unsure of the content of their own knapsacks.[22] Deploying units such as these in active anti-partisan operations was hardly a recipe for success.[23] The dire state of affairs came to the attention of General von Schenckendorff himself. The operations section of the Army Group Centre Rear Area reported on 7th May that:

> *"The deployment of the* Landesschützen-Bataillone *within the compass of the 221st Division for the operation against Glinka has already shown that with such troops successes will be difficult to achieve. As a consequence of their inadequate combat training, the casualties sustained by these units are higher than those of front-line troops. 50% of casualties are dead."*[24]

The fact that the situation was of special concern to General von Schenckendorff is another indication of how serious the 221st's condition really was, and that the division's own doom-laden reports of poor fighting power contained much more than just a grain of truth. It is therefore likely that sensible heads at the 221st's divisional level would in the circumstances have viewed a particularly intensive attempt to woo both population and potential deserters as perhaps the only viable means of compensating for the division's deficiencies. Apart from helping to meet the demand for more OD and militia men, deserters were a vital source of help in even more immediate ways, for each new desertion meant fewer German casualties and a potentially vital source of information.[25] Indeed, the division enacted a raft of measures constituting an intelligence-gathering effort which, in a matter of weeks, seems to have constructed a highly detailed picture of the partisans, and involved both deserters and civilians in co-operation with various German agencies.[26]

A further incentive to cultivation, to which all German units involved in the operations are likely to have been receptive, was that it was increasingly likely to pay dividends as operations progressed. For one thing, as the Jelnja-Dorogobush partisans were steadily crushed, it must have become clear to the population that the Germans were "back in the driving seat", and that it paid to keep on their right side. Secondly, though German reports of partisan excesses against the population were often almost certainly exaggerated, it does seem plausible that desperation in the face of the German offensive lent ruthlessness to partisan treatment of the population, especially in the securing of essential food supplies. Under these circumstances, the willingness of civilians to co-operate with the Germans could only increase. Thus a report of 4th June by one of the 221st's subordinate units, which describes the misery which the partisans had wrought upon the inhabitants of the villages Borowija, Ssekerino, Spasskaja and several others, is probably essentially accurate. The partisans, it was reported, had razed the villages to the ground, destroyed agricultural tools and taken nearly all the livestock bar a few horses and cows. Sure enough, though much of the refugee populace had scattered to other villages, those remaining were responding gladly to German propaganda.[27]

At first sight, this explanation seems to go against the argument that units in severe difficulties were in fact more inclined to brutality. It is too simple, however, to explain such an apparently rigorous hearts and minds effort as the automatic response to the 221st's situation. For one thing, there are indications that other divisional officers did indeed view the same situation with harsher eyes; it is in the light of these indications that a conflict of approaches, between the "hawks" and "doves" at divisional level, becomes clear.

7.2.3. The "Pflugbeil doctrine"

On 4th May, in the aftermath of the difficulties which the 221st Security Division had experienced during Operation *München*, divisional commander General Pflugbeil declared that *"(t)he aim of any combat engagement is not to drive the enemy back, but to exterminate him."*[28] Pflugbeil depicted the enemy as highly organised and dangerous, trained and equipped to full military standards. Moreover, things would get even harder once the muddy season came to an end and partisan activity surged. Pflugbeil was clear about what the division needed to do in these circumstances. The required ruthlessness was to be hammered into every soldier, however quiet the location in which he was stationed; it was to be made plain that he was fighting for his life, and that only the most thorough and effective utilisation of weaponry and terrain could achieve the necessary annihilation of the enemy.

Probably at least some degree of ruthlessness was necessary to convince the population that the Germans could combat the partisans effectively. Other directives, however, employed the kind of language which was likely to harden feelings not just against the partisans, but against the population in its entirety. This was true even of directives designed ostensibly to encourage decent treatment of the population:

> *"It must be made clear to every soldier that any civilian whom he mistreats might join the partisans and then face him with a gun in his hand the following day."*[29]

Such declarations, this one actually issued by the intelligence section, were likely to increase distrust of civilians because they emphasised how shaky the population's allegiance actually was. It has already been seen that, for the men on the ground if not for the officers in charge, the distinction between civilian and partisan could not be readily relied upon.[30] The language used in directives such as the above, whilst less intemperate than the bile-filled outbursts of General von Bechtolsheim,[31] was therefore likely to exacerbate fear and thereby increase the potential for brutality.[32] Worse still was the divisional order of 24th March which ordered as a matter of course the bombardment, with artillery and heavy infantry weapons, of any village which was either not in German hands or had yet to be properly reconnoitred. This was an inevitable recipe for potentially massive death tolls among innocent civilians.[33]

On the one hand, then, officers at the divisional level of the 221st observed the constructive precepts of the Jelnja-Dorogobush operations, and indeed improved upon them. Indeed, such were the circumstances that there seem to have been compelling reasons for them to embrace constructive engagement with particular enthusiasm. On the other hand, division-level officers also urged greater ruthlessness. What influences, at this personal level, lay behind these seemingly mutually exclusive outlooks?

7.2.4. Explaining the "personal dimension" at divisional level

The doves

That some *Ostheer* officers adopted a constructive approach to the anti-partisan effort and relations with civilians might have been due to a particular ability to identify with the Russian population, to an old-fashioned sense of decent soldierly conduct, or to more civilising peacetime values.[34] In the case of Lieutenant Meyer, whose intelligence section seems to have been at the centre of the 221st's constructive engagement effort, no such charitable explanation seems forthcoming. Meyer had after all treated Jews and Red Army commissars with anything but decency during 1941, and his contemptuous description of Soviet POWs at Bialystok seems hardly to have been the hallmark of a russophile.[35] Meyer's decision to pursue a hearts and minds effort of such comprehensiveness was therefore probably due instead to his well-developed sense of practicality.

It was this which had probably lain behind Meyer's positive assessment of the mood of the population at various stages during 1941.[36] Indeed, Meyer had as early as August 1941 recognised the opportunity created by the fact that both Poles and Byelorussians had ample reason to be grateful for the German invasion: *"The Byelorussians regard us as liberators from Bolshevism; the Poles regard us as liberators from Russia and Bolshevism."*[37] Meyer had also been quick to see the particular value of *Propaganda der Tat* (propaganda of deed) in

the effort to cultivate the population. The intelligence section of the Army Group Centre Rear Area had maintained at the end of 1941 that *"any preferential treatment of Russians in German service means that the population's mood is influenced very positively by its own compatriots,"*[38] and Meyer had drawn a similar conclusion in his own end-of-year report: *"The conduct of the German soldier and* Propaganda der Tat *have shown themselves to be the most effective propaganda methods."*[39]

Meyer's directives are perhaps most significant not for what they say, however, as for what they do not say. The instance at Bialystok aside, the divisional files show no sign of actual contempt for the population in Meyer's directives; perhaps his poisonous description of Soviet POWs at Bialystok had been part of an attempt to "get it off his chest" before holding his nose and proceeding with the necessary business of wooing the population. By contrast, other officers urging a more constructive line do seem to have allowed anti-Slavic contempt to influence their approach. An example was Major Schmidt,[40] the operations officer of the 203rd Security Division. In October 1942, whilst arguing that the Germans should offer the population concrete hopes and goals, Schmidt also expressed some contemptuous and derogatory thoughts of his own:

> *"If we could offer some kind of goal to aim for then we could conduct a successful propaganda effort. It should nevertheless be remembered that the Russian has absolutely no love for the Germans, and he never will. He feels, maybe unconsciously, that he is inferior to the Germans, and this inferiority complex has been strengthened by Bolshevik influence."*[41]

It could of course be argued that Schmidt was merely paying lip service here to accepted racial stereotypes rather than holding them sincerely himself. On the other hand, the fact that he made such comments in an official communiqué whereas Lieutenant Meyer did not suggests that paying lip service to such stereotypes was not necessarily a common motivation. Moreover, if Schmidt genuinely placed as much importance on cultivating the population as did Lieutenant Meyer he is unlikely to have voiced such opinions in a communiqué which presumably would have influenced the formulation of higher-level policy. It seems by contrast that, one early "lapse" aside, Lieutenant Meyer was fully, albeit not necessarily wholeheartedly, committed to cultivating the population.

Indeed, Meyer may have been influential over what seems to have been the 221st Security Division's particularly active recruitment of local civilians into the OD during the autumn of 1941. On 4th November the operations section had reported that armed civilians already constituted nearly half the security forces in the 221st's area.[42] The 221st had expected not just the *Feldkommandanturen* and *Ortskommandanturen*, but also the 350th Infantry Regiment and *Landesschützen-Regiment* 45, to take an active role in recruiting the OD.[43] The division had reported that the eventual greater-than-expected recruitment had been because it recognised the OD's value in relieving pressure upon the division's own troops by guarding supply dumps, protecting crops, procuring meat and securing supply routes. The OD's knowledge of

the area had also been of considerable use against partisans.[44] Further, the 221st's success in raising *Ost-Truppen* (eastern troops) units had contrasted markedly with the experiences of some other units. Army Rear Area 582, for example, had declared that the POWs' dislike of Bolshevism was matched only by their unreliability. This unit had asserted on 7th December 1941 that

> *"No prisoner enters the Wehrmacht's service out of idealism. The reason he's prepared to is his terror of the POW camp and the prospect of a better life alongside German troops."*[45]

The 221st's positive experience of civilian and POW recruitment in the autumn of 1941 is likely, furthermore, to have confirmed Lieutenant Meyer in his belief that co-operation with Russians was both necessary and fruitful. This judgement in turn is likely to have reinforced the tendency to constructive engagement which was manifest in the Jelnja-Dorogobush operations. After all, the success of a particular approach made it more likely that the same approach would be used again. Meyer might also have assumed that employing an approach which seemed likely to succeed would do his career no harm either; providing an impression of excessive "softness" could be avoided, a measure of constructive engagement, so long as it was successful, would probably be well-received by General von Schenckendorff.

A heightened practical sense, perhaps mixed with careerism, seems therefore to have been the main driving personal factor in the development of a constructive approach at the 221st's divisional level. Conversely, what personalities and attitudes lay behind the more ruthless stance of other officers?

The hawks

During the Jelnja-Dorogobush operations as in 1941, careerism, frustration at demodernisation and *francs-tireur* phobia seem to have been embodied in the person of General Pflugbeil.[46] Indeed, the circumstances which predisposed Lieutenant Meyer to more sensible and constructive conduct were likely to predispose the general to much more ruthless solutions. The 221st was involved in the Jelnja-Dorogobush area not in conventional anti-partisan operations, against a ruthless unseen enemy which struck from nowhere, but in a major offensive in co-ordination with front-line combat divisions - conditions which if anything showed up the division's defects even more.

Pflugbeil probably was not stupid. Certainly he appears to have seen the necessity of cultivating both population and potential deserters, a fact to which his signature on many of the intelligence section's directives testifies.[47] At the same time, however, a man with Pflugbeil's attitudes and frustrations is likely to have viewed further injections of ruthlessness as an at least partial compensation for the division's inability to destroy the enemy in the quick, easy style of old. Nowhere is this more apparent than in a directive which he issued through the operations section on 6th May. The directive oozed a spirit of comradeship and social darwinist struggle,

borne perhaps primarily of Pflugbeil's own front-line experiences in the First World War, in its appeal to soldierly heroism:

> *"Every soldier must be made to understand clearly that any unauthorised retreat means certain death. He must also understand that the proper, decisive use of weapons and the right use of terrain ensure that success will be his. Every man needs to be fully aware that it is the worst possible disgrace for a soldier to allow ammunition, equipment or dead or wounded comrades to fall into enemy hands. A soldier may die in battle, but he will have died a hero's death like so many who have died for Germany before him. The coward, however, must die, as all traitors fully deserve. Let there be no doubt that cowards will be dealt with mercilessly in full accordance with military law."*[48]

Pflugbeil may also have had more personal reasons for such an outburst. At sixty, the strain of taking on such a dangerous enemy with his own decrepit order of battle was probably becoming too much. Here the careerist motivation, or perhaps more basically a desire to avoid the sack, is suggested by Pflugbeil's apparent desperation for results forcing him to urge his troops to ever greater feats of bravery and ruthlessness. Unfortunately for Pflugbeil, it didn't work; on 6th July he was replaced as divisional commander by General Lersner.

The ambiguity of some of the directives issued by the operations section, meanwhile, fits the more common pattern of open-endedness allowing brutality which characterised so many of the German directives issued in the course of the partisan war. Precisely what combination of careerism, military ruthlessness and anti-Slavism shaped the operations section's approach at this time is difficult to tell; no personal file has been found for Major Friedrich,[49] the operations officer at this point. That said, the distrustful view of the population expressed in the operations section's directives and the recourse to artillery bombardment of all villages of less than 100% guaranteed loyalty do suggest frustration at the division's demodernised situation, *francs-tireur* phobia, and the anti-Slavic contempt, likely to have been particularly prevalent within a Silesian unit, which forged the belief that the "eastern character" was most receptive to severity.[50] Interestingly, there is no sign of overt anti-Slavism in the directives issued by General Pflugbeil at this stage - a point of possible importance which will be considered again shortly.

What is clear is that whilst some division-level officers responded to the situation constructively, others remained more inclined to ruthlessness. Before examining the impact of these different attitudes upon the lower levels of the division, one final aspect of the division-level picture needs to be considered. The sum of the directives generated by the division-level officers mixed cultivation and coercion. Different officers not only contradicted each other; they also seem at times to have contradicted themselves. Lieutenant Meyer's constructive outlook, for example, did not prevent him from issuing directives which seemed designed to stoke up fear and ruthlessness. On 8th April, for example, the intelligence section issued a directive which, whilst apparently forbidding the burning of villages as a reprisal measure, also allowed exceptions where "immediate danger" posed to the troops left "no alternative".[51]

Taken at face value, this statement does not make sense; the decision as to whether a reprisal should be carried out had nothing to do with whether there was any *immediate* danger to the troops; reprisals were supposed to be a punishment measure designed to deter *future* unrest. This vaguely-worded statement, then, seems to have been legitimising terror against civilians without sound military justification.

Conversely, General Pflugbeil's brand of military ruthlessness did not prevent him from signing the pragmatic directives which the intelligence section issued. This apparently contradictory mix was in fact generated not just by the objective tensions of the situation itself, but also by the nature of the particular "balance" between a constructive approach and a ruthless one which existed at the 221st's divisional level.

The "balance"

On closer inspection, the mix of constructive and ruthless measures which characterised the anti-partisan effort at the 221st's divisional level did possess a certain logic. For one thing, there does seem to have been overall agreement on the necessity of currying favour with the population and wooing potential partisan deserters. That said, the ruthlessness of General Pflugbeil and, perhaps to a lesser extent, of the operations section was prominent also. By some process, a "balance" between the two seems to have been reached.

In the absence of a quantitative study of the inner personal workings of German Army divisions, it is not clear what this process was.[52] One possibility is that Pflugbeil, preoccupied as he was with operational matters, simply let his sub-sections attend to their respective tasks as they saw fit. Alternatively Pflugbeil was dependent upon the division's various sub-sections for information and expertise but made sure that he himself retained control of the overall direction of divisional policy. Providing their conduct did not deeply offend his sensibilities, however, he left the more detailed formulation of policy to them. The result of this, in the case of the 221st, was that Pflugbeil retained his own ruthless attitude but was also sensible enough to be influenced to some extent by arguments for a constructive approach. There is after all no sign that Pflugbeil, ruthless in so many ways though he was, was possessed of a particularly virulent brand of anti-Slavism - strong though it may well have been in an officer who came from Silesia - and this may have ensured that he was not totally blind to the dictates of sense.

This second explanation is the more likely, as a comparison with the 707th Infantry Division shows. The overall conduct of the 707th seems to have been markedly more ruthless, as has already been seen, than that of the 221st and indeed of other security divisions generally; the massacre of over 10 000 of its prisoners in the General Commissariat of White Ruthenia in the autumn of 1941 and Operation *Bamberg* in the spring of 1942 were just the most spectacular examples.[53] A key factor in the divisions' diverging approaches seems to have been the radical anti-Semitic and anti-Slavic philosophy of the 707th's commander, General von Bechtolsheim, and its operations officer Lieutenant-Colonel von der Osten.[54] This suggests that a "hands-

on" approach, ensuring that the outlook of senior divisional officers did indeed exert a significant influence upon the conduct of a division as a whole, was the way in which security divisions operated. It therefore follows that a cultivation effort within the 221st enjoyed a more favourable institutional environment and was less likely to be hampered by other aspects of the division's behaviour than would have been the case within the 707th. It would also ultimately enjoy more success.

The doves within the 707th were indeed in a weaker position to influence conduct than were their counterparts in the 221st, as an example from August 1942 shows. On this occasion the 707th's intelligence officer urged better treatment of prisoners and deserters, and *"impeccable conduct by the troops toward the civilian population."* The way the 707th had so far been conducting itself, however, seems to have affected relations with the population in ways which the 221st's files for 1942 never even mention:

> *"In certain villages, underground rumours spread by the partisans cause the villagers to flee into the woods whenever German troops approach."*[55]

Thus, whilst the ruthlessness at the 221st's higher levels may have constrained the success of constructive efforts to some extent, it seems there was a good deal less constraint than there was in the 707th. Indeed the success enjoyed by the 221st's cultivation effort in the Jelnja-Dorogobush region, whilst limited by outside factors, seems to have been genuine. In Lieutenant Meyer's report of 16th June the judgement was upbeat, with Meyer claiming that in many villages *"the population....willingly declared itself to the German troops, supplying valuable information about the movements and intentions of the partisans. It supported the Wehrmacht in every way and in places provided militias for the active combating of the partisans."*[56] Whilst the limitations of German sources need to be borne in mind, the report's apparently balanced judgement - it also conceded that the population of other areas had been hungry, despondent and impossible to mobilise effectively[57] - suggests it is a fairly accurate reflection of the hearts and minds campaign's successes and failures. It seems, therefore, that the results of the 221st's campaign were best described as "mixed". It is nonetheless significant that the same report urged the new units taking over in the area to continue along the same constructive lines as the 221st.[58] Clearly, Lieutenant Meyer was not fazed by partial failure; indeed, his commitment to cultivating the population would be even more manifest in the Gomel area.[59]

All this suggests that the 221st's cultivation effort in the Jelnja-Dorogobush region did enjoy an at least significant degree of success, and that it did so because the "balance" between doveish and hawkish elements at divisional level was more conducive to such an outcome than it was in a division such as the 707th.

That ruthlessness still found favour at the 221st's divisional level seems clear, however, and perhaps the most telling indications of the degree to which it still influenced the conduct of the division as a whole was the massive disparities between recorded German and partisan dead

and between recorded partisan dead and captured partisan weapons. This leads to consideration of how far and why the 221st's lower-levels were swayed either by constructive arguments or by ruthless ones.

7.3. The lower-level picture

7.3.1. Constructive conduct

Lieutenant Meyer's initiatives may have found more favour with officers more strongly possessed either of a more "traditional" military outlook or of civilising peacetime ethics, those concerned about what the further slide to ruthlessness would do to the discipline of their troops, or those who simply saw the sense, in view of the division's situation, of cultivating both population and potential deserters. A smaller number may also have been influenced by their favourable impression of the civilian population, regardless of whether this impression had developed before or after their service in Russia.

The cause of constructive engagement may also have been served by the fact that ruthlessness was perhaps less synonymous with career success than it was in 1941. Under both the 221st Security Division and General von Schenckendorff's command - albeit not necessarily under all units - ruthlessness seems to have been increasingly likely to be evaluated in terms of whether or not it took on the kind of form which would unnecessarily alienate the population. Whilst this certainly left plenty of room for manoeuvre, it was arguably less of a blank cheque to brutality than that which had been presented in the autumn of 1941. Moreover, if unnecessarily alienating the population now brought with it the risk of civilians embracing a burgeoning and dangerous partisan movement, the practical difficulties which would be created would hardly be conducive to career advancement. Further, excessive brutality also risked the dilution of discipline and therefore the effectiveness of the unit, and this may have been a careerist notion which in fact worked against brutalisation. It should also be noted that the officers at the 221st's lower levels were now *Sicherungstruppen* officers, most of whom hardly conformed to the image of the "modern warrior" used to technologically-driven *Blitzkrieg* campaigns. Being fit only for rear area duty, they may have been much less technocratically ruthless and career-driven.[60]

The clearly massive number of non-combatants killed in the operation is a strong sign, however, that a number of officers and their units were far less receptive to the spirit of constructiveness. Whilst the 221st itself lost 278 men during the operations, the enemy was recorded as having lost 806 in battle, along with another 122 partisans shot after capture. Yet only 51 machine-guns and 150 rifles were recorded as captured.[61] There was also a number of individual larger-scale atrocities (see Table 7).

Table 7: Atrocities committed by subordinate units of the 221st Security Division in the Jelnja-Dorogobush region, March - June 1942.[62]

Date	Unit	Details
28.3.42	*Gruppe Luckmann*	Village of Demidowka destroyed. German losses: 1 wounded.
8.4.	*Landesschützen-Bataillon* 230, with artillery and tanks.	4 villages destroyed, 62 partisans killed, 11 prisoners taken. German losses: 3 dead, 6 wounded.
27.4.	*Landesschützen-Regiment* 44 (probably *Landesschützen-Bataillon* 974), with artillery.	30 partisans killed. German losses: 1 dead, 1 wounded.
12.5.	*Radfahrschwadron* 213, with tanks.	3 villages destroyed, 71 partisans counted killed, 60-70 estimated burned alive. German losses: none.
30.5.	*Landesschützen-Bataillon* 545, with artillery.	2nd company takes village of Dorogonino: 25 partisans killed, rest of population handed to SD. German losses: none.
1.6.	*Landesschützen-Bataillon* 302.	40 partisans counted killed, probably more burned alive. German losses: 2 dead, 8 wounded.
4.6.	*Gruppe Gablenz*	Self-propelled assault guns destroyed villages of Losinki and Cholmy. 11 partisans counted killed, probably more burned alive. German losses: none.
8.6.	No details.	65 partisans killed. German losses: 1 dead, 5 wounded.

These figures are a typical indication that a great many non-combatants were perishing at the division's hands; it is this more brutal side of conduct at the sub-divisional level which is considered next.

7.3.2. Ruthless conduct: the general causes

Despite their "constructive" premise, the Jelnja-Dorogobush operations provided fertile ground for brutality born of a cocktail of frustration over conditions, hatred and fear of guerrillas, social darwinist sentiment and career pressure, and distrust of the population fuelled by anti-Slavism.

As in 1941, the travails of the situation and the frustrations which they engendered were almost certain to be felt more keenly and directly at the division's lower levels, and this meant that, at these levels, brutality was more likely.[63] The situation faced by the 221st in the Jelnja-Dorogobush operations was one of second and third-rate manpower operating in appalling weather conditions and often with inadequate transport, openly engaging a numerous enemy which to a large extent was trained, organised and armed to full military standard. Officers did not need to be ruthless careerists in order to feel utterly frustrated by such conditions. In a sense, career pressure existed for these *Sicherungstruppen* officers too; they might never see front-line action even if they wanted to, but if they failed to perform as rear area officers then they faced the possibility of enforced retirement and with it the feeling of personal failure. Among other things, circumstances such as these might have strengthened such social darwinist sentiments as were harboured particularly by those officers who had been hardened by combat

in the First World War. Further, whilst the Jelnja-Dorogobush fighting involved the division in open combat with the enemy, rather than in the normal kind of anti-partisan warfare against an often ruthless, underhand and unseen enemy, the fact that the enemy was still classed as "partisans" almost certainly would have guaranteed that they were held in the same degree of contempt reserved for irregular warfare by officers subscribing to the German Army's institutional view of guerrillas. By extension, any real or imagined assistance rendered to the partisans by the population was likely to meet a brutal German response.

In such severe fighting conditions, moreover, the needs of long-term relations with the population were considerably less likely to govern conduct than they were at divisional level. It has already been seen that relations between the population and individual German units were more suspicious and uneasy than was apparent at divisional level,[64] and in some respects the position of the population in the Jelnja-Dorogobush region was particularly non-conducive to fruitful relations between occupier and occupied. The partisans had re-established Soviet forms of government in the areas which they controlled; though this was a phenomenon which apparently was widespread throughout the entire Army Group Centre Rear Area,[65] it was especially prevalent in the Jelnja-Dorogobush region due to the partisans' particular strength. The population here therefore was probably more prone than most to be forever looking over its shoulder, weighing up the advantages of siding with the Germans against the advantages of keeping faith with the Soviet regime, and forever trying to avoid the wrath of either side,[66] Many German officers may therefore have felt that the Jelnja-Dorogobush population was particularly untrustworthy.[67]

Certainly there were clear instances of such distrust. On 24th April one of the 221st's subordinate units, Gruppe Rüling, came across 100 refugees who had drifted into the 221st's jurisdiction. The refugees hardly constituted a threat to security, consisting as they did of seven men, forty-seven women, fifty-nine children and a cow, but they were handed over to the SD all the same.[68] Again, the distrust of and contempt for the population which instances such as these indicate may have been exacerbated by anti-Slavism and the view, likely to have been particularly prevalent in a Silesian division, that the eastern character was receptive only to severity.

Finally guidelines from above, including not just the general "criminal orders" issued during 1941 but also those which General Pflugbeil and the 221st's operations section had issued in the push for a harder, more ruthless attitude, were almost certainly a further legitimator of brutality. Moreover, if Pflugbeil was still as relaxed about brutal excess as he seems to have been at Bialystok in June 1941,[69] the leeway for brutality at the 221st's lower levels was arguably even greater. Overall, whilst the absence of the arguably more technocratically ruthless *Eingreiftruppen* elements meant that one possible source of brutality was running drier, brutality borne of "frustrated impotence" was all the more likely in the situation which the

221st's remaining units now faced. General explanations do not on their own suffice, however, and this becomes clear when considering the major individual instances of atrocity which took place during the 221st's time in the Jelnja-Dorogobush area. They illustrate the diverse ways in which different combinations of circumstances and perceptions provided the final "push" which converted these general brutalising influences into apparent massacre.

7.3.3. Ruthless conduct: some case studies

At first sight, it seems that it was particularly difficult circumstances which provided the "bridge" between general brutalising influences and actual brutality. Whilst only one of the atrocities was perpetrated by men from one of the division's weaker formations, *Landesschützen-Bataillon 545*,[70] this was probably because, as in 1941, the weaker formations simply were not normally given the opportunity to indulge themselves thus.[71] This example is worth examining, moreover, for it gives a vivid illustration of how a unit might have been "tipped over the edge" by its particularly intractable situation. *Landesschützen-Bataillon* 545 seems to have possessed all the ingredients of a third-rate formation. Relegated to static security duty by its inadequacy as a fighting force, the battalion's officers are likely to have felt frustrated at its lack of fighting power and anxious to cover up its ineffectiveness. Indeed, the unit's report depicted the engagement in question as a hard-won battle involving house-to-house fighting against stiff partisan resistance. The fact that it did not kill more of the inhabitants of the village of Dorogonino on this occasion suggests that its actions came more from this calculated desire to cover its impotent situation with spurious claims of success, rather than from a spontaneous outburst of frustration.

On further inspection, however, the importance not just of circumstances but also of particular perceptions becomes clearer. For one thing, two of the atrocities were committed by units which, though they had had to participate in particularly rigorous action against the partisans, were amongst the division's more effective formations and, more importantly, behaved in a manner which seems to have been particularly excessive in view of the situations which they had faced. *Landesschützen-Bataillon* 230, which committed an atrocity on 8th April, had recently had to attack the partisans around Jelnja; its attack admittedly had been blighted by appalling weather conditions, impassable roads and a virtual collapse in transport and supply, and it had been involved in a fierce encounter near Baltutino on 28th March in which it had suffered nine dead and four wounded.[72] All this nonetheless seems a particularly poor excuse for the massacre which the battalion perpetrated that day; it burned down four villages, killed 62 partisans and in return lost just three dead. Even worse was the conduct of *Radfahrschwadron* 213. This unit was part of Gruppe Rüling which from 30th April to 3rd May had borne the brunt of a particularly fierce Soviet counterattack, losing 35 dead, 94 wounded and 15 missing in the process. Not all these casualties were sustained by the *Radfahrschwadron*, however, and even if they were they do not even begin to excuse the particularly outrageous atrocity which

that unit perpetrated on 12th May. The scale of the killing on this occasion is indicated not just by the disparity in casualties, but also by the minuscule number of partisan guns captured.[73]

These examples suggest, then, that conduct at this level was not shaped by circumstances alone. The importance instead of the individual perceptions harboured by officers on the spot becomes particularly clear in the final two instances considered here.

One of the massacres, attributed in the *Kriegstagebuch* on 27th April to *Landesschützen-Regiment* 44 and resulting in the death of 30 partisans against just one dead German, took place during an operation which involved cleansing a swampy and wooded area east of Baltutino. The true nature of the killing is strongly indicated by the fact that the entire body of weapons captured consisted of four grenade launchers and one anti-tank gun, along with a horse.[74] The particular unit which almost certainly was responsible was *Landesschützen-Bataillon* 974.[75] Again, it is not clear exactly what sparked the massacre; possibly important is the fact that the battalion seems to have suffered its first significant casualties - five dead and six wounded - only the day before. Probably more important, however, is the fact that its commander, Lieutenant-Colonel von der Groeben, was an ex-*Freikorpskämpfer*.[76] Of course, it does not necessarily follow that *Landesschützen-Bataillon* 974's conduct on 27th April was due to the persuasions of the man who commanded it. Lieutenant Meyer's contempt for eastern races, for example, seems to have had no effect on his approach to forging relations with the population. An ex-*Freikorpskämpfer* was more likely than most, however, to employ vicious measures against a "racially and culturally inferior" enemy.

The brutalising role played by the prejudices of individual officers is best illustrated, however, by the final instance considered here. *Landesschützen-Bataillon* 302, which on 1st June 1942 killed at least 40 partisans and burned alive a great deal more, at a cost to itself of two dead, was not the 221st Security Division's most inferior unit. Nor had it undergone particular hardship through the course of the Jelnja-Dorogobush operations - indeed, until recently it had been stationed elsewhere. Whether *Landesschützen-Bataillon* 302 had already undergone a particularly brutalising experience elsewhere is impossible to say. The decisive factor behind the massacre of 1st June, however, may well have been the fact that the battalion was subordinate to *Landesschützen-Regiment* 45, commanded by Colonel Hans Wiemann.

There are several orders from the second half of 1942 which show that Wiemann treated the civilian population of the Gomel area, to which the 221st Security Division was transferred in mid-June, with particular brutality. They therefore shed further light on the actions of *Landesschützen-Bataillon* 302 on 1st June. On 23rd June, right at the outset of the 221st's tenure in the Gomel region, Wiemann ordered a pacification operation which was about to take place around Nowosybkoff:

> *"Security and pacification measures are to be executed ruthlessly. Partisan suspects and any civilians who are possibly in contact with the partisans are to be dealt with using the utmost harshness. If the population does not voluntarily*

> *participate in the anti-partisan effort (through information and reconnaissance) then it is to be treated as suspect."*[77]

This was giving the troops licence to kill anybody who did not voluntarily participate in the anti-partisan effort, a definition which might extend to anyone. Further licence was granted at the beginning of July to Reserve Police Battalion 91, then subordinate to the regiment. Wiemann instructed the battalion that *"(t)he search for hidden weapons is to be carried out vigorously using all methods."*[78] Nor was Wiemann to be disappointed; on 13th July the battalion ordered its men to employ every means, however ruthless, against *"partisans, partisan suspects and armed civilians."*[79] It is unknown how many innocent civilians perished at the hands of Reserve Police Battalion 91 in the following days; the unit's *Kriegstagebuch* for the period has not survived in western archives. It seems, however, that the rank-and-file executed the orders too viciously even for the liking of their own officers; a week later the battalion was for the first time urging that *"unnecessary harshness, for example opening fire hastily or burning houses, is to be avoided under all circumstances."*[80]

On 24th September, Wiemann's troops burned down the villages of Hatki, Medweshje, Sankowo and Orlowitsci, along with all the farms in the surrounding area, on the basis of a report by German intelligence troops that partisans had been gathering in the area.[81] On 11th October, three companies of the 45th Security Regiment, as it was now called,[82] along with a GFP unit and 100 OD men, burned down the villages of Petschi and Chatki and arrested the entire population, to be carted off to transit camps for inspection. Though Wiemann on this occasion urged that the troops attempt to justify the measure to the population of the surrounding villages,[83] this may have been because he knew there was not the slightest justification for such actions. Other than that the village of Chatki included eight houses with strong walls and twenty-one "bunker-like" cellars; because these might conceivably be of use to the partisans, the 45th's pioneers blew them to pieces.[84] Finally, on 21st October the village of Ossinowka was destroyed, ostensibly to prevent the further gathering there of partisans. This time, no attempt to propagandise the surrounding villages seems to have been made.[85]

It seems likely, then, that not only *Landesschützen-Bataillon* 302 but also the rest of Wiemann's regiment were influenced by the brutal approach of their commander. Wiemann's particularly rich personal file provides three important clues as to the forces which helped shape his attitudes. Born in 1885, he was an experienced *Ostkämpfer* of the First World War, having spent the years 1915 to 1918 on the Eastern Front.[86] It was this experience, during the formative time of his life, which may well have injected him with a particularly strong contempt for eastern races. In August 1918, he was transferred to the Western Front - just in time to witness the German Army's collapse in morale and final defeat. Finally, the years between the end of the First World War and the advent of the Third Reich saw Wiemann working among other things as manager of a building firm which fell victim to the economic crisis in 1931 and

was liquidated in 1932.[87] Whilst Wiemann seems therefore to have been hardened, like Colonel von der Groeben, by experience of the First World War, the *Kampfzeit* or both - making both men typical of the brutalised, radicalised *Frontkämpfergeneration* - his mind-set may have been darkened even further by his particularly direct and unpleasant peacetime experiences.

These cases, then, suggest that the intensity of killing engaged in by individual units was determined not just by general brutalising influences and circumstances, but by the interaction of these factors with the particularly ruthless perceptions of individual officers.

7.4. Conclusion

At divisional level, the 221st Security Division responded to the new situation in which it found itself in the spring of 1942 with a constructiveness which if anything went beyond the expectations of its superiors. That it attempted to cultivate both population and potential deserters as far as it did was probably due in part to the particular pressures of the situation in which it found itself during the Jelnja-Dorogobush operations. It was sensible appraisal of the problems thrown up by a uniquely dire state of fighting power which seems to have compelled such an approach on the part of Lieutenant Meyer's intelligence section. Whilst ruthlessness was also apparent at the divisional level, it does not seem to have been the kind of ruthlessness which under no circumstances could countenance a more restrained approach to anti-partisan operations. This state of affairs may have been aided by an apparent lack of particular anti-Slavic venom on the part of General Pflugbeil. A further impetus to constructive engagement was the particular success which the 221st seems to have enjoyed in recruiting civilians and former POWs into German service during the autumn of 1941. In all this, the 221st contrasted significantly with units such as the 203rd Security Division and particularly the 707th Infantry Division.

This constructive outlook was not uniformly shared throughout the division, however. Whilst some officers, through sensible consideration, traditional military values, civilian ethics or even russophilia, may have subscribed to a "softly softly" approach, others clearly did not. The brutalisation process was driven by an array of forces including frustration at the increasingly "demodernised" state of the division, fear and contempt of real or perceived partisan ruthlessness, a sense of social darwinism, distrust of and contempt for the population, and the sheer desperation of *Sicherungstruppen* who were simply out of their depth. The division's lower levels were also subjected to division-level orders which blurred the guidelines on behaviour and legitimised brutality "under certain circumstances". All this was taking place, meanwhile, under the nose of a divisional commander who whilst apparently convinced of the need for a measure of cultivation is likely to have tolerated a considerable amount of excess by his subordinate units. There seems to have been no blanket effect across the division, however; the conduct of units was determined by an interaction between all these forces and the specific

attitude of the individual officer, an attitude in turn shaped to a significant extent by his previous life experiences. On the precise nature of these, the picture in most cases remains murky. In the cases of Lieutenant-Colonel von der Groeben and especially Colonel Wiemann, however, there may well have been a thread linking the experiences which they themselves had endured as part of the *Frontkämpfergeneration* and the butchery which their units inflicted in the spring of 1942. Brutality then was not simply an inevitable result of conditions.

The influences that shaped conduct were not only complex and varied; they also differed significantly from those of 1941. This was most obvious in the disappearance of the Jews from the scene, and in the new-found importance of measures to woo both the population and potential deserters away from the now burgeoning and dangerous partisan movement. It is also possible that careerism no longer automatically led to brutality to the extent that it had during 1941 - careerist motives may in fact have played a part in the constructive engagement which officers at all levels pursued. After all, restrained conduct helped preserve the discipline and therefore the effectiveness of a unit, and the conditions for the success of cultivation still seemed promising. Indeed, the retention of the security divisions' *Eingreiftruppen* at the front line meant that the element of specifically technocratic ruthlessness which had been present in 1941 was now largely absent. More ominously, however, the situation of rising partisan activity overall meant that the potential for brutality was increased by the growing frustrated impotence felt by increasingly inferior lower-level units and their officers.

The next chapter focuses on the 221st Security Division's response to the markedly different circumstances in which it found itself at the outset of its tenure in the Gomel region.

Endnotes to Chapter 7

[1] Weinberg, "Yelnya-Dorogobuzh", pp. 390-7.

[2] BA-MA RH 26-221/34. 221. Div. Abt. Ic, 24.3.42. "Feindlage!".

[3] BA-MA RH 26-221/34. 221. Div. Abt. Ic, 16.4.4.2 Betr.: Antrag auf Zuweisung von Truppen zur offensiven Partisanenbekämpfung.

[4] In May 1942 the Germans were committing nine divisions to the operations. Weinberg, "Yelnya-Dorogobuzh", p. 423.

[5] Ibid., pp. 395-6.

[6] After the operation, moreover, the Germans seem to have continued to observe this distinction, and were thus able to deprive the partisans of civilian support. The result was that all meaningful partisan activity in the area ceased until 1943. Weinberg, "Yelnya-Dorogobuzh", p. 398. Weinberg's account seems to have been drawn almost exclusively from the reports of German units. The picture of low partisan activity which it paints can be deemed essentially accurate, for an anti-partisan unit would have had no conceivable interest in making false claims about non-existent partisan activity. The disruption caused to agriculture and supply routes in the area would have been impossible to disguise from other agencies, and by playing down partisan activity an anti-partisan unit would also have deprived itself of necessary reinforcements. As has already been explained, the pressures of the situation if anything drove units to exaggerate the level of partisan activity. See above, p. 26.

[7] NA T-175/235. Der Chef der Sipo etc., 21.4.42. EM Nr. 194, p. 6.

[8] See above, footnote 27, Ch. 6.

[9] From 1942 on the sources concerning subordinate units become richer than they were for 1941, and a deeper analysis of this level is therefore possible.

[10] NA T-315/1677, file 22639/6. RHGeb. Mitte Abt. Ic, 9.4.42. Ic Befehle und Mitteilungen Nr. 11.

[11] Translated from: *"Der Truppe ist in kurzen regelmässigen Abständen eindringlich bekanntzugeben, daß festes, aber gerechtes und korrektes Auftreten des deutschen Soldaten die beste Waffe zur Aufrechterhaltung der Sicherheit und damit zur Niederhaltung der Partisanen ist, daß andererseits durch sinnloses, gewaltsames und insbesondere ohne Rucksicht auf durch deutsche Ausweise geschützte Personen (Ortswehrmänner, V-Leute) durchgeführtes Requiriern jede zur Befriedung eines Gebietes geleistete Arbeit zerschlagen wird. Jeder Offizier und Mann, der gegen diesen Befehl verstösst, hat härteste Strafe zu gewärtigen."* NA T-501/1677, file 22639/6. 221. Div Abt. Ic, 24.3.42. Betr.: Verhalten der Truppe im besetzten Gebiet.

[12] NA T-315/1677, file 22639/2. 221. Div. Abt. Ic, 8.4.42. Betr.: Behandlung von Kriegsgefangenen, Partisanen u. Bevölkerung, p. 3. The 221st Security Division had been temporarily redesignated 221st Division for the duration of the Jelnja-Dorogobush operations.

[13] Translated from: *"insbesondere in das Dorf kommende Partisanen zu erledigen oder festzunehmen und sie der deutschen Wehrmacht zu übergeben, desgl. jeder Bewohner, der Partisanen aufnimmt, verpflegt oder sonstwie unterstüzt."* BA-MA, RH 26-221/34. 221. Div. Abt. Ic, 30.3.42. Betr.: Propagandamaterial, Ernennung von Bürgermeistern, Bildung von Ordnungsdienst.

[14] BA-MA, RH 26-221/34. 221. Div. Abt. Ic, 24.3.42. Anlage 114, p. 2..

[15] NA T-315/1677, file 112639/6. 221. Div. Abt. Ic, 13.4.42. Betr.: Verhalten der Truppe im besetzten Gebiet. On 13th April Meyer threatened the full force of the division's courts in the event of further transgressions. Interestingly, however, neither this nor the threat of 24th March were ever carried out. In view of what is known about Lieutenant Meyer (see also below, Section 7.2.4.), it is almost certain that he meant these threats sincerely but did not receive the backing of the divisional court. This would certainly tally with the view that the *Ostheer* justice system allowed the troops to commit excesses against the civilian population (providing they did not endanger discipline) because it viewed it as a necessary outlet for the troops' frustrations. Bartov, *Hitler's Army*, pp. 59-105 (esp. p. 72).

[16] BA-MA, RH 26-221/34. 221. Div. Abt. Ic, 8.4.42. Betr.: Behandlung von Kriegsgefangenen, Partisanen und Bevölkerung, p. 2.

[17] It was not to be until 18th August 1943, in fact, that an OKW directive stipulated better treatment for partisan deserters. By the terms of this directive, all captured partisans were to be treated on the same level as prisoners of war, but deserters were to receive better treatment still. Umbreit, "Problem", p. 145. Whilst the OKH had for months already been urging a similar approach, and units in the field had been actively pursuing it, the ploy of awarding deserters with treatment better even than that which they had received in the Red Army seems particularly far-sighted, especially in view of the fact that it was made in early 1942.

[18] BA-MA, RH 26-221/34. 221. Div. Abt. Ic. Betr.: Behandlung von Kriegsgefangenen, Partisanen und Bevölkerung, p. 2.

[19] NA T-315/1677, file 22639/6. 221. Div. Abt. Ic, 16.6.42. Übergabeverhandlung, p. 1.

[20] Ibid..

[21] The other units were front-line formations on short-term rear area duty. Though they would have received a mauling during the winter of 1941-2 and would therefore have been below full strength, they almost certainly would still have been in better shape physically than the 221st's *Landesschützen-Bataillone* newly arrived from the Reich.

[22] NA T-315/1676, file 22639/2. 221. Div. Abt. Ia, 9.4.42. Betr.: Ausrüstungs- u. Ausbildungsstand der neu eingetroffenen LS Bataillone, pp. 1-2; 221. Div. Abt. Ia, 3.5.42. Betr.: Zustand der Landesschützen-Bataillone, p. 2.

[23] Moreover, the intense combat situation prevented an effective geistige Betreuung for the troops. NA T-315/1677, file 22639/6. 221. Div. Abt. Ic. Tätigkeitsbericht, 21.3. - 17.6.42, p. 7.

[24] Schulte, *German Army*, p. 259.

[25] BA-MA, RH 26-221/34. 221. Div. Abt. Ic. Betr.: Behandlung von Kriegsgefangenen, Partisanen und Bevölkerung, p. 3.

[26] NA T-315/1677, file 22639/6. 221. Div. Abt. Ic, 16.6.42. Übergabeverhandlung!

[27] BA-MA, RH 26-221/73. 221. Div. Abt. Ic, 4.6.42.

[28] Translated from: *"Das Ziel einer jeden Kampfhandlung ist nicht ein frontales Zurückdrängen des Gegners, sondern dessen Vernichtung."* NA T-315/1676, file 22639/2. 221. Div. Abt. Ia, 14.4.42.

[29] Translated from: *"Es muß jedem Soldaten klar sein, daß eine durch falsche Behandlung in die Armee der Partisanen getriebener Einwohner ihm morgen mit der Waffe in der Hand gegenüberstehen kann."* NA T-315/1677, file 22639/2. 221. Div. Abt. Ic, 8.4.42. Betr.: Behandlung von Kriegsgefangenen, Partisanen und Bevölkerung.

[30] See above, pp. 68-9.

[31] See above, p. 106.

[32] See above, pp. 67-8.

[33] NA T-315/1676, file 22639/2. 221. Div. Abt. Ia, 24.3.42. Beilage zur Anlage 2.

[34] See for example: Meier-Welcker, *Aufzeichnungen.*

[35] See above, p. 71.

[36] See above, p. 71.

[37] Translated from: *"Die Weißrussen betrachten uns als Befreier von Bolschewismus, die Polen als Befreier von Bolschewisten und Russen."* NA T-315/1673, file 16748/23. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 18.8.41. Betr.: Lagebericht an Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. VII.

[38] Translated from: *"(j)ede bevorzugte Behandlung von Russen im Dienst der Deutschen Sache beeinflußt die Stimmung der Bevölkerung durch die eigenen Landsleute sehr vorteilhaft..."* NA T-501/1, file 14684/4. RHGeb. Mitte Abt. Ic, 3.1.42. TB, Dezember 1941.

[39] Translated from: *"Als wirksamste Propaganda hat sich....die Haltung der deutschen Soldaten und die Propaganda der Tat herausgestellt."* NA T-315/1673, file 16748/23. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 14.12.41. Tätigkeitsbericht, 10.5 - 31.12.41, p. 3.

[40] Not his real name.

[41] Translated from: *"Wenn es möglich wäre, ein festes Ziel in irgendeiner Form zu zeigen, so dürfte damit eine erfolgreiche Propaganda betrieben werden können. Es darf jedoch nicht vergessen werden, daß der Russe den Deutschen keineswegs liebt und auch nie lieben wird. Dazu steckt in ihm, vielleicht unbewußt, ein erhebliches Minderwertigkeitsgefühl gegenüber dem Deutschen, durch die Einflüße des Bolschewismus noch verstärkt."* NA T-315/1585, file 29186/2. Sich.-Div. 203 Abt. Ia, 6.10.42.

[42] NA T-315/1668, file 16748/12. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 4.11.41. Betr.: Lagebeurteilung.

[43] NA T-315/1668, file 16748/11. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 15.10.41.

[44] NA T-315/1668, file 16748/11. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 27.10.41, p. 1.

[45] Translated from: *"Aus idealen Gründen werden sich überhaupt keine Gefangenen zum Dienst in der deutschen Wehrmacht finden. Der Grund, warum sie bereit sein werden, ist der Schrecken vor dem Gefangenenlager und die Aussicht auf ein besseres Leben bei der deutschen Truppe."* Förster, J., "Die Sicherung", p. 1256.

[46] See above, pp. 72-3, 85.

[47] Exactly who wrote these particular directives is not entirely clear. It is assumed that, regarding matters to be distributed throughout the division, the officers of the various sections wrote them, and Pflugbeil signed them. The same would have been true of the regular monthly reports to higher offices. When it came to matters of particular gravity to which higher offices should be alerted, it seems more likely that the divisional commander would have written them himself, to further impress upon senior officers the gravity of the situation. Similarly, it is assumed for this study's purposes that matters of particular gravity for the attention of the division would also have been written by the divisional commander, or at least that he would have had a particularly direct bearing upon their content.

[48] Translated from: *"Es ist jedem Schützen eindeutig klar zu machen, daß jedes Zurückgehen ohne Befehl den sicheren Tod bedeutet, daß bei richtiger zielbewußter Handhabung der Waffe und richtiger Geländeausnutzung der Erfolg stets auf seiner Seite sein wird. Es muß jedem Mann eindeutig klargemacht werden, daß es für jeden*

anständigen Soldaten schimpflich ist, gefallene oder verwundete Kameraden oder Waffen, Munition und Gerät in Feindeshand fallen zu lassen. Im Kampf kann der Soldat fallen, er stirbt dann den Heldentod, wie so viele, die ihm für Deutschland im Tode vorausgingen, der Feigling muß sterben, er stirbt den Verbrechertod des Verräters. Über die unerbittliche Durchführung der in den Kriegsgesetzen für den Feigling vorgesehenen Strafen darf kein Zweifel bestehen." NA T-315/1676, file 22639/2. 221. Div. Abt. Ia, 6.5.42. Anlage 201, pp. 1-2.

[49] Not his real name.

[50] See above, pp. 69-70.

[51] NA T-315/1677, file 22639/2. 221. Div. Abt. Ic, 8.4.42. Betr.: Behandlung von Kriegsgefangenen, Partisanen u. Bevölkerung.

[52] Unfortunately, the official sources do not shed a comprehensive light on the personal power struggles within a particular division.

[53] See above, pp. 49, 106.

[54] For further indications of Bechtolsheim's mentality, see: Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*, pp. 562-79.

[55] Translated from: *"In einem gelegenen Ortschaften wirkt sich die Flüsterpropaganda so aus, daß alle Einwohner beim Herannahen deutscher Truppen in die Wälder fliehen."* NA T-315/2246, file 27797/3. 707 Inf.-Div. Abt. Ic, 1.8.42. "Lagebericht für Juli 1942", pp. 1-2.

[56] Translated from: *"Die Bevölkerung....hat sich rückhaltslos zur deutschen Truppe bekannt, wertvvolle Nachrichten von Auftauchen und Absichten der Partisanen übermittelt, die Wehrmacht in jeder Weise unterstüzt und z. Tl. durch eigene Ortswehren aktive den Kampf gegen die Partisanen aufgenommen."* NA T-315/1677, file 22639/6. 221. Div. Abt. Ic, 16.6.42. Übergabeverhandlung, p. 1.

[57] Ibid., p. 2.

[58] Indeed, it was the continuation of such a constructive line which seems to have been effective in the long-term in stifling support in the Jelnja-Dorogobush area. See below, Ch. 7.

[59] See below, Ch. 8 on.

[60] This view is supported by Dallin. *German Rule*, pp. 507-8.

[61] NA T-315/1677, 22639/6. 221. Div. Abt. Ic, 18.6.42. TB, 22.3. - 17.6.42. The same report claimed another 1227 dead and wounded according to captured papers and interrogations of prisoners and deserters.

[62] Sources: NA T-315/1676, file 22639/1. 221. Div. Abt. Ia, 28.3., 8.4., 27.4., 12.5., 30.5., 1.6., 4.6., 8.6.42. KTB, 20.3.-17.6.42. The definition of "atrocity" as recorded in the tables which list them is any case in which more than 15 partisans are recorded as killed, and the German losses are too low to reflect genuine combat. The smallest ratio between partisan and German losses in any of these three tables is approximately 7.5 to 1; most of the instances record considerably greater ratios, and many record no German dead at all. Unfortunately, due to the shortcomings of the source material (see Section 2.5.1.), these tables cannot be regarded as a completely accurate record of all the relatively smaller-scale atrocities which the 221st's subordinate units committed. Until Soviet sources can be consulted, however, they constitute "what there is to go on".

References to partisans "burned alive" are not intended to refer to deliberate acts of immolation (though this may very well have happened in reality). Rather, these partisans are supposed to have perished in burning buildings in the course of battle.

It is worth noting the use of artillery and/or tanks in the actions of 8th April, 27th April, 12th May, 30th May and 4th June. This means that a significant amount of the disparity between recorded German and recorded partisan dead may well have been due to the use of this superior weaponry. However, so minute or even non-existent were German losses that it also seems likely that much of the disparity is still explicable in terms of the deaths of non-combatants. After all, the combined recorded partisan dead for these five actions was 199 at the very least and was probably nearer 300, whereas German dead amounted to just four. Moreover, whilst no figures for captured weapons are recorded for any of these instances, the massive overall disparity between recorded partisan dead and recorded partisan weapons captured over the course of the Jelnja-Dorogobush operations as a whole as an even stronger indicator that a massive number of non-combatants perished.

For three of the cases listed here, 4th June and 8th June, the sources offer little or no clue as to precisely what caused the atrocities which took place.

[63] See above, pp. 63-9.

[64] See above, pp. 68-9.

[65] NA T-501/15, file 24693/3. RHGeb. Mitte Abt. Ia, 10.6.42. Tätigkeitsbericht, Mai 1942, p. 4.

[66] Weinberg, "Yelnya-Dorogobuzh", pp. 434-7. Whilst currently the most complete western account of the attitude of the Jelnja-Dorogobush region's population prior to and during the operations, the limitations of a study relying almost exclusively upon German Army sources need to be borne in mind (see above, pp. 28-31). Indeed, as Weinberg himself points out, the fact that the sources were generated by units operating at that time at the edges of such a partisan-infested area means that such sources are arguably even less useful than usual. For a similar reason the relevant files of the SD and the *Wirtschaftskommando* Smolensk, which was economically responsible for the Jelnja-Dorogobush area cannot provide particular enlightenment either; the former also because the Jelnja-Dorogobush area was a "special case" which in terms of population mood was below the SD reports' radar screen, and the latter presumably because the partisan situation in the area precluded the possibility of access to economic agencies. That said, the WiKo's general statements on the effects of the food situation upon the population's mood in its jurisdiction are probably applicable to the Jelnja-Dorogobush area also.

[67] See below, pp. 238-40.

[68] NA T-315/1676, file 22639/1. 221. Div. Abt. Ia, 24.5.42. KTB, 20.3.-17.6.42.

[69] See above, pp. 59-60, 73.

[70] This was one of the new, weak battalions which had come under the 221st's command upon the division's arrival in the Jelnja-Dorogobush region. An assessment of its fighting power on 3rd May judged it fully fit for security duty only. NA T-315/1676, file 22639/2. 221. Div. Abt. Ia, 3.5.42. Zustand der Landesschützen-Bataillone, p. 2.

[71] During the Jelnja-Dorogobush operations the division's weaker *Landesschütze* units tended to be held over for static security duty, rather than the kind of active duty which involved more extensive contact with both partisans and population. Between July and December 1941, a similar state of affairs seems to have contributed to the fact that the 221st's *Sicherungstruppen* were "credited" with killing only 197 of the 1095 partisans recorded as killed in the divisional *Tagesmeldungen* to the Army Group Centre Rear Area. NA T-315/1670, file 16748/16. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia. Tagesmeldungen, 17.8.-14.12.41.

[72] NA T-315/1676, file 22639/1. 221. Div. Abt. Ia, 27.3., 28.3.42. KTB, 20.3.-17.6.42.

[73] Two machine-guns (no rifles) were reported as having been captured. NA T-315/1676, file 22639/1. 221. Div. Abt. Ia, 30.4.-3.5.42, 12.5.42. KTB, 20.3-17.6.42.

[74] NA T-315/1677, file 22639/4. 221. Div. Abt. Ia, 1.5.42. Betr.: Tagesmeldung für die Zeit vom 21. - 30.4.42, p. 2.

[75] NA T-315/1676, file 22639/2. 221. Div. Abt. Ia, 27.4.42. An LSR 44; NA T-315/1677, file 22639/4. 221. Div. Abt. Ia, 27.4.42 (Tagesmeldungen an RHGeb. Mitte).

[76] NA T-315/1676, file 22639/1. 221. Div. Abt. Ia. KTB, 26.4.42; RH 26-221/33. 221. Div. Abt. Ia, 3.5.41. Betr.: Zustand der Landesschützenbataillone.

[77] Translated from: *"Die Sicherungs- und Befriedungsmaßnahmen sind rücksichtslos durchzuführen. Gegen Partisanen-Verdächtige und Zivilisten, die mit Partisanen möglicherweise in Verbindung stehen, sind schärfste Maßnahmen anzuwenden. Wenn sich die Zivilbevölkerung am Kampf gegen Partisanen nicht freiwillig beteiligt (durch Anzeigen und Aufklärung) ist sie als partisanenverdächtig zu behandeln."* NA T-315/1679, file 29380/5. SR 45, 23.6.42. "Befehl für die Sicherung und Aufklärung im Raum um Nowosybkoff", p. 2.

[78] Translated from: *"Die Suche nach verborgenen Waffen ist mit allen Mitteln energisch zu betreiben."* NA T-315/1679, file 29380/5. Reserve-Polizei-Bataillon 91, 2.7.42. Einsatz-Befehl Nr. 18. On 12th July the police battalion reported that it had killed 24 Jews "trying to escape" whilst trying to put them in a ghetto in Chotimsk. NA T-315/1678, file 29380/1. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 12.7.42. KTB, 18.6.-31.12.42.

[79] Translated from: *"Partisanen, Partisanenverdächtige und mit Waffen versehenen Einwohnern."* NA T-315/1679, file 29380/5. Reserve-Polizei-Bataillon 91, 13.7.42. Einsatz-Befehl Nr. 25.

[80] Translated from: *"unnötige Härte z.B. übereilte Erschießungen und Abbrennen von Häusern ist unter allen Umständen zu vermeiden."* NA T-315/1679, file 29380/5. Reserve-Polizei-Bataillon 91, 20.7.42. Einsatz-Befehl Nr. 28.

[81] NA T-315/1678, file 29380/1. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 24.9.42. KTB, 18.6.-31.12.42.

[82] During the summer of 1942 all *Landesschützen-Regimente* were redesignated *Sicherungs-Regimente* (security regiments). *Landesschützen-* and *Wach-Bataillone* were redesignated *Sicherungs-Bataillone* (security battalions).

[83] NA T-315/1677, file 29380/1. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 11.10.42. KTB, 18.6.-31.12.42.

[84] NA T-315/1681, file 35408/2. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 14.11.42. Betr.: Berichterstattung über Einsatz der Inf-Pi-Züge im Monat Oktober 1942.

[85] NA T-315/1677, file 29380/1. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 21.10.42. KTB, 18.6.-31.12.42.

[86] BA-MA, Per 6 6900. Personal file on Hans Wiemann.

[87] Ibid..

CHAPTER 8: THE GOMEL REGION (1)

The 221st Security Division's tenure in the Gomel region created an opportunity which had eluded it during the Jelnja-Dorogobush operations. With the prospect of a lengthy tenure in its new area of operations, the 221st was able to enact a much more thorough and all-encompassing hearts and minds effort. This chapter considers the 221st's conduct to October 1942, placing it in an overall context and examining the forces which influenced its anti-partisan effort.[1]

8.1. The division-level picture, June - October 1942

Senior division-level officers within the 221st seem to have recognised the value of wooing the Russian civilian population in the Gomel region as comprehensively as possible. The effort centred again on Lieutenant Meyer's intelligence section, now assisted by its own propaganda units or *Propaganda-Staffeln*.[2] The Russian, the intelligence section concluded, was highly receptive to propaganda, having been saturated with it during the Soviet regime.[3] It had to be the right kind of propaganda, however; Stalin's regime had already given the population its fill of sloganeering and empty promises, and the population would remain unimpressed by a German hearts and minds campaign too reliant upon the written word.[4] An extensive range of media needed to be employed skilfully and, most importantly, the promises made had to be kept. The importance of winning and retaining the population's trust was elaborated on by the administrative section of the 203rd Security Division:

> *"The Russian is as trusting as a child and wants to be treated as such. He is devoted and obedient and is used to poverty and privation. If however he feels his trust is being betrayed or sees that promises are not being fulfilled, he becomes treacherous and deceitful and rears up against his master."*[5]

These conclusions, then, were not unique to the 221st; indeed, as has already been made clear, the German propaganda effort which was conducted across the whole of the Army Group Centre Rear Area encompassed a wide range of media including exhibitions, film shows written material and both native and German public speakers.[6] As has already been seen, however, influences were at work which affected the particular degree to which a unit came to favour cultivation over coercion. Before considering how these influences worked within the 221st between June and October 1942, the actual measures which constituted the division's hearts and minds campaign and the campaign's overall comprehensiveness need to be examined also.

8.1.1. The hearts and minds campaign

The Russian population, the intelligence section recognised, hankered after information about world events and politics, and about National Socialism and its effects upon people's everyday lives.[7] There was a particular yearning for information about the lives of German workers and farmers, and the intelligence section, seeing an opportunity to contrast conditions in the Reich

with the deprivations of life in the Soviet Union, was ready to oblige. It opened an exhibition in Gomel titled *"Wie lebt der deutsche Bauer?"* (*"How does the German farmer live?"*), arranged lectures on agricultural issues, and produced a popular "agricultural calendar".[8] It also employed *Ostarbeiter* working in the Reich who were home on leave to give highly upbeat public talks on their experience of Germany, of the bountiful existence enjoyed by German workers and farmers, and of the favourable treatment of *Ostarbeiter* there. *"The performances were received with enthusiasm,"* the intelligence section reported, *"and were interrupted by calls of "If only we could live like that!""*[9]

Talks such as these, given for Russians by Russians, were viewed by the intelligence section as particularly effective because the speakers were recounting their own experiences in their own language. They could thus employ all the nuances of the Russian language, nuances which no German speaker would have been able to exploit fully. The *Propaganda-Staffeln* seem to have been similarly successful in their use of native speakers to help expand the *Ost-Truppen*.[10] The intelligence section judged the success of these talks in highly positive terms:

> *"Spoken propaganda, which exerts a direct influence upon its recipient, proved particularly effective. When skilfully presented it strikes a chord among the population and banishes the people's initial reservations."*[11]

This was just as well, however; when it came to the *Arbeitseinsatz* question, over which the population would eventually grow particularly embittered,[12] the intelligence section and its *Propaganda-Staffeln* would need to be especially resourceful. Thus, in addition to the talks, the propaganda troops utilised films on German life and "open letters" describing the happiness of groups of *Ostarbeiter* in the Reich.[13] The division also tried to reduce the worst excesses of *Arbeitseinsatz* itself, such as cold weather transportation in train trucks lacking straw and ovens, meagre rations and lack of space, and the ugly methods, such as coercion or plying with alcohol, which were often employed by the native administrators directly responsible for gathering labour.[14]

Cultural initiatives were another area of activity. The *Propaganda-Staffel* in Gomel opened a "House of the People" (*"Haus des Volkes"*) for theatre and film performances,[15] and by October, with more *Kraft durch Freude* groups entertaining German troops in the area, it was possible to provide the population with more diversion in the shape of live Russian artists.[16] The *Propaganda-Staffeln* also used POWs as propaganda pawns; the intelligence section's monthly report for October 1942 reported that the *Dulag* in Gomel had given a "live musical send-off" for POWs being sent for forced labour in the Reich - a move apparently well-received by the civilians who witnessed it.[17]

There seems to have been particular far-sightedness in the way the 221st used propaganda in its actual anti-partisan effort. Shortly after the division's arrival in the Gomel region, the intelligence section and its *Propaganda-Staffeln* seized the propaganda opportunity presented by the initial operations to "comb" the area. Indeed, the 221st's divisional level as a whole

recognised the propaganda value of these operations, and exploited it accordingly. This may well explain the relative restraint with which the operations were carried out; instead of inflicting grotesquely high body counts, they seem to have been used primarily to cultivate the population. Numerous villages were temporarily deprived of their able-bodied male population, who were then sent to *Dulags* for security checks.[18] Of 1,855 men aged between 15 and 60, 21 were shot, 93 sent to a *Dulag* and 87 volunteered for *Arbeitseinsatz* in Germany. Those detainees who were to be sent back home, the overwhelming majority, were to be transformed during their internment into a potent propaganda weapon by being treated to anti-partisan talks and films, and also to programmes of entertainment described as *bunte Abende in Kriegsgefangenenlager.*[19] Once released, so went the theory, these men would be naturally inclined to discount "horror stories" about conditions in the *Dulags* and encourage fellow villagers to co-operate with their occupiers.[20] This course of action does seem to have achieved a considerable measure of success; nine days later the division reported that no encounters with the enemy had taken place in the areas which had been combed, and it attributed this success partly to the "charm offensive" which had been carried out.[21]

That this measure can be said to have been particularly far-sighted lies in the fact that it seems to have gone beyond what General von Schenckendorff had originally called for; Schenckendorff's directive to the division on 5th July had merely stipulated that the detainees not be handled brutally.[22] Further, though it was a task which mounting manpower constraints would increasingly make well-nigh impossible, the 221st also tried to ensure that the areas were occupied by German troops for a fairly lengthy period after the operations, partly in order to enable a yet more effective propagandising of the population.[23]

The 221st's attempts to inject "humanity" into its anti-partisan operations, then, were perhaps yet more comprehensive than what was expected by higher command levels. As in the Jelnja-Dorogobush operations, however, the division's ruthless side was noticeable also.

8.1.2. Tendencies to terror

The coercive tendency within the 221st Security Division continued to show itself in a number of ways. Some of the directives issued, by the operations section in particular, still displayed the distrust of the population and tendency to ruthlessness which had been apparent during the Jelnja-Dorogobush operations. Some still were marked by the ambiguity which might be interpreted as a blank cheque for brutality. The orders issued on 12th July 1942 for Operation *Dreieck* illustrate this even in the same sentence: *"Ruthless measures are to be carried out vigorously; unnecessary harshness, particularly the unnecessary burning of houses, is to be avoided."*[24] The implication seems clear: the troops were being urged to conduct themselves ruthlessly, and this might cause them to interpret the word "unnecessary" rather loosely.

What was now lacking, however, was the dramatic exhortation to merciless harshness made by General Pflugbeil during the Jelnja-Dorogobush operations. Moreover, the division's directives no longer displayed the kind of contempt for and mistrust of the civilian population which seem to have been rife during Major Haupt's tenure as operations officer during 1941.[25] Overall, harsh attitudes notwithstanding, there seems to have been a further shift toward "doveishness" within the division. What caused this shift is addressed shortly, but any explanation is made more meaningful if one firstly contrasts the "balance" between constructiveness and coercion at the 221st's top levels with the balances that characterised other units. In the general scheme of things, just how constructive was the 221st's approach?

8.2. The "balance" between cultivation and coercion: the 221st Security Division compared to other units

Whilst they were not necessarily particularly enthusiastic at the prospect, the divisional officers of the 221st seem during this period to have been fully prepared to enter into a campaign of constructive engagement with both civilians and potential partisan deserters. The 221st was not alone in advocating a relatively constructive approach. The 339th Infantry Division, stationed for most of 1942 in the rear area of Fourth Army, advocated in November that Jews and Gypsies were only to be shot by the 339th's troops if it was proven that they were partisans or helpers. Further, in contrast with the 707th Infantry Division, it declared that shooting women and children, unless they were conclusively proven to be partisans or partisan helpers, was not the task of the troops. In August 1942, moreover, one of the 339th's subordinate units was ensuring that the partisans got to know, via the population, that captured partisans would be treated like normal POWs and that deserters could expect preferential treatment.[26]

To a considerable extent, a similarly sensible approach was adopted by other units; such seems to have been the case for example with another security division, the 203rd. In June the 203rd launched *Freundschaft*, a propaganda operation deploying both loudspeaker vans and a Russian farmer who gave talks about his experiences of Germany. The operation was judged an unqualified success, which among other things had resulted in the desertion of large numbers of partisans.[27] For Operation *Maikäfer* in July, meanwhile, the 203rd's operations section explained that

> *"Attempts are being made to move inhabitants hiding out in the forests back into their villages, for they have nothing to fear providing they have not participated in partisan activities. It has become clear that the pointless slaughter of livestock or the unjustified burning of villages and shooting of inhabitants, as is often the wont of SD and police units, only succeeds in driving the inhabitants into the arms of the partisans."*[28]

That said, the 203rd's approach displayed important differences to the 221st's. For one thing, there was no criticism of the increasingly harsh guidelines being issued from above; this made for a contrast with the criticism of deserter policy which the 221st would make in December.[29]

Whilst for example the 221st had during the Jelnja-Dorogobush operations exhorted its troops against excessive conduct, the 203rd's administrative section remarked in August 1942 that it was scarcely avoidable *"that many people killed in cleansing operations are not actually partisans."*[30] The 203rd's operations section, meanwhile, despite having urged restraint during *Maikäfer*, seems by November to have been converted to a more merciless persuasion. It now expressed itself in extremely cold and utilitarian terms concerning the excesses of the troops:

> *"Reports constantly come in that properties are being vandalised or pillaged outright by members of units stationed in the area. These actions are highly uncomradely, for they can cause a dearth of sufficiently-equipped accommodation for troops who have been sent to the rear to recover from particularly harsh front-line combat. They also contravene orders and indeed are acts of plunder. I shall ensure that reports are submitted on any similar cases in future."*[31]

Though this directive was intended to discourage excesses by the troops, it seems to have done so out of concern for discipline and "uncomradeliness" rather than out of any concern whatsoever for relations with the civilian population. The language is also far less urgent than Lieutenant Meyer's warning against excesses in the Jelnja-Dorogobush operations,[32] and it seems consistent with the derogatory comments made by the 203rd's operations officer about the civilian population.[33] The 221st, the 339th and the 203rd all seem to have differed markedly, however, from certain other units. The 707th Infantry Division, a unit seemingly possessed of an especially harsh, ideologically-driven mind-set, remained true to form during the second half of 1942. This is demonstrated, as will be seen, by the particularly yawning gap between its own dead and the death toll which its subordinate units inflicted.[34] It does appear, then, that the balance between cultivation and coercion within the 221st Security Division during the summer and autumn of 1942 was, relative to some other units, on the side of the former rather than the latter.

What roles were played, respectively, by the 221st's situation and by personal perceptions to ensure that this balance was struck and maintained at this time?

8.3. Explaining the division-level picture

The circumstances in which the 221st Security Division operated during the second half of 1942 played an important role, as they had during the Jelnja-Dorogobush operations, in compelling the division to pursue a constructive approach to anti-partisan warfare. Not least among these was the dire state of intelligence in the division's new jurisdiction.

8.3.1. The intelligence situation

When the 221st Security Division arrived in the Gomel area, so claims its end-of-year intelligence report, it discovered that its predecessor there, the 203rd Security Division, had failed to put a proper intelligence system in place. The 221st thus had to reckon with a dearth of detailed, accurate information on the partisans in the area; reports on partisan strengths made by

the 203rd's *Feldkommandanturen* and *Ortskommandanturen* did not correspond to reality, and there was no *V-Mann Netz* (network of informers) in place.[35] In the particularly comprehensive intelligence effort which the 221st now had to undertake in order to compensate for the failure of its predecessor - in the middle of October it ordered every battalion and *Ortskommandantur* to set up its own network of informers [36] - it almost certainly would have had to rely even more upon information provided by the civilian population. Cultivating the population, then, would have been even more the order of the day than might otherwise have been the case.

Mounting problems over the following months forged further reasons to continue and indeed intensify the cultivation effort.

8.3.2. The problem of overstretch and the fall in fighting power

So far as General von Schenckendorff and his superiors in Army Group Centre were concerned, the partisan problem in the Gomel region during the second half of 1942, alarming though it was, was dwarfed by the scale of the problem elsewhere. The particularly heavily-forested area to the north-east, the Bryansk region, was identified as an area where large partisan groups were especially likely to gather.[37] Arguably the brunt of partisan activity, meanwhile, was borne by the security divisions in the Witebsk-Polozk area. Among other things, the German commanders recognised that the partisans here were greatly aided by the area's proximity to the front line. This enabled a particularly close degree of contact between the Witebsk-Polozk partisans and the Red Army, posing the threat that the partisans might start having a major strategic impact in the area.[38] It was in these areas, therefore, that Army Group Centre and its subordinate units would concentrate a great deal of their anti-partisan effort during the second half of 1942 and into 1943. As Table 8 shows, then, the partisan war in the 221st's area was somewhat quieter during the second half of 1942 than was normal for the Army Group Centre Rear Area as a whole. It therefore comes as no surprise that the 221st found itself further down the pecking order than other divisions when it came to allocation of such meagre manpower resources as were available.[39]

This, it would seem, hamstrung the division's endeavours to pursue effective mobile operations. Indeed, there were countless occasions on which the troops stationed in strongpoints along the railway lines proved incapable of locating and apprehending the culprits of partisan attacks. The division's efforts were particularly crippled when it attempted large-scale operations. An operation in the Wetka area toward the end of August was just one occasion on which the partisans were able to melt into the undergrowth in the face of the less-than-overwhelming force which the division had been able to muster, and then return to the area after the Germans had left.[40]

Though severe overstretch problems were common to all security divisions, they grew yet more acute for the 221st during September. It was in September that the division was forced to relinquish Security Battalion 573 and the staff and headquarters troops of the 44th Security Regiment. At a time when it also needed to oversee the harvest, this loss in manpower meant that the division underwent even more severe strain in its efforts simply to guard the railways. The 221st Security Division, with fewer than 7 000 combat strength, was now responsible for an area of 30 000 square kilometres, 2 560 villages, and over 1 300 000 inhabitants.[41] As has been made clear in previous chapters, the tendency for German reports to exaggerate practical difficulties does not detract from the implications of concrete facts such as these. Nor, moreover, was the 221st yet fully able to rely upon its native units to relieve the pressure effectively, ill-trained and ill-equipped as these units still seem to have been. On 20th August, for example, it was reported that the OD units across the entire divisional area were three thousand rifles short.[42] Worse, if anything, was the state of *Ost-Bataillon* 604, a unit raised from former POWs. A report of mid-November 1942 detailed the chronic lack of machine-guns, medical facilities and footwear plaguing this unit; it also possessed only half the number of horses and trucks with which it should have been supplied.[43] It was these difficulties which forced the division to abandon temporarily all attempts at active security, and concentrate almost fully on guarding the railways.[44] Unable therefore to strike major blows against the partisans, the division's need to woo the population instead would probably have increased correspondingly.

It does not follow, however, that overstretch and an acute need for intelligence automatically compelled the 221st to reach such a sensible judgement. Just as important as the actual constraints of the division's situation, during this period as during the Jelnja-Dorogobush operations, was the way in which individual officers perceived the situation. This is highlighted by again comparing the forces behind the 221st's relatively restrained, constructive approach to anti-partisan warfare, with those which lay behind the somewhat harsher approach of the 203rd Security Division and the markedly harsher approach of the 707th Infantry Division.

Table 8: The partisan war in the 221st Security Division's jurisdiction, July - November, 1942, as compared to entire Army Group Centre Rear Area average.[45]

	July		August		Sept.		Oct.		Nov.	
	221st Security Division	Army Group Centre Rear Area	221st Security Division	Army Group Centre Rear Area	221st Security Division	Army Group Centre Rear Area	221st Security Division	Army Group Centre Rear Area	221st Security Division	Army Group Centre Rear Area
No. of clashes between partisans and Germans / auxiliaries / allies.	60	59	50	67	58	56	58	61	58	42
No. of villages attacked (given as *Plünderungen*).	13	37	13	31	Not given	43	54	58	39	43
No. of successful partisan attacks on railways.	27	35	21	46	33	Not given	25	45	11	36
No. of prevented partisan attacks on railways.	7	17	22	26	18	Not given	15	25	12	26
No. of partisan dead.	206	438	172	477	164	268	39	448	106	439
No. of German etc. dead.	78	51	40	66	56	64	32	39	28	32
German etc. dead as percentage of partisan dead.	37.9%	11.7%	23.3%	13.8%	34.1%	23.8%	82.1%	8.7%	26.4%	7.3%

8.3.3. Comparison with other units

The 203rd Security Division

The operations and administrative officers of the 203rd Security Division, as has already been seen, aired coldly contemptuous views of the Russian population which reveal much about the mentality of the men who held them.[46] It can be shown, moreover, that these views were the result not of any objective judgement of a population less receptive to German rule than that in the 221st's jurisdiction, but of the particular mind-set of the officers. For one thing, only a month separated the operations section's pleas for restraint in Operation *Maikäfer* in July with the administrative officer's terse comments about the "inevitability" of civilian deaths in anti-partisan operations, and in that time there does not appear to have been any significant increase in the population's propensity for supporting the partisans.[47] By the end of November, the administrative section reported that bitterness over German requisitions and the economic situation, and growing lack of faith in the German ability to combat the partisans, had caused the population's mood to deteriorate. It still reported, however, that the population's mood remained *"on the whole not unfriendly"*.[48] At both points, moreover - mid-summer and mid-autumn 1942 - these judgements of mood were similar to the judgements reached at the same time by the 221st.[49] Despite this, the opinion of the population expressed by the 203rd, and some of the practices which it appears to have condoned, were significantly less conducive to a constructive anti-partisan effort than those of the 221st.

In other respects also, the situation of the two divisions was too similar to offer an explanation for differences in approach. The 203rd and the 221st faced overstretch problems of similar intensity and a comparable level of partisan activity.[50] The only sense in which the 221st's forces were perhaps less overstretched was that the 221st seems to have recruited more OD men, but this in itself may have been a result of the 221st's more constructive approach.[51]

Furthermore, the partisans in both areas seem to have behaved similarly in terms of the "ruthlessness and underhandedness" which was particularly likely to exacerbate the fear and hatred of armed civilians on the part of German troops. The 203rd's figure of overall dead for the period was actually lower than that of the 221st,[52] and according to the *Kriegstagebücher* for both divisions there was only instance in the case of each in which more than ten German soldiers at a time were killed by partisans.[53] Three German agricultural officials were murdered in the 203rd's jurisdiction and five in the 221st's, and in the 221st's *Kriegstagebuch* there was one report of partisans attacking whilst disguised in German uniform whilst in the 203rd's there were none. On 5th September, moreover, Lieutenant Meyer himself was fired upon in his car and his driver wounded.[54] The only sense in which the partisans in the 203rd's area were perhaps more ruthless was in their killing of OD men, administrators and their families and sometimes apparently innocent civilians.[55] Arguably, however, partisan atrocities committed against civilians should if anything have prompted a division to capitalise and woo the population even more effectively. That the 203rd did not, but seems instead to have been possessed of a considerable measure of contempt for the population in general and tolerated excesses accordingly, is another indication that its approach was shaped by a harsh mind-set, shaped by racial contempt and *francs-tireur* phobia, rather than by circumstances.[56]

Comparison with the 707th Infantry Division at this time makes the point even more strongly.

The 707th Infantry Division

An indication of what division-level officers were doing in terms of discouraging, tolerating or actively encouraging brutality, and therefore of the ruthlessness in their own outlook, is the disparity between a division's recorded dead and the number of partisan dead which it inflicted. There is a striking disparity on this count between the 221st Security Division and the 707th Infantry Division during the second half of 1942, one which again to a significant extent can be explained only in terms of the contrasting "mind-sets" of the officers of each.

In the case of the 221st, there indeed was considerable disparity during the second half of 1942 between the division's dead and the body count of partisan dead in its jurisdiction. Whilst the 221st itself lost 234 men between the beginning of July and the end of November 1942, the partisan dead numbered 687.[57] The 221st's losses thus amounted to just over thirty-four per cent of partisan losses; the other sixty-six per cent almost certainly was made up to a large extent of non-combatants. Whilst this hardly seems to tally with the image, suggested so far, of a somewhat "restrained" division, this figure needs to be viewed relatively. Relative to the

707th Infantry Division the 221st's conduct was restrained indeed; in the same period the 707th's 169 dead comprised just fifteen per cent of the 1059 partisans which it killed.[58]

What caused the contrast between the two divisions? At first sight, it does appear that a role was played by the fact that the two divisions faced significantly different situations for part of the period. For one thing, the 707th's "intelligence shortfall" seems to have been less acute than that of the 221st.[59] The 707th seems also to have been less overstretched; partisans in the 221st's area attacked the railways 203 times between the beginning of July and the end of November; in that of the 707th, just 132 times.[60] Facing a significantly less serious situation along the railway lines, the 707th was therefore able to commit more troops to the kinds of mobile patrols and larger-scale operations likely to exact heavy death tolls. That the 707th therefore simply enjoyed more opportunity for killing than the 221st is further suggested by the number of "clashes" with the partisans which the 707th recorded for the period - 423 to the 221st's 284.[61] Furthermore, the fact that the 707th's need to expand its intelligence network among the population was probably less urgent than that of the 221st is likely to have meant that the 707th felt even less "inhibited" by its situation.

This seems at first to contradict the much-supported argument that brutality was more likely in a unit which found itself in a more difficult situation, rather than in a unit enjoying relatively favourable circumstances.[62] There is in fact no contradiction, for the 707th's condition too was scarcely one to be envied; it too was assailed by difficult, expansive terrain, highly active partisans and a poor state of fighting power.[63] Circumstances such as these were indeed likely to fuel brutality, be it via frustration, the need to cover for failure, or the belief that strangling support for the partisans through terror of the population was the only means of anti-partisan "warfare" to which the 707th was equal. Inclination to brutality did not necessarily mean, however, that a unit always enjoyed the opportunity for it. Because of a more favourable intelligence situation and the lower level of rail disruption in its jurisdiction, opportunity for mobile operations and therefore for brutality was considerably more available to the 707th than it was to the 221st. The 221st, lacking such leeway, appears to have decided instead that a particularly intensive effort to woo both population and potential deserters was the only option available.

But was it purely circumstances that determined the brutality of one unit and the relative restraint of the other? Looked at another way, the comparison with the 707th suggests a rather different explanation. Whilst the overall picture certainly depicts the 221st's cultivation effort as having been driven by circumstances, a breakdown of the picture sheds yet further light on the role which was played by individual perceptions in influencing how officers responded to their circumstances.

This becomes clear when comparing the conduct of the two divisions during July and August only. At this point, the difference in the two divisions' circumstances was still significant, yet

not so significant as the difference for the period July to November as a whole. Whereas in September and October the 221st faced 91 acts of rail sabotage and the 707th just 41, the respective figures in July and August were 89 and 58.[64] Indeed, July and August were the only months during the period in which both divisions were able to commit significant numbers of troops to mobile operations; this is reflected in the rather similar number of clashes with partisans which took place, 110 for the 221st and 135 for the 707th.[65] If the 221st's constructive conduct over the period as a whole was indeed driven by a restrictive situation which among other things hampered mobile operations, we might therefore expect its conduct during the relatively "mobile" period of July and August to have been a good deal bloodier. In fact, this was true only to a small extent - the 221st killed 378 partisans, of which its own losses of 118 dead constituted thirty-one per cent as opposed to the thirty-four per cent for the whole period.[66] By contrast, this phase of "operational convergence" between the two divisions saw the 707th behave if anything even more viciously. It suffered just eleven per cent of the dead which it inflicted upon the partisans; it killed 737 and itself lost just 81 men.[67] This was conduct far more excessive than that practised by the 221st in relatively similar circumstances.

Admittedly, the 221st's comparatively restrained conduct during July and August might still be explained in terms of that division's situation. The 221st's state of intelligence alone may have remained sufficiently worse than that of the 707th to compel the 221st in a constructive direction. In the light of the figures just cited, however, an exclusively "situational" explanation looks less convincing, for where circumstances were most similar the 707th behaved even more brutally.[68]

Moreover, the killing during the second half of 1942 was spread quite evenly across both the 707th Infantry Division's regiments, the 727th and 747th,[69] and this suggests that it was less particular circumstances than the particularly ruthless doctrine of the divisional commander, highlighted in previous chapters, which influenced the lower levels of the 707th and drove their brutality accordingly.[70] For the 221st Security Division, meanwhile, it seems that relatively constructive conduct was determined not just by circumstances, but also by the somewhat less ruthless collective attitude among its senior officers which ensured that the division responded to circumstances in a relatively sensible way.

This is a surer explanation of the fact that the 221st Security Division's conduct was "relatively restrained" - a term which obviously should be used advisedly regarding the matters of mass killing - even when the division was presented with an opportunity for brutality similar to that of the 707th. It would follow that another unit finding itself in a situation offering as few opportunities for brutality as did that of the 221st after August 1942 might nonetheless still have gone on to behave more brutally than the 221st. It is possible, for example, that a higher incidence of partisan attacks on the railways would not have dissuaded the 707th from

continuing to pursue the mass killing of non-combatants through mobile operations, explicitly sacrificing the needs of passive security in the process.[71] The 221st's situation was certainly one in which opportunities for brutality were severely restricted, but it was the relatively sensible view taken by the officers in charge which ensured that it responded to that situation constructively.[72]

What was it in the attitudes of the 221st's division-level officers, then, which ensured that such a constructive approach was sustained?

8.3.4. The personal dimension

As before, the pivot of the cultivation effort was Lieutenant Meyer's intelligence section. During the second half of 1942 Meyer continued to prevent his apparent contempt for eastern races from clouding his judgement about what was necessary practically. Now, however, there seems to have been more harmony of purpose between the intelligence section, the operations section - from July under command of Major Hellmuth Kriebel[73] - and the divisional commander himself. All may have been engaged in a "learning process", growing increasingly aware of the damage which atrocities might wreak upon essential relations with the civilian population. The new divisional commander, General Lersner, certainly seems to have been persuaded of the case for constructive engagement; compelling evidence is Lersner's signature on particularly constructive suggestions on deserters made in December 1942.[74]

Assessing how Lersner's life experiences affected his conduct is a task even less straightforward than it is in the case of other officers. Lersner was born in 1892 but was not typical *Frontkämpfergeneration* material. He spent most of the First World War as an adjutant, either at battalion or regimental level, and therefore probably spent much of his time behind a desk.[75] As such, he may not have been as brutalised by his front-line experience as had officers such as General Pflugbeil and particularly Colonel Wiemann, commander of the 45th Security Regiment. It would be far too simple however to attribute his sensible approach in Russia to this. As a continuing officer in the Weimar years he is likely to have been influenced to some degree by the officer corps' anti-Bolshevik, anti-guerrilla mind-set, and he was also involved in operations against the left-wing uprising in the Ruhr in 1920.[76] This event in particular may have inculcated him with intense anti-Bolshevism; indeed, it may be that Lersner had wanted to prove himself against the "enemies of the state" after six years behind a desk. All this can only be speculative, but even if Lersner had been infused with a ruthless ideological mind-set by his past experiences, he seems to have let more sensible considerations dictate his actions in 1942. Lersner therefore may or may not be another indication that there was no straight line connecting life experiences, ideological conviction and actual behaviour.

What may have further bolstered the 221st's constructive approach was the fact that a similar approach had already been tried in the Jelnja-Dorogobush operations, also under difficult

circumstances, and seems to have enjoyed a significant degree of success. An apparently successful formula was always likely to be repeated; in a similar albeit grislier way, the 707th Infantry Division had been drenching itself in blood since its arrival in the East and perhaps saw little reason to tamper with its own preferred formula. In the case of the 221st, the sustainability of a constructive approach seems to have been further strengthened by the fact that, for a time at least, the hearts and minds campaign in the Gomel area also seems to have met with considerable success. Among other things, it claims to have been able to explain and justify measures which might otherwise have been highly unpopular, such as requisitioning meat and detaining male civilians for security checks.[77] The 221st's efforts are likely to have contributed to the fact that the partisans found themselves in an uphill struggle in their own efforts to persuade the population to "come over". The division's intelligence section reported on 19th July, for example, that partisan-inspired rumours claiming that the Red Army had broken through at Bryansk and Orel were having little or no effect upon the population.[78]

Whilst the intelligence section almost certainly "talked up" its achievements to some extent, especially its alleged ability to "sell" requisitioning to the population, its measures probably did enjoy an at least significant degree of success. Had they not done so, as would increasingly be the case at the end of 1942 and throughout 1943, the sheer seriousness of the situation would have compelled the intelligence section to give a stronger indication of it.[79] Another indication that the intelligence section's reports are essentially reliable on this score is that they seem to have been open about the shortcomings of the hearts and minds campaign.[80] Moreover, the continuing success of German propaganda during the months of June to October 1942 is testified to by the reports of the SD. Already at the end of May the SD had acknowledged that propaganda was adapting well and corresponding to the Russian psyche.[81] Whilst the SD continued to identify considerable distribution problems over the following months, it was still maintaining towards the end of October that the population remained overwhelmingly convinced of German victory. It also reported that the population received even the slightest improvement in the food situation with gratitude and a full recognition of German generosity.[82] This suggests that the German hearts and minds effort was still holding its own at least. Among other things, the still apparent effectiveness of a comprehensive hearts and minds effort also fuelled the careerist motive, suggested in the previous chapter, for continuing to pursue it.[83]

All told, whilst the 221st's division-level officers may still have been possessed of potentially brutalising attitudes, they had succeeded even more than before in allowing the dictates of sense, mixed perhaps with careerist notions, to shape their approach. Certainly, the division's situation had fuelled an urgent need for greater employment of civilians in the intelligence effort, and severely restricted the division's mobility. It was the foresight of officers at the divisional level, however, which determined the 221st's relatively sensible response to this situation. Thus the 221st contrasted significantly with the 203rd Security Division and even more significantly with the 707th Infantry Division.

8.4. Conclusion

Between June 1942 and January 1943, the divisional level officers of the 221st Security Division seem, to an even greater extent than before, to have been united in attempts to conduct their anti-partisan effort primarily through a "hearts and minds" campaign to woo both civilians and potential deserters. To a large extent, this decision seems again to have been determined by particular circumstances, namely chronically inadequate intelligence and particularly severe overstretch in which the division found itself. These were circumstances which, though different to those encountered in the Jelnja-Dorogobush operations, threw up massive difficulties of their own. Once more, however, as comparisons with the 203rd Security Division and 707th Infantry Division show, the personal perceptions of individual officers seem to have played a decisive role also. In the 221st's case, a combination of sense, careerist notions and the perception that previous constructive measures had been successful ensured that the division remained on a course in which cultivation was the main feature. The officers of the 221st were more successful than those of other divisions in ensuring that a restrained and therefore probably more effective partisan effort was not stymied either by such feelings as they themselves harboured towards partisan ruthlessness and the "inferior" Slavic race, the "social darwinism" with which they had been infused by their experiences of a quarter-century earlier, or by the frustration which they doubtless felt in response to the division's ongoing hardships.

How far this picture was reflected at sub-divisional level is one of the issues which are addressed in the next chapter.

Endnotes to Chapter 8

[1] This chapter, and Chapter Ten also, focus only upon the divisional level, whilst Chapters Nine and Eleven focus among other things upon the 221st's lower levels from June 1942 to January 1943 and February to August 1943 respectively. This avoids the dangers of repetition and a somewhat fragmented analysis.

[2] NA T-315/1680, file 29380/8. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 31.12.42. Tätigkeitsbericht, 18.6.-31.12.42, p. 11.

[3] NA T-315/1680, file 29380/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 2.12.42. Monatsbericht für die Zeit 1. bis 30. November 1942, p. 1.

[4] An almost identical view was expressed by the SD. NA T-175/235. Der Chef der Sipo etc., 19.6.42. MadbO Nr. 8, pp. 10-11.

[5] Translated from: *"Der Russe ist vertrauenselig wie ein Kind und will wie ein solches geleitet werden. Er ist treu und gehorsam und an Not und Entbehrungen gewöhnt. Fühlt er sich aber in seinem Vertrauen getäuscht oder sieht er, daß Versprechungen nicht eingehalten werden, wird er heimtückisch, hinterlistig und bäumt sich gegen die Herrschaft auf."* NA T-315/1586, file 29186/3. 203. Sich.-Div. Abt. VII, 25.2.43. Betr.: Lagebericht für Februar 1943, p. 3.

[6] See above, p. 104.

[7] NA T-315/1680, file 29380/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 3.10.42. Similarly, the SD described the population as possessing a "hunger for news" (*Nachrichtenhunger*) and information particularly on agricultural reform and National Socialism. NA T-175/236. Der Chef der Sipo etc., 14.8.42. MadbO Nr. 16, pp. 13-14; NA T-175/235; idem., 19.6.42. MadbO Nr. 8, pp. 10-11. In December 1941 the German 16th Army identified the

following topics as being of interest to the population: the reasons for the German attack; German military successes; the exploitation of workers and farmers in the Soviet Union, and the following aspects of Germany and National Socialism: i) the situation of German workers and farmers, ii) social provisions, iii) the spending power of the German consumer, iv) schools, v) the German family, vi) Hitler's personality. Buchbender, *Das tönende Erz*, p. 274.

[8] NA T-315/1681, file 35408/1. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 5.8.42. Betr.: Monatsbericht für die Zeit von 1. - 31. Juli 1942, p. 1. On the similar general effort made across the German-occupied Soviet Union, see: Buchbender, *Das tönende Erz*, pp. 133-9 (on agricultural propaganda), 274-5.

[9] Translated from: *"Die Ausführungen wurden mit Spannung aufgenommen...und es fiel bereits der Zwischenruf: "Wann werden wir einmal so leben können!""* NA T-315/1681, file 35408/1. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 5.8.42. Betr.: Monatsbericht für die Zeit von 1. - 31. Juli 1942. On the general *Ostarbeiter* propaganda effort, in which the measures utilised by the 221st Security Division were widely employed, see: Buchbender, *Das tönende Erz*, pp. 280-1.

[10] NA T-315/1680, file 29380/8. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic. Tätigkeitsbericht, 18.6.-31.12.42, p. 13.

[11] Translated from: *"Die mündliche Propaganda hat sich als besonders wirkungsvoll erwiesen, da sie eine direkte Beeinflußung der Zuhörer ermöglicht. Bei geschicktem Vortrag verliert die Bevölkerung schnell ihre anfängliche Scheu, und es läßt sich ein Kontakt herstellen."* NA T-315/1680, file 29380/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 5.8.42. Betr.: Monatsbericht für die Zeit von 1. - 31. Juli 1942. On the reliability of the 221st's intelligence section files as a judge of the success of the propaganda effort, see above, p. 131; below, p. 157.

[12] See above, p. 105; below, Ch. 9 on.

[13] Other units, for example *Feldkommandantur* 550 in the 203rd Security Division's jurisdiction, also made a major propaganda effort in this department. It particularly favoured the employment of enthusiastic letters by *Ostarbeiter* in the Reich to their families back home, and also placed importance on granting privileges to the families. Both *Feldkommandantur* 550 and the 203rd Security Division itself, meanwhile, were for a long time keen to preserve the voluntary principle of *Arbeitseinsatz*. NA T-315/1585, file 29186/2. Feldkommandtur Staryje Dorogi, 10.7.42. An die Rayonleiter, Bürgermeister und Dorfältesten. Betr.: Anwerbung von Arbeitskräften für Deutschland; NA T-315/1586, file 36050. Sich.-Div. 203 Abt. VII, 25.2.43.

[14] BA-MA RH 26-221/74: Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic. Tätigkeitsbericht, 18.6.-31.12.42, p. 13. The intelligence section urged that recruitment in future be put on a much more responsible basis which left far less room for abuse by the native civilian authorities. NA T-315/1680, file 29380/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 4.12.42. Betr.: Arbeitseinsatz in Deutschland.

[15] NA T-315/1680, file 29380/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 2.9.42. Betr.: Monatsbericht für die Zeit vom 1. - 31. August 1942, p. 3.

[16] NA T-315/1680, file 29380/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 29.7.42. Betr.: Anschläge und Bekanntmachungen. *Kraft durch Freude* (KdF) translates as "Strength through Joy". KdF groups were the German Army equivalent of concert parties. On similar attempts to "revitalise the cultural existence" of the population, see: Wilenchik, *Partisanenbewegung*, pp 215-19; Schulte, *German Army*, pp. 156-7. Some of the measures described in these works, such as promotion of education policy, were in the sphere of the administrative section, the files for which in the case of the 221st Security Division were largely unavailable.

[17] NA T-315/1680, file 29380/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 3.11.42. Monatsbericht für die Zeit 1. bis 31.10.42, p. 2. This measure too seems to have been employed in the wider *Ostarbeiter* propaganda campaign. Buchbender, *Das tönende Erz*, p. 281.

[18] NA T-315/1680, file 29380/8. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic. Tätigkeitsbericht, 18.6.-31.12.42, p. 12.

[19] Ibid.. This roughly translates as "merry prison camp evenings".

[20] Ibid..

[21] NA T-315/1680, file 29380/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 16.7.42. Betr.: Festnahme der wehrfähigen Männer südlich Nowosybkow. On the possibility that the intelligence section "talked up" its achievements somewhat, see below, p. 157.

[22] NA T-315/1678, file 29380/2. RHGeb. Mitte Abt. Ia, 5.7.42.

[23] NA T-315/1679, file 29380/5. SR 45, 1.9.42. Betr.: Erfahrungen bei Befriedung der Räume "Viereck" und "Eule" im August 1942.

[24] Translated from: *"Es ist rücksichtslos durchzugreifen, unnötige Härten, besonders unnötiges Abbrennen von Häusern ist zu vermeiden."* NA T-315/1681, file 35408/1. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 12.7.42. Betr.: Unternehmen Dreieck.

[25] See above, pp. 70-1.

[26] Förster, "Wehrmacht, Krieg und Holocaust", pp. 960-1; BA-MA RH 26-339/32. "Einsatz und Erfahrungsbericht der Sicherungs-Abt.eilung 339 für Monat August (1942)", p. 2. Significantly, the term "partisan" was used rather than the much more derogatory "bandit", which the OKW had ordered partisans to be referred as in June 1942.

[27] NA T-315/1585, file 29186/1. Sich.-Div. 203 Abt. Ia, 10.6.42. KTB, 20.3-17.6.42. The fact that this citation comes from the divisional war diary, and not from a report intended for external use, makes it especially reliable.

[28] Translated from: *"Es wird versucht, die Einwohner, die in den Wäldern stecken, zur Rückkehr in die Dörfer zu bewegen, da ihnen selbst soweit sie sich nicht am Partisanenkampf beteiligt haben, nichts geschieht. Es zeigt sich hierüber, daß das sinnlose Abschlachten von Vieh, Abbrennen der Dörfer sowie Erschiessen der Einwohner ohne trifftigen Grund, wie es seiner Zeit der SD und die Polizeitruppe gemacht haben, die Einwohner nur zu den Partisanen treibt."* NA T-315/1585, file 29186/1. Sich.-Div. 203 Abt. Ia, 1.7.42. KTB, 18.6-31.12.42.

[29] See below, pp. 164-5.

[30] Translated from: *"daß bei Säuberungsaktionen auch viele Personen erschossen werden, die keine Partisanen sind."* NA T-315/1586, file 29186/3. Sich.-Div. 203 Abt. VII, 2.8.42, p. 4.

[31] Translated from: *"Immer wieder laufen Klagen ein, daß z Zt unbelegte Unterkunfte von Angehörigen der im Ort liegenden Einheiten beschädigt oder auch regelrecht ausgeplündert werden. Abgesehen davon, daß diese Handlungen im höchsten Maße unkameradschaftlich sind, denn es werden später von der Unterbringung in mangelhaft ausgestatteten Quartieren besonders die Truppen betroffen, die aus schwersten Kampf in vorderster Front zurückgezogen werden, sind sie auch Verstöße gegen gegebene Befehle und evtl. sogar Plünderungen. Ich werde in Zukunft gegen jeden Soldaten, der bei der Beschädigung oder Ausplünderung einer Unterkunft betroffen wird, Tatbericht einreichen lassen."* NA T-315/1585, file 29186/2. Sich.-Div. 203 Abt. Ia, 14.11.42. Divisionsbefehl Nr. 69.

[32] See above, pp. 122-3.

[33] See above, p. 127

[34] See below, pp. 153-6.

[35] NA T-315/1680, file 29380/8. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic. TB, 18.6.-31.12.42, p. 1. Though this account almost certainly is exaggerated – the idea of a security division failing completely to build up an intelligence network is difficult to believe – it almost certainly contained at least a significant degree of truth. There would have been nothing to gain from falsely and openly accusing another security division of incompetence, as this would almost certainly have resulted in damaging counter-allegations.

[36] NA T-315/1681, file 29380/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 17.10.42. Betr.: V-Leute.

[37] DeWitt and Moll, "Bryansk" pp. 466-7.

[38] Mavrogordato and Ziemke, "Polotzk Lowland" pp. 554-6.

[39] See above, footnote 76, Ch. 6.

[40] NA T-315/1681, file 29380/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 5.8.42. Monatsbericht für die Zeit vom 1.-31.7.42, p. 2.

[41] . NA T-315/1678, file 29380/1. Gefechts- u. Verpflegungsstärken der Sich.-Div. 221, 18.6.-31.12.42; NA T-315/1680, file 28380/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. VII, 1.1.43. Tätigkeistbericht, 4.7.-31.12.42, pp. 1-2.

[42] NA T-315/1680, file 29380/11. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ib, 20.8.42. KTB, 18.6.-31.12.41. If German security forces were low down the list of priorities, the position of the OD, across the Army Group Rear Area in general, was often even lower. *Feldkommandantur* 581 too reported serious defects in the degree to which the OD was armed and a general low standard of OD in its jurisdiction, and in October both the *Feldkommandantur* and the 203rd Security Division reported that manpower shortages in the rear areas deprived the OD of suitable officer material. NA T-315/1586, file 29186/3. Sich.-Div. 203 Abt. VII, 29.10.42, pp. 6, 8;

Feldkommandantur 550, Kr. Verw. Gr. Staryje Dorogi, 24.7.42. Betr.: Lage u. Tätigkeitsbericht für die Zeit vom 24.6. bis 24.7.42; Feldkommandantur 581 Verwaltungsgruppe, 19.8.42, Lagebericht p. 5.

[43] NA T-315/1681, file 35408/2. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 13.11.42. Betr.: Ausrüstung des Ost-Batl 604 (Pripet).

[44] NA T-315/1681, file 35408/2. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 5.10.42. "Monatsbericht für die Zeit vom 1.9. - 30.9.42, p. 1.

[45] The (rough) Army Group Centre Rear Area average was calculated by dividing the total by four (referring to the four security divisions active in the area). Sources: NA T-501/27, file 31491/6. RHGeb. Mitte Abt. Ia. Monatsberichte, Juli - November 1942; NA T-315/1681, files 35408/1 and /2. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia. Monatsberichte, Juli - November 1942.

[46] See above, p. 149.

[47] On 6th July, for example, the operations section declared that Operation *Freundschaft* had been a success. By 2nd August, whilst the administrative section reported that the population's mood was becoming more subdued in the face of growing partisan activity, the rural population was still overwhelmingly anti-partisan. NA T-315/1585, file 29186/2. Sich.-Div. 203 Abt. Ia, 6.7.42, p. 1. Betr.: Monatsbericht; NA T-315/1586, file 29186/3. Sich.-Div. 203 Abt. VII, 2.8.42. Betr.: Monatsbericht, pp. 2-4.

[48] NA T-315/1586, file 29186/2. Sich.-Div. 203 Abt. VII, 28.11.42. Betr.: Monatsbericht, pp. 1-2.

[49] The 221st's intelligence section report for August maintained that the population of some areas was "fluctuating", but that on the whole the population tended toward the Germans so long as it was "handled properly". By the beginning of November it was reporting that the mood had worsened due to requisitioning and the *Arbeitseinsatz* of young girls in the Reich, but that propaganda was still well-received. NA T-315/1680, file 29380/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 2.9.42. Betr.: Monatsbericht für die Zeit vom 1.-31. August 1942; ibid., 3.11.42. Betr.: Politische Überwachung der Bevölkerung; ibid., 2.11.42. Betr.: Monatsbericht für die Zeit vom 1.-31. Oktober 1942. The rosy appraisals which both the 203rd and the 221st made about the population's view of the Germans seem sincere when one considers that the SD reports, which can be considered more impartial (see above, footnote 69, Ch. 2) were of a similar view even by the end of 1942. See below, p. 172.

[50] The 221st suffered 171 attacks on the railways between the beginning of July and the end of October, the 203rd 179. NA T-315/1681, files 35408/1 and /2. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia. Monatsberichte, Juli bis Oktober 1942; NA T-315/1585, file 29186/2. Sich.-Div. 203 Abt. Ia. Monatsberichte, Juli bis Oktober 1942.

Over the period July - October 1942 as a whole, the 221st was deploying 13 men per hundred square kilometres, the 203rd 10. The 203rd benefited at various points, however, from assistance from two additional Order Police battalions, the Dirlewanger Brigade of the Waffen-SS, the SS Cavalry Division and an *Ostheer* field training regiment. Together, the presence of these units almost certainly closed the "overstretch gap" between the 203rd and the 221st. NA T-315/1678, file 29380/1. Gefechts- u. Verpflegungsstärken der Sich.-Div. 221, 18.6.-31.12.42; NA T-315/1680, file 28380/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. VII, 1.1.43. Tätigkeistbericht, 4.7.-31.12.42, pp. 1-2; NA T-315/1585, file 29186/1. Gefechts- u. Verpflegungsstärken der Sich.-Div. 203, 1.4.-31.12.42; NA T-315/1585, file 29186/1. Sich.-Div. 203 Abt. Ia, 29.6., 7.7., 16.7., 30.8., 9.9., 27.9, 8.10., 11.10.42. KTB, 1.4.-31.12.42; NA T-315/1585, file 29186/2. Sich.-Div. 203 Abt. Ia, 8.6.42. Betr.: Unternehmen Potsdam; ibid., 1.7., 1.8., 1.9. 1.11.42. Einsatzübersichte der Sich.-Div. 203.

[51] By the end of 1942 the 221st was deploying 8 930 OD men; by the end of November the 203rd was employing 5 774 and, judging by the OD's growth rate over previous months (the figures on 1st September and 28th September were 4 342 and 4 540 respectively), would not have approached the 221st's figure by the end of the year. NA T-315/1680, file 28380/13. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. VII. Tätigkeitsbericht, 4.7. – 31.12.42, p. 3; NA T-315/1586, file 29186/3. Sich.-Div. 203 Abt. VII/Kr-Verw.. Betr.: Lage und Tätigkeitsbericht, 28.11.42, p. 10; ibid., 1.9.42, p. 11; ibid., 28.9.42, p. 8.

[52] The figures from the beginning of July to the end of November were 234 dead for the 221st and 160 for the 203rd. NA T-315/1681, files 35408/1 and /2. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia. Monatsberichte, Juli bis Oktober 1942; NA T-315/1585, file 29186/2. Sich.-Div. 203 Abt. Ia. Monatsberichte, Juli bis Oktober 1942.

[53] In the 203rd's jurisdiction on 17th June a mixed police/army convoy was attacked by partisans with the loss of 18 policemen killed and four policemen and four soldiers missing. On the night of 2nd September, 23 men of the first battalion of the 8th Police Regiment, subordinate to the 221st Security Division, were killed when their strongpoint was attacked. NA T-315/1585, file 29186/1. Sich.-Div. 203 Abt. Ia, 17.6.42. KTB, 1.4.-31.12.42. NA T-315/1678, file 29380/1. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 2.9.42. KTB, 18.6.-31.12.42.

[54] NA T-315/1585, file 29186/1. Sich.-Div. 203 Abt. Ia, 11.6.42. KTB 1.4.-31.12.42; NA T-315/1678, file 29380/1. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 28.8., 5.9., 7.9., 25.9.42. KTB, 18.6.-31.12.42.

[55] Between the beginning of June and the end of October the 203rd's *Kriegstagebuch* records five instances in which sizeable numbers of civilians, including women and children, appear to have been murdered by partisans. The 221st's *Kriegstagebuch* records two such instances for the same period. NA T-315/1585, file 29186/1. Sich.-Div. 203 Abt. Ia, 26.6., 28.8., 12.9., 14.9., 28.9.42. KTB, 1.4-31.12.42; NA T-315/1678, file 29380/1. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 25.9., 27.10.42. KTB, 18.6.-31.12.42.

[56] The argument that a relatively harsher approach existed at the 203rd's divisional level during 1942 is supported by the fact that its own recorded dead amounted to just 15% of recorded partisan dead between the beginning of July and the end of October. The equivalent figure for the 221st Security Division was 35%. NA T-315/1681, files 35408/1 and /2. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia. Monatsberichte, Juli bis Oktober 1942; NA T-315/29186/2. Sich.-Div. 203 Abt. Ia. Monatsberichte, Juli bis Oktober 1942.

[57] NA T-315/1681, files 35408/1 and /2. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia. Monatsberichte, Juli bis November 1942.

[58] NA T-315/2247, file 41762/1. 707 Inf.-Div. Abt. Ic, 1.1.43. Zahlenmässige Feindlage. Verlust- und Beuteübersicht, 1. Juli bis 31. Dezember 42.

[59] The 707th had been in its jurisdiction since May, and there is no evidence that it was facing an intelligence shortage as acute as that of the 221st by July.

[60] NA T-315/2247, file 41762/1. 707 Inf.-Div. Abt. Ic, 1.1.43. Zahlenmässige Feindlage. Verlust- und Beuteübersicht, 1. Juli bis 31. Dezember 42.

[61] Ibid..

[62] See above, pp. 22-3.

[63] The 707th, like the 221st, was composed mainly of sub-standard *Landesschützen* units. On the conditions of partisan warfare in Army Rear Area 532, in which the 707th was stationed, see: DeWitt and Moll, "Bryansk"; Schulte, *German Army*, pp. 46-8, 73-85; 117-49; 258-71.

[64] NA T-315/1681, files 35408/1 and /2. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia. Monatsberichte, Juli bis Oktober 1942; NA T-315/2247, file 41762/1. 707 Inf.-Div. Abt. Ic, 1.1.43. Zahlenmässige Feindlage. Verlust- und Beuteübersicht, 1. Juli bis 31. Dezember 42.

[65] NA T-315/1681, file 35408/1. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia. Monatsberichte, Juli, August 1942; NA T-315/2247, file 41762/1. 707 Inf.-Div. Abt. Ic, 1.1.43. Zahlenmässige Feindlage. Verlust- und Beuteübersicht, 1. Juli bis 31. Dezember 42.

[66] NA T-315/1681, file 35408/1. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia. Monatsberichte, Juli, August 1942.

[67] NA T-315/2247, file 41762/1. 707 Inf.-Div. Abt. Ic, 1.1.43. Zahlenmässige Feindlage. Verlust- und Beuteübersicht, 1. Juli bis 31. Dezember 42.

[68] In view of the obstacles facing any effort to employ terror *effectively* against the population in the Soviet Union (see above, p. 23), it seems unlikely that the lower incidence of attacks on the railways in the 707th's jurisdiction was *a result of* efforts by the 707th to terrorise the population from supporting the partisans.

[69] Whilst the figures given in the divisional war diary clearly are incomplete, they are sufficient to suggest that the two regiments "shared their pleasures" during the second half of 1942. Between the beginning of July and the end of November the 727th is recorded as having killed 222 partisans and "suspects" at a loss to itself of 8 dead; the 747th is reported to have killed 185 and suffered 5 dead. NA T-315/2246, file 27797/1. 707. Inf.-Div. Abt. Ia KTB, 1.7. – 30.11.42.

[70] See above, footnote 51, Ch. 3; above, p. 106.

[71] Indeed, the 221st itself would temporarily sacrifice passive security for mobile operations during the summer of 1943. See below, pp. 205-6.

[72] The feasibility of a short-term comparative study more detailed than that conducted here is considered in Ch. 13.

[73] Not his real name.

[74] See below, pp. 164-5.

[75] BA-MA, RH7/707 Pers 6. Personal file on Hubert Lersner.

[76] Ibid..

[77] NA T-315/1680, file 29380/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 2.9.42. Betr.: Monatsbericht für die Zeit vom 1. - 30. August 1942. The 221st was not the only security division to remark on the lack of success of partisan propaganda at this stage. On 28th September the 203rd Security Division's administrative section reported that, apart from the areas directly threatened by the partisans, the population remained pro-German. *Einsatzgruppe* B, meanwhile, reported that the population remained convinced of ultimate German victory. NA T-315/1586, file 29186/2. Sich.-Div. 203 Abt. VII, 28.9.42, p. 4; NA T-175/236. Der Chef der Sipo etc., 23.10.42. MadbO Nr. 26, p. 8.

[78] NA T-315/1680, file 29380/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 19.7.42. The division monitored its success through regular Ic *Arbeitstagungen* (basically "away days") in which the divisional intelligence officers, GFP, SD and *Propaganda-Staffeln* all took part. NA T-315/1680, file 29380/8. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic. Tätigkeistbericht, 18.6.-31.12.42, p. 17.

[79] As would be the case in 1943; see Chs. 10 and 11.

[80] On 29th July, for example, the intelligence section reported that printed propaganda material was not unavailable in sufficient amounts. NA T-3151680, file 29380/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 29.7.42. Betr.: Politische Überwachung der Bevölkerung.

[81] NA T-175/235. Der Chef der Sipo etc., 29.5.42. MadbO Nr. 3, p. 7.

[82] NA T-175/236. Der Chef der Sipo etc., 23.10.42. MadbO Nr. 26, p. 8.

[83] See above, p. 128.

CHAPTER 9: THE GOMEL REGION (2)

From October 1942 the 221st Security Division faced a new series of challenges, but also a new opportunity to prosecute further mobile anti-partisan operations. This chapter examines the forces which shaped the division's conduct under these new circumstances, and also considers how and why the conduct of the division's subordinate units increasingly diverged from that of the divisional level over the period from June 1942.

9.1. The division-level picture, October 1942 - January 1943

9.1.1. The intensified propaganda effort, and the deserter question

The winter of 1942-3 saw an intensification in many aspects of the 221st Security Division's propaganda campaign. Among other things, wireless broadcasting for the population was extended during January and February, with the establishment of "listeners' gatherings" (*Hörgemeinschaften*) enabling entire villages to tune into radio programmes.[1] The use of loudspeaker cars and German and Russian propaganda speakers was stepped up also. Yet other initiatives were directed at particular groups. The *Propaganda-Staffel* in Gomel, for example, reported that the mood of industrial workers was suffering from low rations and low wages. In an attempt to counter this, the *Staffel* planned a "trade fair" (*Gewerbeausstellung*) in Klinzy, and several "business conventions" (*Betriebsappelle*) in co-operation with the regional *Wirtschaftskommando*.[2]

Much of this effort corresponded to similar measures to improve propaganda across the entire Army Group Centre Rear Area.[3] In terms of deserter policy, however, the 221st's hearts and minds effort seems to have grown particularly daring. The intelligence section's monthly report for December 1942 recorded an increase in propaganda aimed at encouraging partisan desertion, and it was during that month that the division took its sensible approach far enough to clash with higher-level policy. Its arguments were embodied in a communiqué of 3rd December, issued through the intelligence section, signed by Major Kriebel on behalf of General Lersner and sent to General von Schenckendorff. The communiqué warned that the current guidelines - which stipulated that partisans should be spared only if they deserted with their weapons before an anti-partisan operation, and that those surrendering during or after an operation, even if they brought their weapons with them, were to be shot - were dangerously counter-productive:

> *"An enemy with only the prospect of death staring him in the face will fight to the end bitterly and tenaciously, thereby inflicting greater losses upon us....Amongst the partisans are a large number of amoral fellow travellers, and the best means of weakening and undermining partisan morale is to target this particular group with an unrestricted propaganda effort enticing it to desert."*[4]

This was also an implicit criticism of the provisions on deserters in the OKW directive of 11th November, which stipulated that captured partisans be shot or better still hanged.[5] It was also essential, the 221st pointed out, that promises of preferential treatment for deserters actually be kept. This of course implied that the Germans had not been keeping such promises before.[6] The division thus was criticising higher-level policy in ways which, if not absolutely unique, were certainly significant. The officers who drafted the communiqué of 3rd December clearly were more concerned about sensible anti-partisan policy than about being perceived by their superiors as overly "soft". A similar line of thought seems to have been at work in the mobile *Ankara* operations of winter 1942-3.

9.1.2. Restrained exploitation? The *Ankara* operations, December 1942 - January 1943

The 221st Security Division's view of the *Ankara* operations, conducted in the north-eastern sector of the division's jurisdiction primarily by the 36th Security Regiment, was that the operations' purpose was to pacify the area, not plunder it. The regiment ordered that quota levels be strictly observed in the requisitioning of livestock, horses and produce, so as to ensure that the subsistence level be maintained.[7] The 221st itself was even more unequivocal; there was to be no unbridled exploitation, even in those villages which had not achieved the necessary quota.[8] For *Ankara* II, requisitioning was in most cases restricted, again, to collecting quotas from inhabited villages; only in the case of abandoned villages was the requisitioning to be more thorough and all-encompassing. Much of the livestock and foodstuffs procured in *Ankara* II, it seems, was not plundered from villages, but was in fact picked up when the partisans abandoned it.[9] Moreover, the division imposed a total ban on the burning of villages for the duration of *Ankara* II.[10] This may well have been a direct response to excesses committed during *Ankara*, for which the division had allowed the burning of villages "under certain circumstances".[11]

At this stage the economic dimension of the anti-partisan effort had yet to assume the degree of importance which it would acquire later in 1943. In the case of the *Ankara* operations, security and not economic considerations seem to have dictated the agenda; a clear sign of this is that the operations did not take place in an area of the divisional jurisdiction deemed by the WiKo to be particularly economically threatened,[12] but rather in the area which the 221st deemed most problematic from the point of view of general security.[13] More significantly, whilst economic bodies often protested that anti-partisan operations in which economic needs were subordinated to "security" needs often resulted in unbridled excess and rapacity,[14] the approach of the 221st seems to have fostered conduct which actually was even more "restrained" than if economic imperatives had been in the driving seat. This is highlighted by comparing the *Ankara* operations with Operation *Peter*, conducted at almost exactly the same time in the jurisdiction of the 203rd Security Division. Though ostensibly an anti-partisan operation,

Peter's real purpose was economic exploitation; it was termed an *Erfassungsunternehmen* (requisition operation) by the 203rd.[15] Here too the economic bodies' concern to maintain the area's economic viability was apparent, but requisitioning seems to have gone beyond the fulfilment of quotas; two thirds of all produce and livestock were to be seized; what was left over was deemed, whether rightly or wrongly, as corresponding to subsistence level.[16] Unlike *Ankara* II, however, "bandit-friendly" villages - presumably those which had fallen behind in fulfilling their quotas - were to be destroyed after labour, produce and livestock had been seized.

The *Ankara* operations therefore are another indication that the 221st's constructive approach to anti-partisan warfare was continuing. The division's intensified propaganda campaign, its stance on deserters and its determination not to allow any damage to its constructive approach from excessive economic measures were hallmarks of a unit which still clearly preferred cultivation to coercion. That it did was due not just to the sense displayed by division-level officers, but also to new developments in the division's situation from October 1942 on.

9.2. Explaining the division-level picture

If, as has been argued, the 221st's division-level officers were governed in their actions at this time by good sense more than by ruthlessness, they would have found much in their new situation to persuade them of the need for further constructive engagement both of the population and of potential partisan deserters.

9.2.1. "Passive" or "active" security?

For one thing, the arrival of reinforcements in the area did not mean that the 221st Security Division now enjoyed an unrestricted free hand to conduct mobile operations. It certainly could not rely upon the long-term assistance of the 1st *Fallschirmjäger-Ausbildungs-Regiment.*[17] Whilst the presence of this unit might provide some short-term respite for the division's passive security effort, it did not really increase the viability of a major policy shift by the division in favour of mobile operations. Moreover, the arrival of the regiment was itself hardly cause for celebration. Whilst nominally a paratroop unit, and therefore enjoying association with that "crack" branch of the armed forces, the 1st *Fallschirmjäger-Ausbildungs-Regiment* was essentially composed of inexperienced trainees.

Meanwhile, though the onset of winter facilitated more effective mobile operations, there was also a need for long-term thinking. Whilst mobile operations might inflict blows upon the partisan movement over the winter months, thanks to the ease of traversing frozen swamps and tracing partisan tracks in the snow, such was the growth in the partisan movement by this stage that mobile operations could hardly hope to destroy the partisans outright. With mobile operations also posing the danger that excessive brutality might be unleashed, the 221st may

have feared embittering the population so far that the population would embrace the resurgent partisans the following spring. Whilst there is no written evidence that the 221st was thinking along such lines at this stage, such an interpretation seems likely in view of what is already known about the division's approach. This would explain why such mobile operations as were undertaken focused on the area where the partisan problem was at its worst, the north-eastern Mamajewka forest sector, and why the directives which the division issued for them were on the whole relatively restrained. Elsewhere the division would restrict its efforts - successfully as it would turn out - to improving, albeit temporarily, the security situation along the railways.[18]

Further constraints, and therefore further incentives to continued cultivation, were generated by the nature of passive security itself.

9.2.2. The problems of passive security

Training, always a grave concern to the 221st as it was to other security divisions,[19] was especially difficult for troops committed to guarding the railway lines, scattered as they were in particularly small groups over a vast area. The need for training and the often dire results of a lack of it were especially glaring among replacement troops. At the end of July, three of the division's security battalions received replacements of eleven NCOs and 309 men, but many of these were either insufficiently trained or even completely untrained.[20] By late August, General Lersner seems to have thought that further replacement troops might be more of a curse than a blessing; the latest projected batch had an average age of forty, with little training, and Lersner doubted that they would cope with the rigours of anti-partisan duty.[21] Unsurprisingly, the end of October saw the 221st's operations section castigating the troops for their lack of preparedness:

> *"Recently, heavy losses have had to be sustained due to the troops' negligence and carelessness in their conduct of the full range of necessary security duties. It must be hammered into the troops that they must maintain the sharpest state of alertness, even in those areas where attacks have not recently taken place."*[22]

Morale, meanwhile, was being sapped to a new low by the unrelenting rigours of security duty. By the summer of 1942, for example, most of the troops who had been with the division since June 1941 had not been on leave for twelve to eighteen months, some even longer.[23] The sense of isolation was heightened by the often atrocious state of the roads, which in wet weather prevented the delivery of *Feldpost*.[24] Probably, feelings of isolation were exacerbated and morale damaged further by the scattering of the division's troops in small strongpoints along the railway lines. A report of 4th October by the division's operations section described railway strongpoints in a state of disarray, with rifles, helmets, coats and gas masks left lying around in disorder.[25] The dangers of illness from the unhygienic conditions in the East were heightened in the case of new, inexperienced troops recently transferred from the Reich; gout and rheumatism, for example, were rife within *Landesschützen-Bataillon* 557.[26] On top of all this

was the damage wrought to morale by prolonged lack of obvious success and the sheer unrelenting boredom of passive security.[27]

It has already been seen why, temporary reinforcement by a second-rate training formation or not, the 221st Security Division is likely still to have felt the need to make a considerable commitment to passive security. It was clear however that even passive security, with its often excessively lengthy hours of sentry duty, might be beyond the capabilities of troops in the miserable state to which many of the 221st's units seem by now to have been sinking - exaggerated though some of the reports may have been. This further debilitation in fighting power, in circumstances in which the prospect of long-term reinforcement was uncertain, is likely to have further reinforced the incentive to cultivate the population. Here, again, it would have compensated for dwindling combat effectiveness by facilitating a relationship with the population which was more likely to ensure the population's greater involvement in the intelligence effort. It also made the division's existence more tolerable in a general sense by at least slowing the process of growing accommodation between population and partisans.

Committed then, for the time being at least, to a sustained hearts and minds campaign, the 221st almost certainly would have felt compelled to intensify it by the fact that the partisans' hearts and minds campaign was by now gathering momentum itself.

9.2.3. Difficulties in the hearts and minds campaign

The situation to autumn 1942

To a significant extent, the difficulties growing ever more acute in the 221st's hearts and minds campaign had their roots in the constraints which had assailed propaganda even at the earliest stages of the Eastern campaign. Distribution of German propaganda had been beset by drawbacks as early as autumn 1941; the SD had on numerous occasions drawn attention to the far greater dissemination of partisan propaganda than German.[28] Distribution had been hampered across the entire Rear Area by a lack of available aircraft; the 221st, for example, had had to wait until late October before benefiting from the services of a solitary ex-stunt 'plane, use of which had been limited by the fact that its main burden had been reconnaissance duties.[29] A further obstacle, and one of which the 221st's intelligence section had been all too aware, had been that higher orders would often compel *Ortskommandanturen* and *Feldkommandanturen* to move around too quickly to be able to forge constructive relations with the civilian population.[30]

Whilst these problems had to a considerable extent been solved by the summer of 1942, the SD still judged the situation as far from ideal.[31] The 221st Security Division's intelligence section constantly pointed out the necessity of ensuring effective supply and distribution of newspapers, *Wehrmacht* reports and other material in the Russian language.[32] Where the Germans seem to have made particularly little headway was in propagandising the youth of the

occupied areas. Youth felt the influence of Soviet indoctrination particularly strongly because they had never known anything before the Soviet Union, and also because they felt robbed of their prospects by the hardship and upheaval which the German invasion had brought in it wake.[33]

By autumn 1942 the propaganda situation was growing ever more daunting for the occupying forces. An increasingly large area was falling under the influence of the partisans and their own forms of psychological warfare, and the miseries being inflicted upon the populace by the German occupation were creating a rich source of resentment for the partisans to tap.

Resentment and its exploitation by the partisans

There were three issues over which civilian resentment at this stage burned strongest. The first was German requisition policy, which by late 1942 was taking on ever more excessive dimensions. The high quota levels set by *Wirtschaftsinspektion Mitte* stoked hardship and bitterness,[34] and in early October the 221st's intelligence section reported that especially severe food shortages were expected over the winter, and that *Bürgermeister* should be as sparing as possible in the weeks and months ahead.[35]

The population's mood was further darkened by its disillusionment with German agricultural reforms. Though the privatisation of agriculture, for which many farmers had yearned, had been officially enacted in March 1942, it had been carried out in a slow, piecemeal manner. This had been due in large part to the low esteem in which the Russians' powers of self-motivation and drive were held by German agricultural officials.[36] From the outset, moreover, the reforms had excluded state farms and machine tractor stations, and German taxes on private farms had far exceeded those on collective farms.[37] By early October, the 221st's intelligence section reported that the farmers' early enthusiasm for the reforms was clearly on the wane, and that many of them feared that the size of requisitions would soon push them below subsistence level.[38] Within weeks, requisitions were combining with the impending Russian winter to stoke a mood of the blackest apprehension across the population.[39]

The most immense source of discontent was the *Arbeitseinsatz* of Russian workers in the Reich, every aspect of which, from increasingly ruthless recruitment methods to the treatment of workers in Germany, made it perhaps the favourite object of native resentment. Feelings ran particularly high over the compulsory labour of young girls. The 221st's intelligence section reported on 3rd November that "wild rumours" (in reality probably accurate ones) were circulating about the treatment of Russian girls working in the Reich - that they were forbidden to go out, that they had no leisure time, and that they were falling foul of illness, malnutrition and a work burden which was driving them into the ground.[40] By now civilians understandably were doing everything they could to avoid *Arbeitseinsatz*. Young men were fleeing to the partisans; young women frantically marrying, getting themselves pregnant or at least persuading their doctors to lie for them in this regard.[41] Another increasingly popular option,

with both men and women, was self-mutilation.[42] By December it was rumoured that all single women up to the age of thirty-five were to be sent to the Reich.[43]

Such fears were manna from heaven to a partisan movement itself intent on securing the population's co-operation. There was more, however. For one thing, an increasing amount of animus was heaped upon members of the native auxiliary police and the German-appointed civilian administration. The auxiliaries' policing methods, such as arresting people without trial, were often seen as nothing more than a hangover from the old Soviet days.[44] Native administrators, meanwhile, were often perceived by the population as abusing their position to the advantage of themselves, their family and their friends in all manner of ways.[45] The sometimes Neanderthal disposition of the Hungarian troops stationed in the divisional area was further cause for anger:

> *"For example - as a general rule they* (the Hungarians) *beat up all road menders and foremen, arrest people with German work passes and often beat up the inhabitants of entire villages. The* (population's) *willingness to work is suffering greatly as a result of all this."*[46]

Quite apart from all this is the likelihood, which unsurprisingly received scant attention in the 221st's discipline reports, that the division's own troops were behaving in a similarly atrocious manner. Last but very far from least, there was growing rage over German anti-partisan measures. Whilst actual brutality by the 221st's troops does not yet seem to have contributed significantly to the population's bitterness, a contrast at this stage with the experience of other divisions,[47] the same could not be said of the growing resort to evacuation of villages in the name of "security". The indignation stoked by such measures is described in a report of late October from *Feldkommandantur* 528 (V), based in Klinzy, which railed against a proposed plan by the division to evacuate all able-bodied men from the partisan-endangered parts of its jurisdiction. The population was to be persuaded of the "necessity" of these measures through propaganda, but the *Feldkommandantur* held out no hope of the male population submitting willingly to evacuation, fearing as it would for the well-being, indeed the lives, of the families it would be leaving behind. In addition, the *Feldkommandantur* argued, any evacuation would be seen as an admission of German weakness and failure to destroy partisans, and this would further reduce the occupiers' standing in the eyes of the population. Finally, the *Feldkommandantur* was also aware that *Wirtschaftsstab Ost*, the main body responsible for economic exploitation of the Army-administered areas, had hatched a plan forcibly to snap up 1 500 men and 4 500 women from the Klinzy area for *Arbeitseinsatz*. Quite how the *Feldkommandantur* itself was to sell this plan to the population, at the same time as selling the idea of forced evacuation, was not clear.[48]

Exploiting resentment, however, was not the only prong of the partisans' campaign to win the population over.

Other partisan tactics

By autumn partisan propaganda was striking an increasingly nationalistic rather than ideological note, the partisans perceiving as they did that such appeals were more likely to strike a chord with the population.[49] The partisans also continued to promise a rosier future, contrasting with the hardships which had been endured under the Soviet regime of old. It was equally important to inspire the population with fear, not least of the increasing possibility that the Red Army would return and inflict fearful vengeance upon pro-German collaborators. A far more immediate and tangible source of terror, however, was the partisans themselves. By December 1942, in the increasingly large area controlled or threatened by them, they offered a simple choice: *"...they threaten to shoot those members of the population working for the Wehrmacht who do not cease such work and resign all their posts."*[50] Civilian administrators and OD men were thus in a constant state of terror for themselves and their families; in the endangered areas, mayors were moving to towns or villages occupied by German troops or, where that was not possible, were reduced to sleeping at a different address every night.[51]

By combining threats with enticements to "come over" in return for decent treatment, the partisans intensified attempts to persuade growing numbers of native administrators and auxiliaries to desert the German cause altogether.[52] On 29th November, for example, the 27th Security Regiment reported that the OD leader in Mglin had twice been contacted by the partisans in writing, urging him to come over to his own brothers. The mayor of Krasnogorki had gone over to the partisans after being captured by them.[53] The rate of desertion crept up among the *Hiwis* (unarmed native volunteers) and the rank-and-file OD, and in December it became a serious problem.[54] It was fed by rumours, often spread by former *Hiwis* and OD men themselves, that deserters could expect good treatment from the partisans. *Hiwis* and OD men harboured a multitude of the kind of grievances ripe for exploitation by the partisans. As early as September, *Hiwis* felt they were getting a poor deal in terms of supply and consequently were defecting already. The manifold disadvantages which the OD suffered, particularly concerning clothing and equipment, were to drive many of its number to similar action.[55]

Fear of the partisans and uncertainty about the future could only be exacerbated, meanwhile, by the 221st's continuing failure actually to locate and destroy partisan groups.[56] The intelligence section's report for August 1942 reported that the mere presence of German troops reassured civilians, and helped prevent them from drifting further into the arms of the partisans. The less visible the German presence and the more visible the partisan presence, the more debilitating the effect upon the population's faith in the superiority of German arms.[57] By the end of the year, civilians in endangered areas appear to have resigned themselves to the 221st's failure to destroy the partisans,[58] and their accommodation with the partisans seems often to have been far from unwilling. A report by pro-German informers operating east of Tschetschersk described the attitude of much of the population there: *""Oh, leave the partisans be, they've*

done us no harm. Whereas the Germans are after our chickens, our eggs, everything..." In short, the population cannot be trusted."[59] Overall, the intelligence section commented at the beginning of November that the mood of the population unmistakably was deteriorating.[60]

It is the 221st's very lack of success, however, which may help explain why the division's hearts and minds campaign was at this stage sustained and even intensified. Though the campaign clearly was encountering setbacks, the fact that it seemed until now to have been successful, along with the apparent lack of viable alternatives, is likely to have convinced many officers that the best solution was to intensify constructive tactics to meet the new challenges. If nothing else, it should be stressed that the battle for hearts and minds hardly seemed lost by the end of 1942. In the 221st's jurisdiction the intelligence section reported that, despite the population's worsening mood, German propaganda was on the whole still being well-received,[61] and the SD reported on 23rd December that the population was still overwhelmingly pro-German.[62]

The 221st Security Division, it seems, was compelled to a large extent by particular circumstances to conduct its anti-partisan effort in a way which relied more upon cultivating the population than upon terrorising it. Though specific circumstances changed over the second half of 1942, there was no fundamental change in the way they combined with the relatively sensible outlook of the 221st's senior officers to compel the division in a constructive direction. As before, meanwhile, the careerist notion that constructive engagement equalled success and success equalled promotion is likely to have remained intact.

As before, however, the picture at divisional level did not necessarily correspond to the picture further down.

9.3. The lower-level picture, June 1942 - January 1943

9.3.1. Restrained conduct: a "trickle-down" effect?

Whilst the 221st Security Division's subordinate units often conducted themselves with brutality in the Gomel area between June and October 1942, the picture was somewhat less damning than it had been in the Jelnja-Dorogobush area. This might be explained partly by the fact that the Jelnja-Dorogobush operations, having been of a particularly mobile nature and involved relatively extensive use of artillery, had presented greater opportunity for brutality. It does also seem, however, that the relatively constructive attitude which clearly characterised division-level officers had penetrated the division's lower levels more thoroughly by the time the 221st arrived in the Gomel region.

This is certainly suggested by the comparatively measured conduct of units which did participate in mobile operations during the second half of 1942, particularly during the summer.[63] It is perhaps especially significant that the operations of July and August were to a

large extent carried out by the 45th Security Regiment, a unit which otherwise seems to have enjoyed a particularly merciless reputation within the 221st.[64] The harshness of the orders which Colonel Wiemann himself issued for the operations were in fact balanced to some extent by exhortations against "excessive" conduct. Whilst much of the excess which the 45th perpetrated over the period 1942-3 was almost certainly due to Wiemann's own influence, the colonel seems on this occasion to have been at least partly swayed by the saner arguments emanating from the divisional level. At the very least, he bowed to pressure to incorporate such arguments to some extent in his own orders. The result, in any case, was that the 45th conducted the operations of July and August with what was for that unit an element of moderation.

Further examples of measured conduct took place during Operation *Ankara*. On 19th December, the first day of the operation, the 1st battalion of the 8th Police Regiment conducted itself with restraint upon discovering that the village of Guta, which it had just entered, had clearly served as a partisan base:

> *"It was clear from the agricultural stockpiles in Guta that the village was being used as a bandits' strongpoint. Of the thirteen men present, the eight able-bodied ones were therefore arrested."*[65]

Whilst these eight unfortunates could expect little mercy, the battalion chose not to carry out an indiscriminate massacre. Such relative restraint is even more striking for the fact that the battalion's arrival at Guta immediately followed its total failure to intercept the partisan group which was active in the area; thus the battalion chose not to cover this failure by inflating its body count with dead civilians. A second incident, attributable to no particular unit, occurred on 20th December:

> *"A bottle of* (gun) *powder was found in a house in Sinowjewka. Ammunition detonated when the house was burned down by order of the regiment. A sawn-off shotgun and a hunting rifle were found in the ruins, which despite a thorough search beforehand had not been found. The owner of the house admitted that her husband was with the partisans and had left the ammunition behind after his last visit. The woman was shot, and her children handed over to the headman."*[66]

Harsh conduct it indeed was, but indiscriminate massacre would have been harsher still. How far these instances of *relatively* restrained conduct resulted from sensible considerations about discipline and keeping the population sweet, from the retention of old-fashioned military values, civilian ethics or even from a measure of affection for the population, it does seem that the constructive approach being pursued at divisional level found a significant amount of agreement at the lower levels. The spirit of constructive engagement only penetrated so far, however, as numerous instances of brutality demonstrate.

9.3.2. Explaining brutality: "smaller-scale" atrocities

At divisional level, the situation of overstretch and falling fighting power which assailed the 221st Security Division in the Gomel region had helped compel a constructive approach to the

anti-partisan effort, just as similarly constructive measures had emerged from the situation which the division had faced in the Jelnja-Dorogobush operations. As has already been seen, however, such a situation was bound to be felt in different, more direct and more acute ways at the division's lower levels, and bloody outcomes were particularly likely when the effects of the situation combined with attitudes which, for whatever reasons borne of earlier life experiences, were hard and ruthless already.[67] The result, as can be seen from Table 9, was plain; the overall disparity between recorded partisan dead and German dead between June 1942 and January 1943 remained considerable to say the least. Table 10 shows the instances of individual atrocities which were committed.

Table 9: German and partisan dead in the 221st Security Division's jurisdiction, June 1942 - January 1943.[68]

Period	Partisan dead	German/OT/OD dead	German/OT/OD dead as % of partisan dead
6.42	46	18	39.1%
7.42	206	78	37.9%
8.42	172	40	23.3%
9.42	164	56	34.1%
10.42	39	32	82.1%
11.42	106	28	26.4%
12.42	86	17	19.8%
1.43	199	57	28.6%
Total	**1018**	**326**	**32.0%**

Table 10: "Smaller-scale" atrocities in the 221st Security Division's jurisdiction, June 1942 - January 1943.[69]

Date	Unit / operation	Details
25.7.42	No details.	Firefight with partisans at Dobronossitschi, in Roslawl area. 15 partisans killed. German losses: none.
6.9.42	*Ortskommandantur* Roslawl.	28 partisans killed in op. led by *Ortskommandant.* German losses: none.
12.9.42	SR 45 (prob. SB 230)	Firefight with 200 partisans escaping from Operation Süd, s.w. of Ssidorowitschi, nr Krasnopolje. At least 40 partisans killed. German dead: 4.
26.9.42	I/ Pol. Rgt. 8	Firefight. 70 to 80 partisans killed and many wounded. German dead: 2.
14.11.42	SB 791.	Village of Ormino, occupied by 400 partisans, retaken by third company of SB 791. 20 partisans killed. German dead: none.
28.12.42	Probably SR 45.	Firefight nr Krasnopolje. 25 partisans killed. German / OD dead: 3, 7 OD missing.
11.1.43	OD	24 partisans killed near Merkulowitschi. OD dead: none. Captured weapons recorded: 10 rifles, 1 m.g.

Possible "blanket influences" - frustration caused by demodernisation, social darwinist sentiment, anti-Slavism, distrust of the population and *francs-tireur* phobia - enjoyed plenty of scope during this period. The ongoing deterioration in manpower and the inability to get to grips with actual partisans induced by commitment to passive security are likely to have increased fear, frustration, "pressure to perform", and the tendency to substitute terror of the population for anti-partisan action.

Among other things, units in the field had to cope with the concrete results of lack of training. A directive issued by the 221st on 25th June instructed commanders down to company level to ensure that training was being carried out properly,[70] but it was extremely difficult, as has been seen, to train troops scattered in small groups across such a vast area. Security Battalion 706, for example, was so overstretched at the beginning of July that the only troops available to master its *Vorfeld* were drivers and desk-wallahs.[71] The third company alone was responsible for 70 kilometres of track.[72]

Both General von Schenckendorff and the 221st still held officers personally responsible for the failures of their units, however. A great many security division officers, often due to their age, clearly were not up to their job - a problem which General von Schenckendorff identified across the entire Army Group Centre Rear Area.[73] For the 221st Security Division, the operations section complained on 4th August that some officers were failing to carry out orders with the proper thoroughness and application.[74]

Whether via fear, frustration, a need to cover for failure, or the perception that the partisans could only be combated by terrorising the population, it is likely that the officers who felt particularly driven to brutality by their circumstances were the *Feld-* and *Ortskommandanten*. *Feld-* and *Ortskommandanten* seem often to have been particularly unequal to their tasks; the divisional personnel officer's report for June to December 1942 claimed that the replacement officers from the west had been far below the standard needed for service in Russia and that most had therefore been given relatively quiet postings in *Feld-* and *Ortskommandanturen*.[75] Another factor contributing to this picture of miserable inadequacy was that *Feld-* and *Ortskommandanten* had to administer large areas often with wholly insufficient personnel. This was certainly a problem for *Feldkommandantur* 550, in the 203rd Security Division's jurisdiction, which on 24th July reported:

> *"There are good grounds for doubting that* Ortskommandantur *Ljuban is up to the task of carrying out its duties with the care and application which Russian conditions demand. It is staffed by one sergeant, one senior private as clerk, and one interpreter."*[76]

Such a situation, via whatever particular mechanism - it is not clear which - may well have led to the incident of 6th September 1942, shown on the table below along with the 221st's other "smaller-scale" atrocities during the period June 1942 to January 1943, in which 28 partisans

were killed by soldiers of the *Ortskommandantur* in Roslawl and the Germans themselves suffered not a single casualty.

Whilst German rather than OD units are the focus of this thesis, the conduct of the OD is worth a glance also, further illustrating as it does the link between poor fighting power and brutality. Frequently inadequate fighting power among OD units was likely to lead to the kind of brutality which manifested itself on 11th January 1943.[77] Indeed, during 1943 the OD would increasingly find itself the object of derision from German officers, at a time when its importance to the German security effort was becoming ever greater. For example Lieutenant Gäuger, of the 2nd company of Security Battalion 791, reported an action of 18th January 1943 in which 13 German and 33 OD men had participated, but in which the German troops would have been more effective had they been on their own. The OD's incompetence had directly resulted in the loss of an anti-tank gun, and Gäuger claimed that "(i)*n the firefight which ensued, the combat value of the OD was precisely zero.*"[78] Whilst the OD is likely at least on some occasions to have been simply the whipping boy of German units anxious to cover their own failings, the frequently inadequate training and equipment with which it was provided would inevitably have blighted its fighting power at least to some extent, with all the implications for conduct which this brought with it.

German distrust of the population, meanwhile, was certain to be increased by the isolation of units which came with the continued commitment to passive security. It was the view of the 27th Security Regiment that the partisans' eyes and ears were everywhere, for partisan intelligence seemed to know the Germans' every move.[79] Nor could the Germans necessarily trust apparently loyal civilian administrators, for the partisans were making every effort to install their own people as *straiten* or OD leaders. One report described how an elderly partisan informer had been deliberately left behind in the Soviet retreat of 1941 because the partisans had assumed, correctly as it turned out, that the Germans would be taken in by his "dignified bearing" and appoint him to an administrative post.[80] Indeed, feelings of racial contempt, and therefore potential for brutality, may have increased through prolonged contact with those members of the OD and administration who remained faithful to the German cause; shortage of suitable personnel and the fear of partisan reprisal for collaboration meant that neither the cream of Russian manhood nor the pinnacle of administrative acumen were much in evidence.[81]

With isolation, meanwhile, feelings of fear and helplessness before an unseen and ruthless enemy are likely to have increased. Thus, whilst division-level officers did not allow themselves to be brutalised by ruthless, underhand partisan tactics, there was no guarantee that the field units actually confronted with such conduct would follow suit. Reports of the killing of German soldiers, both individuals or groups, of partisans masquerading in German uniform, and of the partisans' apparent murder of unarmed civilians, are all likely to have strengthened the propensity to "lash out" in frustration in a situation in which the enemy appeared to be all

around.[82] The first battalion of the 8th Police Regiment, stationed as it was in the particularly troublesome north-eastern sector, is likely to have felt these difficulties particularly acutely; this was a situation which is likely to have figured importantly in the atrocity which that unit committed on 26th September.

Finally, as before, it is likely that the propensity for brutality was highest in a unit possessed already of a particularly harsh mind-set. Such seems to have been the case with the 45th Security Regiment, commanded as it was by an *Ostkämpfer* of the Great War and failed businessman. Indeed, units of the 45th committed not one but two atrocities during this period, on 12th September and 28th December 1942.

The conduct of the larger mobile operations at the turn of the year, however, suggest that brutality was beginning to gather a wider momentum across the 221st's subordinate units as a whole.

9.3.3. Explaining brutality: the winter operations

The operations of December 1942 to January 1943 - *Ankara*, *Ankara* II and *Klette* II - show that, the 221st's measured exhortations notwithstanding, barbarisation at the lower levels was on the increase.

One possible ingredient was frustration at the mounting long-term rigours to which the division's troops had been subjected, combined with particular difficult conditions in the operations themselves. To a large extent, all three operations used the same units. These, responsible as they had been for security in the particularly troublesome north-eastern sector, would already have been particularly affected by the strain, isolation and lack of training plaguing all the 221st's subordinate units. During the operations themselves, moreover, these units were subjected to the pressure of having to cleanse large areas with insufficient numbers of troops, conditions common to most *Großunternehmen*. Further, the operations were taking place in an area in which the particularly numerous and active partisan groups operating there were likely to hold the civilian population more firmly in their grip than was the case elsewhere - hardly a recipe for trust between the Germans and the population.

All these influences, and their potential brutalising effects, were particularly visible during *Klette* II. This operation, which took place directly after *Ankara* II, saw units of the 221st, collectively designated Gruppe von Geldern, exact the same death toll than they had in both *Ankara* operations put together.[83] *Klette* II lasted more than two weeks, culminating in the breakout of 1 500 partisans, and was made all the more difficult by metre-high snow, outdated maps and insufficient numbers of troops. The 221st's troops, primarily responsible for preventing the breakout of partisans, were too thinly spread to be effective in such a task.[84] It is also likely that the troops were being reduced to a particularly low state of exhaustion, ineffectiveness and indiscipline, involved in mobile operations since December as many had been. *Ost-Bataillon*

604's fatalities included its commander, Major Tschegeloff, who was described as having been *"the soul of his unit"* (*"die Seele seiner Truppe"*). This loss may have influenced the decision to send *Ost-Bataillon* 604 for four- to six-weeks' retraining after the operation. The first battalion of Police Regiment 8, meanwhile, was accused of unprofessional judgement, wild imaginings and "overreaction" (*"unsachlicher Lagebeurteilung, Übertreibung und Phantastereien"*), and the 221st's French battalion, particularly plagued by poor discipline and morale, earned the hatred of the civilian population through its constant wild plundering.[85] As in previous cases, moreover, the fact that the reports were silent on the conduct of the division's German troops does not mean that their conduct was impeccable; it was more likely a cover for the fact that their conduct, like those of the other units which took part in the operation, was now often anything but impeccable.

From the conduct of *Klette* II, it might at first seem that the worsening condition of the 221st's subordinate units and the mounting challenges which they faced were becoming so intractable that they were lowering the threshold of brutality, and that the ruthlessness which previously had been displayed in the most extreme case by Colonel Wiemann was becoming more widespread, irrespective of the particular inclinations of individual officers. Brutalisation may also have been fuelled by another source, however; the network of orders under which Gruppe von Geldern was to operate came not from the 221st Security Division, but from Army Rear Area 532, and were far more ruthless than those which the 221st had issued for the *Ankara* operations. It was ordered that all stocks in the area be removed or, where that was not possible, destroyed on the spot, and units were also told that they would have to live off the land during the operation. Deserters, meanwhile, were to be dealt with in a way which contrasted harshly with the 221st's recommendations of December; no distinction was to be made between those who deserted before and those who deserted during an operation.[86] Regardless of "situational difficulties", then, Army Rear Area 532's directives clearly had set a ruthless agenda before the operation had even started. At the very least, this helped legitimise the atrocities which the troops felt increasingly driven to commit by their worsening situation.

In this context the effects not just of Army Rear Area 532's directives, but also of the OKW directive of 16th December 1942, need to be considered. Whilst earlier higher-level directives, such as that of 18th August, had perhaps been too ambiguous to have a decisive brutalising effect, there was no such ambiguity in the 16th December directive.[87] Admittedly, it is likely that increasingly difficult circumstances did play some role in the excesses which the 221st's subordinate units perpetrated during the winter; the *Ankara* operations, after all, were carried out under the aegis of the 221st itself and were therefore subject to more restrained directives, but this did not prevent excesses from being committed. Moreover, the first *Ankara* operation - which seems to have been bloodier than the second - took place before the 16th December directive was issued. It is also likely, however, that the 16th December directive intensified a climate in which many officers felt they had free rein to butchery borne of any mixture of the

brutalising influences which many are likely to have harboured more intensely than ever in the face of the increasingly difficult situation which they now faced. This may among other things have contributed to the particular viciousness of the larger *Ostheer* anti-partisan operations of the first months of 1943.[88]

As before, the picture at this level remains particularly speculative. Aside perhaps from individual examples such as Colonel Wiemann, there can be no certainty concerning the effect which generational differences were continuing to have. It seems nonetheless that the tendency to brutality not only remained greater than it was at divisional level, but also that by early 1943, in response to a combination of worsening circumstances and higher-level orders encouraging ever-greater viciousness, it was growing stronger.

9.4. Conclusion

The situation which the 221st Security Division faced from October 1942 presented new opportunities, with paratroop reinforcements facilitating more mobile operations, but also new difficulties in the shape of a partisan movement which was becoming increasingly adept at exploiting the population's growing embitterment. That the 221st continued to respond to these challenges with a constructive, restrained anti-partisan effort, rather than one relying more on terror and coercion, was due partly to the fact that ruthlessness would further alienate the population rather than destroy the partisans, but also to the fact that the 221st's officers were able to recognise this. That they did so was due again to the mix of careerism and above all sense which ensured that their outlook remained more constructive than did that of units such as the 203rd Security Division and, even more so, the 707th Infantry Division. Constructiveness was also compelled by the need to retain the population's co-operation in the passive security effort to which the 221st remained committed and which was growing more difficult due to the division's deteriorating fighting power. The continuing effort at cultivation manifested itself at this stage above all in the 221st's handling of the deserter issue, but also in the intensified propaganda campaign and the restrained directives issued for the conduct of mobile operations.

At the 221st's lower levels, however, a substantially different picture was emerging. Whilst there is evidence that some officers, either through common sense or their own value judgements, were receptive to pleas for restraint in anti-partisan operations, the growing trend seems to have been one of brutality. This was brought about partly, as it had been during the Jelnja-Dorogobush operations, by the increasing strain of a situation which was overstretching units and progressively debilitating their fighting power. By late 1942 this was taking place in the face of a population which in the eyes of many officers in the field was growing more receptive to the partisans. All this, along with anti-Slavism, social darwinism and the traditional German disdain for irregular warfare, made for a potent brew - one which was especially

potent in the case of officers such as Colonel Wiemann, commander of the 45th Security Regiment, who were already possessed of a particularly ruthless attitude. Perhaps most importantly, the network of orders issued if not by the 221st itself then by higher offices seemed if anything to be giving an even bigger green light to brutality than they had before. This was especially the case with the OKW directive of 16th December, which appears to have particularly loosened the lid on brutality at the lower levels in the 221st's winter operations. The necessarily speculative nature of individual motivation aside, this grim trend seems unmistakable. Moreover, as the next chapter will show, it would intensify during 1943.

Endnotes to Chapter 9

[1] NA T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Prop. Abt. W Staffel Gomel, 20.1.43. Betr.: Monatsbericht vom 20.12.42 - 20.1.43; ibid., Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 1.1.43. Betr.: Hörgemeinschaften in den besetzten Ost-Gebieten, p. 1.

[2] NA T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Prop. Abt. W Staffel Gomel, 20.1.43. Betr.: Monatsbericht vom 20.12.42 - 20.1.43.

[3] Time constraints prevented a search for material generated by *Propagandastaffeln* outside of the 221st Security Division; it seems that this kind of material is very rare in German archives. It therefore is not clear precisely how far these similar measures were implemented across the rear areas. From the Army Group Centre Rear Area's intelligence section reports for late 1942, however, it is clear that the importance of effective propaganda had not diminished in the eyes of the military authorities, and that the shortcomings of the propaganda effort so far were fully recognised. The activity report for December, for example, maintained that promises of a better future no longer sufficed and that active propaganda needed promoting. NA T-501/27, 31491/4. RHGeb. Mitte Abt. Ic, 6.1.43. Tätigkeitsbericht, Dezember 1942, p. 2.

[4] Translated from: *"Der Gegner, der keine andere Aussicht als den Tod vor Augen hat, wird verbissen und zäh bis zum Schluß kämpfen und damit größere Opfer auf unserer Seite erfordern...Unter den Banden befinden sich in großer Zahl Mitläufer, die moralisch wiederstandsfähig sind. Gegen diese ist die Überläuferpropaganda unbestrittener Maßen das beste Mittel zur Schwächung und Unterminierung der Kampfmoral."* NA T-315/1680, file 29380/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 3.12.42. Betr.: Überläufer.

[5] The 221st was essentially arguing that all captured partisans, deserters or otherwise, be taken prisoner, a policy which a number of units were to practice and the OKH was to endorse in Basic Order No 13a, and which the OKW finally endorsed in its directive of 18th August of that year. Umbreit, "Problem", p. 145. How far the 221st was "ahead of the game" in urging such a measure in December 1942 is not clear, but none of the major works on the partisan war mention any other unit in the Army Group Centre area urging such measures at this particular stage.

[6] DeWitt and Moll make the same point. De Witt and Moll, "Bryansk", p. 513.

[7] NA T-315/1685, file 36509/11. Sich.-Rgt. 36, 10.12.42. Betr.: Unternehmen Ankara.

[8] NA T-315/1685, file 36509/11. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 14.12.42.

[9] NA T-315/1682, file 36509/4. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 5.2.43. Monatsbericht für die Zeit vom 1. – 31.1.43., pp. 1-2.

[10] NA T-315/1685, file 36509/12. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 7.1.43. Betr.: Unternehmen Ankara II, p. 3.

[11] The precise phrase was: *"Zum Abbrennen von Ortschaften ist die Genehmigung der Division einzuholen."* NA T-315/1685, file 36509/11. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 14.12.42.

[12] In January 1943 the areas in the 221st's jurisdiction deemed by the *Wirtschaftskommando* Gomel as worst-affected by partisan activity were the rayons of Korma and Nowosybkow. The WiKo reported that the partisans had seized the livestock, grain and other foodstuffs in rayon Korma, and that supply was further threatened by partisan encroachment upon the Mogilew highway around Derbitschi. NA T-77/1147, file WiID/861. WiKo Gomel Monatsüberblick, Januar 1943, p. 1. The WiKo's motive behind labelling these areas as particularly partisan-infested is much more likely to have been borne primarily of economic rather than security considerations. It is possible, for example, that the potential agricultural yield of these areas was particularly

extensive (Unfortunately the relevant WiKo files do not reveal anything on this particular point. It is almost certain, moreover, that much of the discussion concerning the involvement of economic agencies in anti-partisan operations was conducted by telephone).

[13] NA T-315/1680, file 29380. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 4.12.42. Feindlage!

[14] Mulligan, *Politics*, p. 141; Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtunsgpolitik*, pp. 924-6. The *Wirtschafstkommando* Witebsk was just one economic unit which was severely critical of the economic destruction wrought by anti-partisan operations and the rapacity of the troops, pointing out the effects upon farmers not just in economic terms but also in terms of how they viewed the German occupation. BA-MA, RW 31/795. Wiko Witebsk KTB, 1.1.-26.2.43, pp. 2-3.

[15] NA T-501/1586, file 35950/2. Sich.-Div. 203 Abt. Ia, 5.1.43. Betr.: Unternehmen "Peter" (Einsatzbefehl).

[16] It is not clear whether the "two-thirds" seizure cited here was greater or at the same level as the "seizure to quota level" advocated by the 221st Security Division during the Ankara operations. It is unlikely to have been lower.

[17] *Fallschirmjäger-Aubsildungs-Regiment* translates as "paratroop training regiment".

[18] That said, it is difficult to assess how far the improved situation along the railways was due to the 221st's efforts and how far to the fact that partisan pressure upon the railways always eased off during the winter due to the partisans' need to turn more of their attention to foraging for supplies. Whatever the reason, the fall in attacks on railways reflected a general trend across the Army Group Centre Rear area.

[19] BA-MA, RH 22/231, 12.6.42, p. 6; RH 26-221/3a. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 25.6.42; Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia 28.6.42. Betr.: Ausbildungslehrgänge bei SR 45. See also above, pp. 22, 40.

[20] NA T-315/1681, file 35408/1. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 31.7.42. Betr.: Zusammenfassung des Ersatzes für Sich.-Batl. 230, 302 u. 701 in eine Ausbildungs-Kompanie.

[21] NA T-315/1681, file 33408/1. Aktenvermerk! (General Lersner), 26.8.42.

[22] Translated from: *"Sorglosigkeit und Nachlässigkeit der Truppe beim Sicherungsdienst wie bei allen notwendigen vorbereitenden Sicherungsmaßnahmen, mußten in letzter Zeit immer mit schweren Opfern bezahlt werden. Der Truppe muß immer wieder eingehämmert werden, daß sie zu schärfster Aufmerksamkeit auch dort angewiesen ist, wo offenbar in letzter Überfälle nicht erfolgten."* NA T-315/1681, file 35408/2. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 30.10.42. Betr.: Ausbau und Sicherung der Stützpunkte und Unterkünfte.

[23] RH 26-221/79. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. IIa TB, 17.6.42 - 15.3.43. The problem of leave was general to the *Ostheer*. By April 1942, for example, 123 000 of the 9th Army's combat troops had not been home for a year or more. Schulte, *German Army*, p. 261.

[24] NA T-315/1680, file 29380/12. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ib Anlagen, 22.6. - 31.12.42.

[25] NA T-315/1681, file 35408/2. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 4.10.42. Betr.: Bahnsicherung. Schulte cites a report to General von Schenckendorff from late 1942 which makes similar observations. It describes the troops manning some of the railway strongpoints as "slipper soldiers" (*Pantoffelsoldaten*) who had decided to lounge around in their guardhouses with no longer any thought of maintaining discipline or carrying out their duties adequately. Schulte, *German Army*, p. 146.

[26] BA-MA, RH 26-221/33. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 3.5.42. Betr.: Zustand der Landesschützenbataillone. On the extent of health problems faced by rear area troops, see: Schulte, *German Army*, pp. 255-8.

[27] Anthony Kellett, referring particularly to American units in the Vietnam War, notes the severe effect which such a state of affairs can have upon morale. Kellett, *Fighting Power*, p. 253.

[28] NA T-175/234. Der Chef der Sipo etc., 8.10.41. EM Nr. 107, p. 5; ibid., 22.10.41. EM Nr. 121, p. 7; ibid., 14.11.41. EM Nr. 133, p. 8.

[29] NA T-315/1668, file 16748/12. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 4.11.41. Betr.: Lagebeurteilung, p. 5.

[30] NA T-315/1668, file 16748/12. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia / Div St Qu, 4.11.41. Betr.: Lagebeurteilung.

[31] NA T-175/235. Der Chef der Sipo etc., 29.5.42. MadbO Nr. 5, pp. 9-10; ibid., 14.8.42. MadbO Nr. 16, pp. 13-15.

[32] NA T-315/1680, file 29380/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 9.8.42. Betr.: Politische Überwachung der Bevölkerung. The SD similarly called for such an effort. NA T-175/236. MadbO Nr 16, 14.8.42, pp. 13-17.

[33] NA T-315/1680, file 29380/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 3.11.42. Betr.: Monatsbericht für die Zeit vom 1.10.-31.10.42, p. 2.

[34] NA T-315/1680, file 29380/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 3.10.42. Betr.: Politische Überwachung der Bevölkerung, p. 2.

[35] NA T-315/1681, file 35408/2. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 5.10.42. Monatsbericht für die Zeit vom 1.9. - 30.9.42, p. 9. There were similar reports from other units. At the beginning of September the 203rd Security Division described the deeply negative effect of requisitioning often to the last cow, and that the population was being forced to sell its possessions at ridiculous prices to make ends meet. The SD described the food situation and its effects upon the health of the population in the rear areas as "catastrophic, and on 23rd September that the livestock situation across the Army Group Centre area was suffering badly, with the Wehrmacht demanding more and more to the extent that soldiers were dragging cows out of sheds. "Indiscriminate butchering" had reduced the numbers of pigs, sheep and goats to less than 23% of pre-war levels. NA T-315/1586, file 29186/3. Sich-Div 203 Abt. VII, 1.9.42. Betr.: Tätigkeitsbericht, August 1942, p. 2; NA T-175/236. Der Chef der Sipo etc., 14.8.42. MadbO Nr. 16, pp. 11-12; ibid., 25.9.42. MadbO Nr. 22, pp. 14-15.

[36] Mulligan, *Politics*, p. 99.

[37] Mulligan, *Politics*, pp. 91-103.

[38] NA T-315/1680, file 29380/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 3.10.42. Betr.: Politische Überwachung der Bevölkerung, p. 1.

[39] NA T-315/1680, file 29380/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 2.11.42. Betr.: Monatsbericht für die Zeit vom 1. - 31. Oktober 1942, p. 1.

[40] NA T-315/1680, file 29380. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 3.11.42. Betr.: Politische Überwachung der Bevölkerung, p. 1.

[41] NA T-315/1680, file 29380. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 2.12.42. Betr.: Monatsbericht für die Zeit vom 1. - 30.11.42, p. 1; Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 3.12.42. Politische Überwachung der Bevölkerung, p. 1.

[42] NA T-315/1680, file 29380. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 3.12.42. Betr.: Politische Überwachung der Bevölkerung, p. 1.

[43] NA T-315/1680, file 29380. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 2.1.43. Politische Überwachung der Bevölkerung, 1.-31.12.42, p. 1.

[44] NA T-315/1680, file 29380. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 3.11.42. Betr.: Politische Überwachung der Bevölkerung, 1.-31.10.42, p. 2.

[45] NA T-315/1680, file 29380. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 3.10.42. Betr.: Politische Überwachung der Bevölkerung, p. 2.

[46] Translated from: *"So z.B. verprügeln sie* (the Hungarians) *grundsätzliuch alle Straßenarbeiter bezw. Wegemeister, verhaften Personen mit deutschen Dienstausweisen und verprügeln auch oft die Einwohnerschaft ganzer Dörfer. Dadurch leidet die Arbeitsfreudigkeit und Arbeitsmöglichkeit stark."* NA T-315/1680, file 29380. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 19.7.42. Betr.: Politsche Überwachung der Bevölkerung, p. 2.

[47] On the 707th Infantry Division in this respect, see above, p. 131.

[48] NA T-315/1679, file 29380/5. Der Kommandant der Feldkommandantur 528 (V), 20.10.42. Betr.: Geplante Evakuierung.

[49] NA T-315/1680, file 29380/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 3.12.42. Betr.: Politische Überwachung der Bevölkerung, p. 2.

[50] Translated from: *"...Androhung des Erschiessens der für die Wehrmacht arbeitenden Bevölkerung, falls sie nicht ihre Arbeit einstellen und sämtliche Ämter niederlegen."* NA T-315/1680, file 29380/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 2.1.43. Betr.: Politische Überwachung der Bevölkerung, p. 1.

[51] Ibid..

[52] Dallin et al., "Psychological Warfare", pp. 227-41; Slepyan, *Avengers*, pp. 281-8.

[53] NA T-315/1680, file 29380/9. SR 27 Abt. Ic, 29.11.42. Betr.: Politische Überwachung der Bevölkerung, p. 2.

[54] NA T-315/1680, file 29380/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 2.1.43. Betr.: Monatsbericht für die Zeit vom 1. - 31. Dezember 1942, p. 1.

[55] NA T-315/1680, file 29380/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 9.8.42. Betr.: Politische Überwachung der Bevölkerung; Ibid., 3.10.42, p. 2.

[56] NA T-315/1680, file 29380/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 22.10.42. Bericht des V-Mannes Loginow, Sachar, über Reise in den Bezirk Chotimsk von 1.-10.10.42.

[57] NA T-315/1680, file 29380/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic., 2.9.42, p. 1.

[58] NA T-315, Roll 1680, file 29380/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 2.11.42. Betr.: Monatsbericht für die Zeit vom 1.-31. Oktober 1942, p. 1.

[59] Translated from: *"Ach, sollen sie* (the partisans) *auch leben, sie haben uns nichts Böses getan, aber umgekehrt die Deutschen verlangen Hühner, Eier usw. Mit einem Wort: die Bevölkerung ist nicht zuverlässig."* NA T-315, Roll 1680, file 29380/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 24.10.42. Berichte der V-Männer Wo. und Wa. über die Lage ostwärts Tschetschersk.

[60] NA T-315, Roll 1680, file 29380/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 3.11.42. Betr.: Politische Überwachung der Bevölkerung, p. 2.

[61] NA T-315, Roll 1680, file 29380/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 2.1.43. Betr.: Politische Überwachung der Bevölkerung, p. 2.

[62] NA T-175/236. Der Chef der Sipo etc., 23.12.42. MadbO Nr. 35, p. 8.

[63] Though the records are incomplete, it seems that the four main mobile operations of August - *Süd*, *Eule*, *Dreieck* and *Viereck* resulted in the deaths in action of fewer than 120 "partisans" at a cost to the 221st of 36 dead. By contrast, the recorded death toll for the 203rd Security Division's three main operations of the summer - *Potsdam*, *Maikäfer* and *Adler* - was 321 partisans killed in action at a cost to the 203rd of 28 dead. NA T-315/1678, file 29380/1. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 28.7.-21.8.42. KTB, 18.6-31.12.41; NA T-315/1585, file 29186/1. Sich.-Div. 203 Abt. Ia, 12.6., 13.7., 8.8.42. KTB, 1.4.-31.12.42.

[64] See above, pp. 136-8.

[65] Translated from: *"Dagegen liess die landwirtschaftliche Bevorratung des Dorfes Guta darauf schliessen, daß der Ort selbst als Bandenstützpunkt diente. Deshalb wurden von den 13 anwesenden Männern die 8 Wehrpflichtigen festgenommen."* NA T-315/1685, file 36509/11. SR 36 Ia, 26.12.42. Betr.: Unternehmen Ankara, p. 1.

[66] Translated from: *"In einem Hause von Sinowjewka fand sich eine Flasche Pulver. Als das Haus auf Befehl des Regts abgebrannt wurde, detonierte Munition. In den Trümmern wurden ein abgeschnittenes russ. Gewehr und ein Jagdgewehr gefunden, die trotz vorheriger aufmerksamer Durchsuchung nicht aufgefallen waren. Die Besitzerin des Hauses gab zu, daß ihr Meyer bei den Banditen war und die Munition bei seinem letzten Besuch hinterliess. Sie wurde erschossen, ihre Kinder sind dem Starosten übergeben."* NA T-315/1685, file 36509/11. SR 36 Ia, 26.12.42. Betr.: Unternehmen Ankara, p. 2.

[67] See above, Section 7.3..

[68] Source: NA T-315/1681, files 35408/1 and /2; NA T-315/1682, file 36509/4. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia Monatsberichte, Juni 1942 – Januar 1943.

[69] Sources: NA T-315/1678, file 29380/1. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 25.7., 6.9., 12.9., 26.9., 14.11., 28.12.42, 11.1.43. KTB, 18.6.-31.12.42; NA T-315/1682, file 36509/1. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 11.1.43. KTB, 1.1.-1.6.43. Except in one instance, none of the above cases record how many partisan weapons were captured. The exception was the 11.1.43 engagement; here one machine-gun and ten rifles were recorded as captured. The remaining shortfall between recorded partisan dead and recorded partisan weapons captured suggests that eleven genuine partisans were killed - perhaps the OD managed to take them by surprise - along with thirteen non-combatants.

[70] RH 26-221/38a. Sich.-Div. 221. Abt. Ia, 25.6.42. Anlage 533.

[71] The *Vorfeld* in this context was the strip of territory immediately on either side of the railway lines.

[72] NA T-315/1679, file 29380/5. SB 706, 2.7.42. Betr.: 4. Kompanie, SB 706, Odessa.

[73] NA T-315/1681, file 35408/1. RHGeb. Mitte, Chef des Generalstabes, 29.9.42, pp. 1-2.

[74] NA T-315/1681, file 35408/1. Sich.-Div. 221, Kommandeur, 4.8.42, p. 1.

[75] RH 26-221/79. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. IIa. Tätigkeitsbericht, 17.6.42 - 15.3.43, p. 1. This example certainly corresponds to the view of Gerald Reitlinger who, writing in 1961, described the "typical" Rear Area military official as *"an officer whose career had failked, a captain or major in late middle age who had been given an unpopular task because of his incompetence."* Reitlinger, *House Built on Sand*, p. 110.

[76] Translated from: *"Ferner muß mit Recht bezweifelt werden, daß die Ortskommandantur Ljuban, die nur mit 1 Feldwebel, 1 Oberschützen als Schreiber uns 1 Dolmetscher besetzt ist, in der Lage ist, sich um die Durchführung der Verwaltungsanordnungen so zu kümmern, wie es hier in russischen Verhältnissen nötig ist."* NA T-315/1586, file 29186/3. Feldkommandantur 550 Kr. Verwaltungsgruppe, Staryje Dorogi, 24.7.42. Betr.: Lage und Tätigkeitsbericht für die Zeit vom 24.6. bis 24.7.42.

[77] See above, Table 10, p. 174.

[78] Translated from: *"Der Kampfwert des OD war in dem sich entwickelnden Feuergefecht gleich null."* RH 26-221/53. 2/SB 791, 25.1.43 (Anlage 84); SB 791, 25.1.43.

[79] NA T-315/1679, file 29380/5. SR 27, 7.7.42.

[80] NA T-315/1680, file 29380/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 21.11.42. Betr.: Urlaubsscheine mit Hinweis auf bevorstehenden Waffenstillstand.

[81] This was certainly the observation of units in Army Rear Area 532. Schulte, *German Army*, pp. 161-162. On 25th September the SD reported a massive lack of suitable personnel for administration. NA T-175/236. MadbO Nr. 22, 25.9.42, pp. 12-14.

[82] See above, p. 153 (esp. footnotes 53-5) Ch. 8, on partisan ruthlessness up to the end of October 1942. During the late autumn and winter, in addition to a mushrooming of reports of partisan "plunder", two incidents in particular are likely to have added to the fear and contempt of partisans which was instilled in German troops. On 11th December 15 villagers and 1 OD man were reported as having been killed by partisans, and on 21st January the Fedorow partisan group was reported to have killed 24 villagers. NA T-315/1678, file 29380/1. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 7.12.42. KTB, 18.6.-31.12.42; NA T-315/1682, file 36509/1. Sich.-Div. 221. Abt. Ia, 21.1.43. KTB, 1.1.-1.6.43.

[83] See above, Table 6, p. 114. Though artillery was used in the operations, the big disparity between the recorded number of partisans killed in battle and the number of partisan rifles captured strongly indicates that the vast majority of recorded partisan dead were non-combatants.

[84] NA T-315/1685, file 36509/12. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 12.2.43. Betr.: Unternehmen "Klette", p. 2.

[85] NA T-315/1685, file 36509/12. Sich.-Rgt. 36 Abt. Ia, 9.2.43. Betr.: Unternehmen Klette II. Gefechtsbericht, p. 15. Though a volunteer unit, the French battalion suffered from particularly low morale and discipline. Many of its officers and NCOs seem to have been rogues and adventurers rather than "ideological warriors", and morale suffered because many soldiers felt demeaned as anti-partisan fighters, preferring to be at the front with their sister battalions. The French troops were also concerned about relatives being held as POWs in France, and about the hardships their families were experiencing - fears which had grown more acute after the Anglo-American invasion of French North Africa in November 1942. NA T-315/1680, file 29380/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 14.12.42. Betr.: Zersetsungserscheinungen in der franz. Legion.

[86] NA T-315/1682, file 36509/4. Besondere Anordnungen zum Divisions-Befehl für Unternehmen Klette II.

[87] See above, pp. 107-9.

[88] Between July and December 1942 three major operations involving *Ostheer* units took place in the Army Group Centre Rear Area. Together, Operations *Adler* (203rd and 286th Security Divisions), *Greif* (286th) and *Blitz* (286th) exacted a recorded partisan death toll of 2 744 at a loss to the German side of 59 dead. Far worse, however, were the three equivalent operations which immediately followed the 16th December directive. *Peter* (203rd), *Waldwinter* (286th) and *Schneehase* (201st), which took place between 10th January and 15th February 1943, inflicted at least 5 300 dead. The loss of 57 dead was recorded for the German side. Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*, pp. 827-8.

CHAPTER 10: THE GOMEL REGION (3)

The depths to which the 221st Security Division's situation deteriorated during the early months of 1943, along with the growing economic imperative of the German anti-partisan effort, fostered a dynamic altogether more ruthless than that which had driven the 221st during 1942. The 221st's conduct during the spring of 1943 was marked, therefore, by growing conflict between elements advocating the yet further intensification of the cultivation effort on the one hand and those of a more ruthless persuasion on the other. Chapter Ten examines the forces that fuelled this process and the outcomes that resulted.[1]

10.1. The division-level picture, February - May 1943: growing pressures

10.1.1. Operation *Zugspitze*

Operation *Zugspitze*, conducted in the 221st's north-eastern sector in February 1943, provides the first clear signs that a more ruthless attitude was taking hold at divisional level as well as below it. The divisional directive for *Zugspitze* dispensed with the ban on burning villages which had held for *Ankara* II, authorising the burning of villages in certain circumstances. Explaining what lay behind this hardened approach is not straightforward, for *Zugspitze* took place before the serious deterioration in the 221st's situation which set in with the coming of spring. Nor, taking place as it did in the north-eastern sector, does it appear to have been designed primarily to satisfy the *Wirtschaftskommando* in Gomel; as has already been pointed out, the north-eastern sector was not one of the areas whose economic viability was deemed by the WiKo as particularly threatened.[2]

That said, the greater ruthlessness of *Zugspitze* probably was indeed driven to an important degree by a mixture of security-related and economic considerations. For one thing - though there is no written evidence for this - the 221st may have decided after *Ankara* II that it needed to exploit the opportunities provided by the winter more fully. Winter after all was when partisan-infested areas were more accessible thanks to frozen swamps and, arguably, when the partisans were most vulnerable to attacks on their source of supply due to the particularly harsh conditions in which they were living.[3] The order to burn villages may therefore have served the twin purpose of firstly inflicting a genuine blow against the partisans and secondly of facilitating more thorough requisitioning. Pressure from above, whether direct or indirect, may have played a further role in the development of this somewhat harder line. It may be that the 221st's criticism of deserter policy in December 1942 had created the perception at higher levels that the division was perhaps being just a little too constructive. The directive for *Zugspitze* may have been intended, among other things, to counter such perceptions. This may have seemed especially necessary in an atmosphere which, for the time being at least, was

characterised by an explosion of bloodletting in the German anti-partisan effort as a whole, facilitated probably to some extent at least by the OKW directive of 16th December 1942.[4] In other words, if the 221st's constructive engagement effort of 1942 had to some extent been conducted with a view to currying favour with superiors, such a motive may by now have started working in the opposite direction.

It is nonetheless important to note that the 221st's directive for *Zugspitze* did not ape the call to unbridled brutality contained in the 16th December directive, nor was it nearly as ruthless as either Army Rear Area 532's orders for the second *Klette* operation or those issued by the *Ostheer* units taking part in the Witebsk-Polozk area in early 1943.[5] As before, the 221st seems to have retained a relatively sensible outlook - even though the word "relatively" needs if anything to be stressed yet more strongly than before.

Developments in the spring of 1943, however, would harden attitudes further.

10.1.2. Spring 1943: the partisan surge

The situation which developed in the spring of 1943, part of a general trend across the entire Army Group Centre Rear Area,[6] was described by the 221st's operations section in the grimmest terms:

> *"In the course of April 1943 the unrest in the entire divisional area reached dangerous proportions. Valuable economic installations - depots, dairies, distilleries etc. - were everywhere attacked and in places burned down. Raiding and plunder of the villages and the murder of* starosten *and other pro-German inhabitants became the order of the day. The division's attempts to combat this mushrooming threat were severely restricted due to the inadequate forces available."*[7]

Operations undertaken during April brought only the briefest respite from partisan activity; even those areas in which operations had met with some success were soon infested with partisans again. Forced recruitment, the division reported, was enabling entirely new groups to be formed; in some areas the partisans were extending recruitment up to 55 year-olds.[8] Instructors were being parachuted in, and Soviet officers had taken over the partisans' training and leadership.[9] Thus were the partisans able to extend their influence and draw ever nearer to the railway lines, highways and important strongpoints; the effects are all too clear from Table 11.

Table 11: The partisan war in the 221st Security Division's jurisdiction, February - June 1943.[10]

	February	March	April	May	June
No. of clashes between partisans and Germans / OT / OD / Hungarians.	59	66	113	131	112
No. of villages attacked (given as *Plünderungen*).	Not given	Not given	140	308	281
Total no. of sabotage acts.	Not given	Not given	87	233	200
No. of partisan dead.	202	121	500	176	117
No. of German etc. dead.	68	68	66	74	28
German etc. dead as percentage of partisan dead.	33.7%	56.2%	13.2%	42.0%	23.9%

The fact that this surge ensued shortly after the 221st had been forced to relinquish three of its battalions must have been especially alarming to the division, for the immediate result was that it now became more overstretched than ever.[11]

10.1.3. The effect on fighting power

Partly as a result of these developments, the 221st's fighting power worsened further. The demands of active anti-partisan operations, coupled with the amount of passive security which the troops were still compelled to undertake, had led among other things to even greater restrictions on training.[12] It is unsurprising that discipline and morale seem to have slackened further under such circumstances; this was certainly the judgement of an officer of the operations section inspecting the Gomel-Dowsk-Tscherikoff stretch of track.[13] Lieutenant Andre reported that strongpoints were not being fortified and covered to a sufficient extent, that the squads available for defence were too small, and that the troops sometimes were not even guarding the bridges at all but, instead, their own living quarters.

Equipment too was cause for mounting alarm; reports multiplied of partisan groups which were not only numerous but also, thanks to improved supply from the Red Air Force, increasingly well-armed. The 45th Security Regiment drew attention to the inevitable effects:

> *"Many times our railway patrols have come to grips with enemy mine-layers. On every occasion the bandits have been equipped with machine-pistols and our own troops have not. This explains why the enemy's losses are never established, despite the fact that the actions are often fought at extremely close quarters. In the darkness, directly after the moment of surprise has gone, the rifleman hardly ever has the chance to fire a second shot. The regiment wishes to stress the psychological consequences for the troops."*[14]

The OD's condition was if anything even more lamentable. Though the OD's material state had improved significantly by spring 1943, it could not keep pace with the OD's further expansion in the following months. Morale, meanwhile, was spiralling downward; desertion

continued unabated, at a time when the division's reliance upon the OD was greater than ever. The worsening situation at the front, with all the growing uncertainties this brought, played a role in rising desertion,[15] along with the partisans' increasingly crafty cultivation of the OD men who fell into their hands; by March the partisans, rather than shooting captured OD men, were re-educating them before then in some cases setting them free.[16] The effects of all this upon the OD's overall fighting power were entirely predictable, and are described uncompromisingly by the German officers who witnessed them. Contemptuous sentiments were expressed, for example, in a report by *Feldkommandantur* 528 (V). Here, Sergeant Bauer of the *Feldgendarmerie* had been killed leading an OD squad against partisans, but the OD had subsequently failed to pursue the partisans immediately and capture them. Their excuse had been that they had felt too shaken by the death of Bauer, to whom they had been devoted, to have been capable of decisive action.[17] Yet more alarming was a report from the 1st battalion of the 8th SS Police Regiment, stationed in the north-eastern sector.[18] An officer of the battalion had been ordered to build a strongpoint in Bazun, to be manned by OD men. When the OD men accompanying him had heard about this, however, they had waited until the detachment from the battalion had departed before themselves disappearing one by one. By June 1943, both *Feldkommandantur* 516 and the *Feldkommandantur* in Gomel were reporting that the worsening partisan situation in their respective areas had made the OD as a whole quite unreliable.[19]

During 1942 the 221st had tried to compensate for its diminishing fighting power by strenuously engaging both population and potential deserters. By spring 1943, however, there were sure signs that this was ceasing to be a viable option.

10.1.4. The battle for hearts and minds: the turning tide

Until late 1942 the 221st's cultivation effort can hardly be said to have been a failure. Failure, however, is what increasingly stared it in the face during 1943, and this development was to help forge the growing fault line between those in the division advocating an intensification of such methods and those beginning to favour an altogether harsher approach.

The main reason for the division's increasingly apparent failure was that the population's disaffection and the partisans' increasingly effective exploitation of it were clearly gathering pace. Still most prominent among the causes was the *Arbeitseinsatz*, the intensification of which during 1943 stoked even greater resentment than before. The intelligence section's report for February 1943 reported not only that most of the civilians earmarked for *Arbeitseinsatz* were fleeing their villages, but also that the effects of "good news" from the Reich, presumably in the form of letters or talks given by *Ostarbeiter* on leave, had all but dried up.[20]

By 1943, however, the partisans had additional material to work with. The overall report compiled by the 221st's intelligence section for January to August 1943 asserted that the "punitive expeditions" undertaken by the division had contributed to the population's darkening mood.[21] Thus by 1943 the brutality of operations such as *Ankara*, *Klette II* and later *Osterhase* was creating the kind of situation for the 221st which had already plagued the 707th Infantry Division in 1942.[22]

Probably the most important dimension, however, was the increasing likelihood of Soviet victory. The deteriorating situation at the front line, which with the retreat from the Caucasus by January and the fall of Stalingrad in February assumed frightening proportions for the Germans, was a further source of torment for the 221st's hearts and minds effort. Along with increased bombing by the Red Air Force it fuelled civilians' fear of what might happen to them if, as seemed increasingly likely, the Germans were forced to retreat.[23] The intelligence section described the impact which these developments had had upon the population's mood, along with *"the constant rumour-mongering which follows in its wake, nourished and spread on an enormous scale by bandits, spies and the like."*[24] The arrival of tens of thousands of troops from the Italian 8th Army during February did not help one iota. These troops had staggered into the 221st's area after being thrashed in the winter battles in southern Russia, and their morale and discipline were dangerously low; as well as plundering and requisitioning Russian houses and accosting Russian women and girls, they spread defeatist talk and thus reinforced the population's perception that Soviet victory was just a matter of time.[25] At the end of April the intelligence section reported that "(t)*he successes of the Red Army and the rising partisan activity in the rear areas, skilfully exploited and exaggerated by enemy propaganda, have almost totally destroyed the population's belief in the victory of German arms."*[26] In a situation such as this, the observation of the *Wirtschaftskommando* Witebsk , further to the north, would have greatly resonated with the officers of the 221st. The governing principle in the population's behaviour, the WiKo asserted, was that *"(l)oyalty lies where the power lies".*[27] It would have been clear to the 221st, as it was to the WiKo in Witebsk, that this principle now worked firmly against the Germans rather than for them.

All this could only further ease the partisans' task of securing ever-greater swathes of the population, by whichever means, for the Soviet cause. Moreover, whilst the partisans continued to employ terror extensively, their cultivation effort was growing increasingly skilful. For one thing, they were now recruiting as far away from base as possible so as not to antagonise the population in their immediate vicinity. Indeed, they often made the effort to supply nearby villages, and here requisitions were where possible restricted to families of German-appointed administrators or OD men. The partisans seem by now to have recognised that press-ganged civilians were likely to make less enthusiastic partisan recruits, and that they therefore needed to win the population over through their deeds.[28] This certainly seems to have had some effect, as Corporal Meynecken, formerly a prisoner of the partisans, testified after his escape:

> *"In every village the population was in a good mood. Everywhere the bandits were welcomed and fed, and so far as I could see this was all done willingly and without any pressure from the bandits. The bandits had brought two accordions with them, which they brought out at every village they rested in for the villagers to dance to. The villagers didn't seem at all intimidated when they chatted with the bandits. The bandits too seemed in a remarkably good mood; I was made to watch while they danced to harmonica music."*[29]

The 221st's attempts to turn the population's mood, meanwhile, were being reduced to a state of frustrated impotence by a multitude of practical difficulties. Partisan attacks on railways caused severe disruption to the supply of propaganda,[30] and the accommodation of troops bound for the front in theatres and cinemas denied the population a source of entertainment.[31] The strains on propaganda personnel, meanwhile, were growing intolerable. During March most of the personnel of the *Propaganda-Staffel* Gomel had to accompany particular operations and were therefore quite unable to organise other talks and displays for the population. This came on top of further disruption to propaganda distribution caused by bombing and partisan attacks on rail supplies.[32] During late March and early April new propaganda units had to be established in Nowosybkoff, Ssurash and Neshin, but it proved impossible to expand the staff of the *Propaganda-Staffel* in Gomel accordingly. Later that month the *Staffel* had to relinquish thirteen of its younger men, presumably for front-line duty.[33]

By May 1943 there were too few suitable Russian propaganda speakers available to the division,[34] and rumours among the population about plummeting German fortunes at the front and the bombing of German cities further fuelled the spectre of eventual Soviet victory. By now there were also illegal partisan printing presses in towns such as Nowosybkoff, and the partisans were seducing the population by selling it cut-price salt and textiles. The youth of the area was particularly influenced. *"Youth is especially receptive to partisan propaganda, because it sees itself being robbed of all its prospects in life* (by the German occupation)," the intelligence section reported.[35]

By now, then, fright at accelerating partisan activity and the division's own worsening condition was coupled with a growing realisation that no decisive improvement could be effected by stemming the anti-German tide in the population's mood. If this were not enough to fuel a more ruthless approach at the 221st's divisional level, however, the area's economic situation provided further impetus.

10.1.5. The economic situation

By spring 1943 both the 221st Security Division and WiKo Klinzy, as the former WiKo Gomel was now titled, were unpleasantly aware of the economic effects of rising partisan activity in the division's jurisdiction. The WiKo's agricultural section reported at the end of April that:

> *"As far as agriculture is concerned, the security situation has deteriorated again. In the Bobruisk area just fourteen per cent of the* Wolloste *remain pacified, in the Gomel and Klinzy area just thirty-seven per cent. By night the entire region becomes the partisans' area of operations. From every forest fires burn and rockets climb into the air to light the way for the Red Air Force."*[36]

The March report of *Wirtschaftsinspektion Mitte*, meanwhile, singled out the 221st's area as one of special concern:

> *"In WiKo Klinzy's area the security situation has worsened further. In the Bobruisk area sixty per cent of the* Wolloste *are not being cultivated; in the Gomel and Klinzy areas the figures are thirty-eight and forty-two per cent...bands of several hundred, sometimes over a thousand, rove through the region paralysing all economic activity and destroying dairies, MTS stations and depots."*[37]

All this could only hamstring supply of food and labour, at a time when the German war effort's need for both was growing increasingly acute. Of direct importance to the 221st, meanwhile, was the fact that these developments seriously threatened its own food supply. Shortage of food for the troops was becoming more manifest; on 16th April, for example, the quartermaster of the Army Group Centre Rear Area declared that the ration for fresh potatoes would be set at a maximum of 500 grams per day.[38]

The situation which the 221st Security Division faced during the spring of 1943, then, was one of rising partisan disruption both to the security of the supply routes and the area's economic viability, along with a change in the population's mood which the 221st's best propaganda efforts were proving increasingly unable to prevent. The response to this problem at the divisional level of the 221st seems to have been one of confusion, of growing conflict between "hawks" and "doves", as the division's more constructive elements found their wisdom increasingly challenged by other elements who had started advocating a ruthless response. With the ineffectiveness of the division's constructive efforts increasingly apparent, officers within the operations section, the quartermaster's section and perhaps General Lersner himself may have been persuaded to "coerce a little more and cultivate a little less". Whereas previously these officers had been sensible enough to prevent such brutalising tendencies as they harboured from deterring pursuit of what had seemed a necessary constructive approach to anti-partisan warfare, the increasingly obvious failure of such an approach seems to have hardened their attitude markedly. Consequently, as has already been suggested, such careerist perceptions as they possessed may have changed also; after all, if constructive engagement was proving increasingly ineffective then it was hardly compatible with enhanced career prospects.

That ruthlessness was taking a firmer hold at divisional level seems clear from the 221st's directive for Operation *Osterhase*.

10.2. The division-level picture: the ruthless response

The location for *Osterhase*, conducted at the end of April 1943, seems to have been determined by security concerns; the area selected, the jurisdiction of the 45th Security Regiment, appears

to have seen a particularly sharp rise in partisan attacks upon the railways during April.[39] Another possible security consideration was the need to "impress" the population. With the population's support for the German cause dwindling, a ruthless anti-partisan operation in a particular part of the division's jurisdiction might showcase the effectiveness of German anti-partisan methods and remind the rest of the population that they too could expect similar treatment if they co-operated with partisans. A side-effect for which the division is likely to have hoped was a reassertion of OD discipline, an improvement in OD effectiveness and, consequently, an easing of the pressure on the 221st's own troops. Certainly, pursuing these aims was a likely motive in light of the division's earlier concerns.[40]

The form of the operation, however was driven by a ruthlessness borne of both security and economic considerations. As in *Zugspitze*, the fact that villages could again be burned at the division's discretion allowed in some circumstances the most exhaustive type of requisitioning - that which left nothing behind.[41] *Osterhase* went much further, however, over the systematic gathering of livestock and produce. The divisional quartermaster declared that the level of requisitioning depended upon whether a village was earmarked for destruction, or whether it was to be left standing in the interests of further economic exploitation. The issue which was to decide a village's fate was whether it met its quota, and economic logic dictated that those which had not were pro-partisan.[42] This seems to have been the first instance where the 221st accepted the principle that economic criteria should decide whether or not a village was disloyal and invited destruction. In the event, *Osterhase* saw twice as much requisitioning as *Ankara* despite involving about half as many units.[43] and an excessively high recorded body count of "partisans".

As before, however, the perceptions of individual officers continued to exert an important influence over their response to the situation which they faced. There was no "blanket" increase in ruthlessness at divisional level, as is indicated by the behaviour of the intelligence section during this period.

10.3. The division-level picture: the limits of "cultivation"

The increasingly apparent failings of the 221st's hearts and minds campaign met a markedly different response from the division's intelligence section. Lieutenant Meyer's section, always the strongest proponent of a "constructive" approach to anti-partisan warfare, seems to have believed in the spring of 1943 that the best course of action was to intensify the cultivation effort even further. Indeed, in view of the success which the 221st's constructive engagement effort had enjoyed until late 1942, the intelligence section may have believed that "one last push" was necessary. However, whilst the intelligence section was certainly more sensible than other elements of the division in realising that ruthless methods were far more likely to alienate the population than combat the partisans effectively, its motives for continuing to promote a

more measured approach may well have contained an element of selfishness. Having set particular store, it seems, by constructive methods, Lieutenant Meyer is likely to have viewed the impending failure of such methods as a failure for himself personally. Understandably, he would have been anxious to avert such an outcome. Indeed, it may be for this reason also that the intensified hearts and minds campaign of spring 1943 saw not only more rigorous employment of existing methods but, in addition, calls for a sea-change in policy at the highest levels of the Reich itself.

10.3.1. The intensified hearts and minds effort

In the spring of 1943 the intelligence section and its subordinate *Propaganda-Staffeln* pushed themselves even further in their attempts to saturate the population with propaganda. During April, for example, the Russian-language newspaper *Nowy Put* increased circulation in the Gomel area from 35 000 to 45 000.[44] One of the most important propaganda battlegrounds was the OD. It was acknowledged that, if the flow of desertions were to be stemmed, then the supply, clothing and *Betreuung* of the OD required a new degree of attention, and bad handling of the OD by German officers and NCOs must be sharply countered. Above all it was necessary to make the OD man feel that he was being treated absolutely fairly.[45]

Ever greater effort, meanwhile, went into propagandising the thousands of workers being procured for the now-compulsory *Arbeitseinsatz*. The *Propaganda-Staffel* in Klinzy was especially active in this regard. During June it distributed postcards and letters from *Ostarbeiter* in the Reich, and put on religious services, musical numbers and film-shows for the workers before they were transported.[46] The intelligence section still saw an opportunity, meanwhile, to undermine partisan morale and entice deserters,[47] and it still seems to have been able to influence other branches of the division accordingly. On 29th June, for example, the low number of partisan deserters prompted the divisional quartermaster to order that deserters be given the same rations as members of the *Ost-Truppen*.[48]

It was perhaps the bloody excesses of *Osterhase* which prompted the intelligence section to urge sweeping political reforms as the only possible long-term means of enticing the population back into the German fold. Lieutenant Meyer may in addition have felt emboldened by the fact that he was promoted to captain on 1st May.[49] Thus the intelligence section's report for May maintained that many civilians still felt cause to fight the partisans, but that this could be effectively harnessed only if a nationalist Byelorussian government were to be formed in the very near future along the lines of the governments which the Japanese had set up in Burma and Manchuria.[50] In doing so, the intelligence section was echoing not only other security division offices, such as the administrative section of the 203rd Security Division,[51] but also the higher-level efforts of Colonel Gehlen and others.[52] The intelligence section combined its call for reform with a scathing attack upon the propaganda tactics which had been determined by higher-level policy makers, slating the slogan "the battle against Bolshevism" as totally

inadequate for propaganda purposes.[53] It also signalled its despair at the ruthless, exploitative nature of occupation policy in general:

> *"The enormous moral credit which the German Wehrmacht possessed at the time of the invasion has almost completely evaporated, and belief in German victory destroyed. This is due to our mistaken perceptions of the Russians, in particular our tendency to draw no distinction between Russians in general and Bolsheviks in particular."*[54]

Whilst waiting for sanity to prevail in the higher echelons of policy making, the intelligence section tried to inject a greater degree of "humanity" into the division's mobile operations. The efforts which were made in this direction, and the forces which constrained them, were particularly visible in Operation *Sommerfest*.

10.3.2. Operation *Sommerfest*

In seeking a vehicle for "humanising" anti-partisan operations, the intelligence section made what appears to have been a genuine effort to distinguish between "innocent" and "guilty" among the inhabitants of those villages condemned to destruction and persuade other division-level elements to do likewise.

For early July's Operation *Sommerfest* the population of evacuated areas, it was declared, was not to be uniformly condemned as *Banditenhelfer*. Civilians were to be vetted by the GFP, with the help of trustworthy individuals from the local population. They were then to be handed over to the administrative section for the next stage: *"Section VII* (administrative) *to assume responsibility for resettling the useful part of the population in areas as far away from their villages as possible, and for transferring suspect elements to labour camps."*[55] Whilst many German units seem merely to have paid lip-service to the idea of distinguishing between "guilty" and "innocent", the 221st does seem to have been sincere, even if it was motivated by the practical need to keep the population sweet rather than by genuine humanity.[56] The strongest sign of sincerity is the proportion of the population which actually was spared death or the labour camp. Though there is no numerical record, there is a strong suggestion that the proportion was in fact high:

> *"The requisition staff was not deployed in the usual way, because it was clear that most of the villages being vetted were not bandit villages, but merely contained individual families who had been helping the bandits...It emerged that a large number of the villages which* (the division) *checked had not been visited* (by the partisans) *for months, in some cases for over a year."*[57]

Admittedly, in the general scheme of things such "restrained" measures were paltry consolation for the misery which German anti-partisan operations inflicted, and it is likely that, as with the rest of Captain Meyer's initiatives, they were conceived out of cynical calculation rather than humanity. What perhaps prevented the intelligence section from doing more, however, were the restrictions imposed by its need to co-operate with the quartermaster's section in formulating such measures. The quartermaster's section, more mindful perhaps of

economic imperatives, seems to have been set on severely restricting the freedom of action of which the intelligence section might otherwise have taken fuller advantage. Certainly, the quartermaster's orders for *Sommerfest* made clear that, as far as he was concerned, there would be no compromise on the fundamental principle that a village's allegiance or otherwise to the German cause would be determined primarily by its record in meeting quotas, and that it would be spared or destroyed accordingly.[58]

Sommerfest therefore suggests that the 221st Security Division's constructive engagement policy was being constrained not only by forces beyond the division's control, but also by forces within the division itself. With ruthlessness now apparently taking firmer hold at divisional level, efforts to intensify constructive engagement were likely to be restricted. It seems that more division-level officers were no longer convinced, unlike in 1942, that constructive engagement would have the necessary effect. Though there may have been some readiness to accept a measure of it, it was probably felt it should not take any form that might obstruct the "necessary" injection of greater ruthlessness.

A similar state of affairs, in which the need for cultivation was acknowledged but actual cultivation was restricted by ruthless economic imperatives, was apparent in the administrative section of the 203rd Security Division; this case warrants some attention because it deepens understanding of the calculation which may have been being played out within the 221st Security Division at this time. In March 1943 the 203rd's administrative officer showed considerable concern for the plight of refugees in the division's jurisdiction, railing against the simple proposal put forward by the area's economic administration to feed the evacuees with rations originally reserved for the civilian population. Even if there were enough food to go round until the next round of crop-gathering, the administrative officer pointed out, the effects on the mood of the civilian population could be appalling. Meanwhile, the refugees themselves had been kept in the dark about what would happen to them and this had enabled the partisans to put the rumour about, successfully, that the refugees were to be shipped to Poland as agricultural labourers. Consequently many refugees had sold their horses and livestock, at pitifully low prices, because they had thought these would be taken from them by the Germans.[59] This collective state of affairs was condemned by the administrative officer.

At the beginning of May, however, the administrative officer displayed a contrasting, utterly pitiless attitude toward the forced recruitment of Russian workers for *Arbeitseinsatz*:

> *"When asked, the unit responsible for agriculture in Bobruisk declared that there are still significant labour reserves in its rural areas, who can only be described as "surplus mouths". The* Führer *has declared that recruiting labour from the eastern territories is vital to the war effort. All over German-occupied Europe the last available sources of labour are being mobilised, by force where necessary, if they have not been mobilised already. Nowhere has this been more thoroughly realised than in the Reich itself, where our women are being put to heavy physical work in armaments factories and other concerns. It seems quite unacceptable, in view of the situation, that the Russian population be exempted. The Russians are*

> *used to being forced to work, and if other means fail then they should be forced using the harshest methods."*[60]

Though refugees and labour procurement were separate issues, they were linked in that the way in which the Germans handled them was likely to have a bearing upon German relations with the population. The contrast between the conciliatory viewpoint expressed in March and the heartless exhortations made by the same officer in May in fact illustrates the increasing difficulties in relations with the population which the deteriorating situation was causing. This was the situation which seems to have been developing at the divisional level of the 221st also. Whilst the 221st's more hawkish elements may still have recognised the importance of cultivation, they were now sufficiently unconvinced of its viability for them to be determined not to let it interfere with the harsher line which they now felt the deteriorating economic and security situation demanded.

10.4. Conclusion

At the 221st's divisional level, growing conflict between hawks and doves seems to have been the order of the day during the first months of 1943. On the one hand, the "hard-line" mentality clearly was in the ascent. A desire to avoid creating an overly "soft" impression at higher levels in the more brutal general atmosphere created by the OKW directive of December 1942 seems along with the opportunities afforded by winter conditions to have provided the first push in a more ruthless direction, and the process was apparently reinforced by the dangerous deterioration in the economic and security situation and by the progressive failure of constructive engagement. The ruthless directives for Operation *Osterhase* were the result. On the other hand, the division's "doveish" tendency - primarily Captain Meyer's intelligence section - was intensifying constructive engagement, its effort albeit constrained, as the *Sommerfest* operation showed, by the division's hardening institutional attitude.

The slide to brutality was not a uniform, inexorable process, however; as the next chapter shows, the personal attitudes of individual officers continued to exert a significant influence upon a unit's approach even in the increasingly desperate straits in which the 221st Security Division and its subordinate units found themselves during the summer of 1943.

Endnotes to Chapter 10

[1] This chapter, like Ch. 8, focuses only upon the 221st's divisional level; an analysis of the 221st's lower levels between February and August 1943 is contained in Ch. 11.

[2] See above, p. 165.

[3] Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*, p. 832.

[4] See above, pp. 108-9, 178-9.

[5] See above, p. 109; on the Witebsk-Polozk operations: Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*, pp. 928-31.

[6] See above, p. 109.

[7] Translated from: *"Im Verlauf des Monats April 1943 kam die Unruhe im ganzen Divisions-Bereich in bedrohlichem Masse zu. Überall wurden wertvolle wirtschaftliche Einrichtungen, wie Staatsgüter, Molkereien, Brennereien usw. angegriffen und teilweise abgebrannt. Plünderungen und Überfälle auf Dörfer, die Ermordung von Starosten und deutschfreundlichen Landeseinwohnern war an der Tagesordnung. Im großen Masse wurden Zwangsrekrutierungen von den Banditen zur Auffüllung ihrer Banden vorgenommen. Eine wirksame Bekämpfung dieses ausserordentlich verstärkten Bandenwesens war infolge der geringen zur Verfügung stehenden Kräfte nur ganz unvollkommen möglich."* NA T-315/1683, file 36509/5. Sich-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 6.5.43. Monatsbericht für die Zeit vom 1. bis 30.4.43, p. 1.

[8] NA T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 26.5.43. Betr.: Bandenlage im Divisionsbereich für die Zeit vom 26. April - 25. Mai 1943, p. 1.

[9] Ibid..

[10] Source: NA T-315/1682, file 36509/4; NA T-315/1683, file 36509/5. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia Monatsberichte, Februar – Juni 1943.

[11] NA T-315/1683, file 36509/5. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 11.6.43. Betr.: Bandenlage im Divisions-Bereich/Rückführung abgegebener Bataillone, pp. 3-4.

[12] NA T-315/1683, file 36509/5. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 7.6.43. Monatsbericht für die Zeit vom 1. bis 31. Mai 1943, p. 5.

[13] RH 26-221/53. Oberl. Andre, 8.4.43. Bericht über die Kontrolle der Dg VII im Abschnitt Dowsk-Tsecherikoof am 7.4.43.

[14] Translated from: *"Den Eisenbahnstreifen ist es in einer großen Anzahl von Fällen gelungen, feindliche Minenlegertrupps im Feuerkampf zu vertreiben. Bei diesen Feuerkämpfen waren die Banditen stets, die eigenen Streifen nie, mit MPs ausgerüstet. Daraus erklärt sich auch, daß Feindverluste nicht festgestellt wurden, obwohl die Gefechte oft auf kurze u kürzeste Entfernung geführt worden sind. In der Dunkelheit und infolge des Überraschungsmomentes kommt der Gewehrträger kaum zur Abgabe eines zweiten Schusses. Das Regt weist hiermit auch auf die psychologischen Rückwirkungen hinsichtlich der Einstellung der Wehrmachtsangehörigen hin."* NA T-315/1684, file 36509/9. SR 45, 31.5.43. Betr.: Bewaffnung der Sich. Truppen. The direness of the regiment's own weaponry relative to that of the partisans may have been somewhat exaggerated.

Such a poor state of equipment on the part of the German troops says yet more about the disparity in German and "partisan" casualties, and the proportion of "partisan" dead who were actually civilians.

[15] NA T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 7.3.43. Betr.: Bandenlage im Divisions-Bereich, Februar 1943, p. 1.

[16] NA T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic. Bandenlage im Divisions-Bereich, März 1943, p. 1.

[17] NA T-315/1684, file 36509/8. Der Kommandant der Feldkommandantur 528 (V) Abt. Ia, 11.5.43.

[18] NA T-315/1684, file 36509/9. Meldung, 11.6.43. In the spring of 1943 all police regiments were redesignated SS police regiments.

[19] NA T-315/1683, file 36509/5. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 6.7.43. Monatsbericht für die Zeit vom 1. bis 30. Juni 1943, pp. 5-6. In the case of Feldkommandantur Gomel this description applied only to the west of its area.

[20] NA T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 4.3.43. Monatsbericht, Februar 1943, p. 2.

[21] NA T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 19.11.43. Tätigkeitsbericht des Ic vom 1.1. bis 31.8.43, p. 7.

[22] See above, p. 131.

[23] NA T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 2.2.43. Betr.: Monatsbericht für die Zeit vom 1.1. - 31.1.43; ibid., Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 30.1.43. Betr.: Politische Überwachung der Bevölkerung, p. 1.

[24] NA T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 19.11.43. Tätigkeitsbericht, 1.1.-31.8.43, p. 7.

[25] NA T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 20.2.43. Betr.: Italienische 8. Armee im Bereich der Division; Gruppe Geheime Feldpolizei 729, 23.2.43. Betr.: Zersetzende Verhalten italienischer Soldaten. Bericht.

[26] Translated from: *"Die in der verflossenen Zeit seitens der Sowjet-Truppen erzielten Erfolge und die zunehmende Bandentätigkeit im rückwärtigen Gebiete, aufgebauscht und geschickt von der Feindpropaganda ausgenützt, hat in der russ. Bevölkerung den Glauben an den Sieg der deutschen Waffen fast völlig zerstört."* NA T-315/1687, 36509/24. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 30.4.43. Betr.: Politische Überwachung der Bevölkerung, p. 1.

[27] Translated from: *"Wo die Macht steht, da ist auch der Glaube."* BA-MA, RW 31/849. WiKo 212 (Mogilew), 18.5.43. "Lage- und Tätigkeitsbericht Nr 17, Gesamtüberblick".

[28] NA T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 8.2.43. Betr.: Bandenlage im Divisions-Bereich im Monat Januar 1943, p. 1.

[29] Translated from: *"In allen Dörfern war die Stimmung der Bevölkerung gut. Die Banditen wurden überall gut aufgenommen und verpflegt. Soweit ich feststellen konnte, wurde alles freiwillig und ohne Anwendung von Zwang gegeben. Die Banditen führten 2 Akkordeons mit sich, auf denen bei jeder Rast in den Dörfern gespielt wurde und die Bevölkerung tanzt dazu. Auch bei der Unterhaltung der Banditen mit der Bevölkerung konnte ich keine Einschüchterung der Dorfbewohner bemerken. Die Stimmung der Banditen selbst schien außerordentlich gut zu sein. Sie tanzten zu der Harmonikamusik und ich musste zusehen."* NA T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic 8.6.43. Betr.: Vernehmung des Ogfr. Paul Meynecken von der Propaganda-Staffel Gomel, der aus Banditengefangenschaft befreit wurde.

This statement can be judged reliable, for a former German prisoner of the partisans can hardly have had anything to gain by painting his former captors in an excessively rosy light.

[30] NA T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Prop Abt. W Staffel Gomel, 20.2.43. Betr.: Monatsbericht vom 20.1.43 - 20.2.43, p. 1.

[31] NA T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic. Monatsbericht, Februar 1943, p. 2.

[32] NA T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Prop Abt. W Staffel Gomel, 21.3.43. Betr.: Monatsbericht vom 20.2. bis 20.3.43, pp. 1-2.

[33] NA T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Prop Abt. W Staffel Gomel, 20.4.43. Betr.: Monatsbericht vom 20.3. bis 20.4.43, p. 1.

[34] NA T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 2.6.43. Betr.: Beitrag zu Monatsbericht 221. Sich-Division Ia für die Zeit vom 1. bis 31. Mai 1943, p. 2.

[35] Translated from: *"Die Jugend ist deshalb der Feindpropaganda besonders zugänglich, weil sie sich seines Lebensziel beraubt sieht."* NA T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 31.5.43. Betr.: Politische Überwachung der Bevölkerung, p. 2. NA T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Prop Abt. W Staffel Gomel, 21.3.43. Betr.: Monatsbericht vom 20.2. bis 20.3.43, pp. 1-2.

[36] Translated from: *"Der Stand der allgemeinen Befriedung hat sich weiter im Bereich der Gruppe La verschlechtert. Im Gebiet Bobruisk sind nur noch 14% der Wolloste und im Gebiet Gomel und Klinzy nur noch 37% der Wolloste befriedet. Nachts ist das gesamte Gebiet der Gruppe La offenes Operationsgebiet der Bolschewisten. Aus allen Wäldern flammen Feuerzeichen und Raketen steigen zum Himmel, die den roten Flugzeugen den Weg weisen."* NA T-77/1147, file WiID/857. WiKo 210 (Klinzy), Gruppe Landwirtschaft, 11.7.43. Kriegstagebuch der Gruppe La Klinzy. Überblick in der Zeit vom 1.4. bis 1.7.43, p. 1. *Wolloste* were administrative units roughly equivalent to a parish.

[37] Translated from: *"Im Gebiet des Wi Kdo Klinzy hat sich der Stand der Befriedung weiter verschlechtert.*

Im Gebiet Bobruisk werden	*60%*
Im Gebiet Gomel	*38%*
Im Gebiet Klinzy	*42% der Wolloste nicht bearbeitet.*

...Banden von vielen Hundert Personen, oft sogar über 1000 durchstreifen den Bereich, lähmen jede wirtschaftliche Betätigung und zerstören Molkereien, MTS-Stationen und Staatsgüter." NA T-77/1099, file WiID/368. WiIn Mitte Stab Abt. I/Id, 4.2.43. Lagebericht Nr 26, p. 5. It needs to be remembered that these reports may have exaggerated economic problems somewhat.

[38] BA-MA, RH 26-221/51b. RHGeb. Mitte Quartiermiester, 25.4.43. Besondere Anordnungen für die Versorgung.

[39] According to the divisional KTB (which admittedly kept a far from complete record) the number of successful partisan attacks on the stretches of railway which bestraddled the 45th's jurisdiction rose from two in March to ten in April. By contrast, attacks in the 930th Grenadier Regiment's jurisdiction fell from ten in March to six in April. NA T-315/1682, file 36509/1. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 1.3.-30.4.43. KTB, 1.1.-1.6.43.

[40] See above, pp. 150-1, 166-72.

[41] NA T-315/1685, file 36509/13. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 6.4.43. Betr.: Unternehmen "Osterhase", p. 2.

[42] See above, p. 111.

[43] See above, Table 6, p. 114.

[44] NA T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 3.5.43. Monatsbericht, 1.-30.4.43, p. 2.

[45] NA T-315/1682, file 36509/4. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 11.3.43. Betr.: Sicherung des Divisions-Bereiches.

[46] NA T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 26.6.43. Betr.: Propagandistische Betreuung der Arbeitertransporte.

[47] NA T-315/1687 file 36509/24. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 2.6.43. Betr.: Beitrag zu Monatsbericht 221. Sich-Division Ia für die Zeit vom 1. bis 31. Mai 1943, p. 1.

[48] NA T-315/1687, file 36509/27. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ib, 29.6.43. Besondere Anordnungen für die Versorgung Nr. 42/43.

[49] NA T-315/1687, file 36509/25. Kriegsrangliste sämtlicher Offiziere und Beamten im Offizierrang des Stabes Sicherungs-Division 221, 1.1.-31.8.43, p. 1.

[50] NA T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 2.6.43. Betr.: Beitrag zum Monatsbericht 221. Sich-Division Ia für die Zeit vom 1. bis 31. Mai 1943, p. 1.

[51] NA T-315, Roll 1586. 203. Sich.-Div. Abt. VII / Mil Verw, 25.2.43. Betr.: Lagebericht für Februar 1943.

[52] See above, p. 110.

[53] NA T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 30.6.43. Betr.: Politische Überwachung der Bevölkerung, p. 2. On other pleas by officers for a more realistic approach to propaganda, see: Förster, J., "Rußlandbild", pp. 157-60.

[54] Translated from: *"Der ungeheure moralische Kredit, den die deutsche Wehrmacht bei ihrem Einzuge besaß, ist infolge der jahrelangen falschen Einstellung gegenüber der Russen (insbesondere des Nicht-Trennens von Bolschewist und Russe) fast völlig geschwunden, der Glaube an den deutschen Sieg zerstört."* NA T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 31.5.43. Betr.: Politische Überwachung der Bevölkerung, p. 2.

[55] Translated from: *"Division Abt. VII veranlaßt Umsiedlung der brauchbaren Bevölkerungsteile in möglichst weit vom Heimatgebiet abgesetzte Räume und für Überführung der unzuverlässigen Elementen in Arbeitslager."* NA T-315/1686, file 36509/17. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 20.6.43. Betr.: Unternehmen Sommerfest, p. 2.

[56] Christian Gerlach cites German Army and SS officers who claimed that operations were indeed conducted with a view to distinguishing between "innocent" and "guilty", but then argues that these claims were not credible. He cites examples of operations where the onus was on proving innocence not guilt, with the result that vast numbers of civilians were killed. Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*, p. 863.

[57] Translated from: *"Der Erfassungsstab trat in der vorgesehenen Form nicht in Tätigkeit, weil es sich bei keinen der überpreuften Ortschaften um ausgesprochene Banditendörfer handelte, sondern lediglich einzelne Familien Banditenhelfer waren.....Es stellte sich heraus, daß ein großer Teil der überprüften Dörfer seit Monaten, in einem Fall sogar seit einem Jahr nicht besucht waren."* NA T-315/1687, file 36509/27. Sich.-Rgt. 930 Abt. Ib, 10.7.43. Erfahrungsbericht über Erfassung u. Evakuierung beim Unternehmen Sommerfest.

[58] NA T-315/1687, file 36509/27. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ib/Ic, 21.6.43. Betr.: Befriedung des Raumes entlang der FK-Straße Gomel-Dowsk.

[59] NA T-315/1586, file 29186/3. 203. Sich.-Div. Abt. VII. Lagebericht, März 1943, pp. 2-3.

[60] Translated from: *"Der Gebietslandwirt Bobruisk, befragt, hat erklärt, daß noch erhebliche Arbeitsreserven in den Landgemeinden brachliegen, die nur als unnütze Esser angesehen werden können. Der Führer hat die*

Erfassung der Arbeitskräfte aus dem Ostraum für den Arbeitseinsatz im Reich als kriegsentscheidend bezeichnet. In dem deutschen Machtbereich unterworfenen europäischen Gebiet und mehr oder weniger noch darüber hinaus werden heute die letzteren verfügbaren Arbeitskräfte mobilisiert, und zwar, wo es nicht anders geht, auch unter Zwang. Dies gilt insbesondere für das Reich selbst, wo auch unsere Frauen weitgehend zu schwerer körperlicher Arbeit in Rüstungs- und anderen Betrieben eingesetzt werden. Angesichts dieser Lage erscheint es nicht angängig, die russische Bevölkerung, die es nicht anders gewohnt ist, als in großem Ausmaße durch Zwang an die Arbeit gebracht zu werden, zu verschonen. Es sollte im Gegenteil, wenn alle anderen Mittel und Wege versagen, erforderlichenfalls der härteste Zwang aufgeobten werden." NA T-315/1586, file 29186/3. 203. Sich.-Div. Abt. VII. Lagebericht, April 1943, pp. 12-13.

CHAPTER 11: THE GOMEL REGION (4)

Summer 1943 saw the ruthlessness of the 221st Security Division intensify as its economic and security situation deteriorated even more rapidly than before. As before, however, the road to ruthlessness remained a "twisted path", in which the perceptions of individual officers still played an important role in the form and degree of brutality which resulted. This final empirical chapter analyses the processes which unfolded at the 221st's divisional level during the summer of 1943 and also among its subordinate units from February of that year.

11.1. The division-level picture: the worsening situation, summer 1943

The situation which the 221st Security Division faced during the summer of 1943 was one which was likely to harden the approach to anti-partisan warfare at divisional level even further. It was also the kind of situation likely to lead to serious contemplation of the kind of "dead zones" policy which featured increasingly in the German anti-partisan effort of 1943.

The pitiless logic of the dead zones concept, borne of rising partisan activity, economic disruption and the waning German ability to hold on to rear area territory, and envisioning the cultivation of select parts of rear area territory and the corresponding devastation of others,[1] seems increasingly to have been recognised within the 221st Security Division that summer. Though there appears to have been no blanket directive ordering a shift to such a policy, there are clear signs from June onwards that the division was pursuing it. In addition to worsening economic and security circumstances, a further force likely to have hardened attitudes was growing desperation borne of the realisation that Germany was losing the war.

11.1.1. The deteriorating economic and security situation

A report of 11th June 1943 emphasised the 221st's impotence, with a shortfall of five battalions since February, in the face of the snowballing partisan activity in its jurisdiction.[2] The division was not entirely powerless; during June for example it managed to prevent an increase in the number of succesful rail attacks.[3] Successes such as these seem however to have been bought at an increasingly high price, with the troops guarding the railways driven again to the limits of endurance in terms of guard duty and the other rigours of passive security. This was highlighted in a divisional report of 6th July, which also predicted that further deterioration was just around the corner.[4] The worst-affected unit was Security Battalion 242,[5] but the division also made clear that, by now, that battalion's case probably was not exceptional:

> *"Whilst the average age of other security regiments many not be so high, or the signs of strain clear, as they are with Security Battalion 242, the sudden loss of a strongpoint is always possible under current conditions. Everything boils down to the fact that....there is no prospect of reinforcement. This means firstly that the demands* (on the division) *are always increasing, and secondly that there is often no possibility of leave."*[6]

No less depressing for the division was the economic situation. With the further spread of partisan activity in May, WiKo Klinzy's assessment became more pessimistic than ever. It identified the most endangered areas as Tschetschersk, Buda-Koschelewskaja and Klimow; in Klimow in particular, reports of plunder and murder were coming in daily.[7] At the end of May the 221st itself reported on the decisive effect which increasing partisan activity was having upon agriculture in the area: *"The agricultural population is not meeting its quotas. This however is hardly surprising in view of bandit activity."*[8] Moreover, bombing raids were killing workers, unsettling the population and causing production to fall further.[9]

Even more immediately worrying for the division was the supply of its own troops. The miserable state of rations being endured in the 183rd Security Regiment's jurisdiction was a grim indication of how far conditions might deteriorate on this particular front.[10] The operations section also reported that supply points could now only be defended against the partisans if they lay inside the major towns, and that partisan activity in many areas had led to a fall in the collection of agricultural products and taxes.[11] July saw both a rising incidence in partisan attacks on economic installations, and an apparent recognition by the 221st of the true extent of the danger posed by those areas which effectively had had to be abandoned to the partisans:

> *"In the farthest corner of the extensive bandit territory around Korma, Krassnopolje and Tschetschersk, the farmers are forced under threat of reprisal to thresh grain immediately after harvest, and hand nearly all of it over at the partisan airfield in Ossinowka. The bandits therefore are not just restricting themselves to destroying economic concerns through attack and sabotage; increasingly, they are trying to deprive the occupying troops of the crops. Despite our own troops' efforts, the transportation of food supplies has been disrupted by strong and repeated bandit attacks. Bandit-ruled territory has been progressively isolated from neighbouring areas, and the movement of civilians within it restricted with draconian methods, with the result that whole tracts of the divisional area have been cut off. Our own propaganda effort has been largely expelled from such areas. These areas constitute a severe danger, because enemy forces, including airborne troops, are able to gather within them."*[12]

Taken together, it would seem that the economic and security situation was such that retrenchment by the 221st to cultivate select areas and simply devastate the rest was becoming all but inevitable. It was made even more so by the division's continuing failure in the battle for the population's hearts and minds.

11.1.2. Hearts and minds: the battle lost

During the summer of 1943 the partisan effort to secure the population for the Soviet cause gathered further momentum, aided by disillusionment with German occupation policy and perhaps above all by the growing realisation that the Germans were losing the war. July and August 1943 in fact saw the 221st Security Division's propaganda effort assume its most comprehensive form yet. In July the *Propaganda-Staffel* Gomel distributed 178 000 newspapers and magazines, 60 050 brochures, 250 000 placards and 813 700 leaflets. School

and youth propaganda were supplied by the school newspaper *Skolnik* and the teachers' journal *Schule und Erziehung*, and picture books were provided for kindergartens.[13] Despite this intensified effort, however, the portents of ultimate failure were stronger than ever.

From the intelligence section's reports, it appears that the failure of the campaign was felt across all areas in the division's jurisdiction, whether they were directly endangered by the partisans or not. A sure sign was the extremely low voluntary participation in the "celebrations" for the "day of liberation" of 22nd June, the second anniversary of the German invasion; the overwhelming sentiment among the population was that it should be declared a day of mourning instead.[14] It is perhaps unsurprising that the cause of the Vlasov Army fell completely flat in the division's area; by June the intelligence section reported that six months of pro-Vlasov propaganda had scarcely made an impression upon the population.[15] In July and August 1943, in the wake of the German defeat at Kursk and the big Soviet offensives that followed it, the partisan rumour mill again went into overdrive, propelling the population even more inexorably in the direction of the Soviet cause.[16]

Whilst the 221st put particular effort into propagandising the *Ostarbeiter*, reflecting similar efforts across the entire area under Army Group Centre, it was here that winning over hearts and minds was proving a particularly thankless task. The wholesale recruitment of those born in 1925 and 1926 led to the setting up of transit camps in the area of every *Ortskommandantur*, in which films about life and work in Germany and other forms of *Ostarbeiter* propaganda were presented.[17] On 28th July, in a joint directive composed by the quartermaster's, intelligence and administrative sections, the intelligence section's two subordinate *Propaganda-Staffeln* were informed of their main task for the next six weeks:

> *"The population needs particularly to be made to understand that it cannot stand idly by, but must make its contribution to the building of the new Europe....It must also be made to see that life in Germany is good to the Russian worker, and that the* Arbeitseinsatz *is only for a limited period."*[18]

These efforts were entirely in vain, however; the intelligence section later reported that:

> *"The population's resistance* (to *Arbeitseinsatz*) *was so strong that the recruitment in July 1943 of those born in 1925/6 was a total failure in most areas of the division's jurisdiction. This was despite every conceivable propaganda effort by the division itself."*[19]

Many, it was reported, had continued to desert to the partisans rather than face *Arbeitseinsatz*. In June the division's overall ability to propagandise the population was further compromised by the increasingly dire state of affairs at the *Propaganda-Staffel* in Gomel. The overall judgement was grim: "*In its current state, this unit is unworthy of the title* "Propaganda-Staffel"."[20] The *Propaganda-Staffel* in Klinzy too did not escape disruption - it was bombed during June, resulting in the destruction of much propaganda material.[21] The 221st was also losing the battle to control desertion from the OD and *Ost-Truppen* units in its jurisdiction, particularly in those areas where partisan propaganda was especially active.[22] The partisans

were making a more strenuous effort than ever to re-educate captured members of the OD, the *Ost-Bataillone*, and the native civilian administration:

> *"Hand-written, printed leaflets targeting the OD and other native units have been found. They encourage the reader to desert with his weapon, appeal to his national honour and also employ the standard scare tactics depicting the grisly revenge which the already advancing Red Army will inflict upon all OD men. There is particular emphasis on "fantasy totals" of German dead, as well as the names of OD deserters who are praised for having enticed more of their comrades to desert with their weapons. Of note were a number of personal hand-written letters by bandit chiefs to mayors and other civilians, threatening them with the direst consequences if they continued working for the Germans. Leaflet raids and distribution have been reported in all* rayons*; lately they are being distributed in the market places."*[23]

In response the division's own efforts grew increasingly desperate. The operations section tried bribery; on 6th July it announced:

> *"In order to give some substance to the constant announcements of a reward system for the OD, a representative of Section VII is to be responsible in every larger operation for ensuring that the belongings of bandits and bandit accomplices are secured for distribution to the OD."*[24]

Already in one operation, which had taken place in June, the principle of "rewarding" both OD men and *starosten* with requisitions had been introduced.[25] By August, however, the sheer magnitude of the OD problem had prevented the 221st from solving it. A report by the operations section dated 22nd August judged that, despite all the division's efforts, the OD was now far less reliable than it had been before.[26] As partisan influence spread further, meanwhile, German-appointed native administrators were covertly transferring their allegiance to the partisans in ever-greater numbers; official directives were only being followed as long as the means were there to oversee them - a state of affairs that was becoming increasingly rare.[27]

By August partisan propaganda was achieving ever-greater effectiveness. *"The propaganda is skilful and up-to-date, and exploits all the latest developments as far as it can,"* reported the intelligence section.[28] Even in villages still ill-disposed toward the partisans, the division's troops themselves could by now expect no help. This was clear to the third battalion of the 930th Grenadier Regiment, which on 10th August reported that:

> *"The population is in two minds about the troops. On the one hand they know they have nothing to fear from German soldiers; on the other, heavy propaganda activity by the bandits arouses great distrust of the troops, especially in those areas which have felt little of our presence. The fear of being named a traitor by one's neighbour and turned over to the partisans is hindering people from giving precise statements about bandit movements. It was also clear that of all the* starosten *whom we came across, none could name or wanted to name anybody suspected of helping the partisans. It is obvious from this that no* starost *feels that his life is safe."*[29]

Just as the growing ineffectiveness of the 221st Security division's hearts and minds campaign had since the beginning of 1943 led elements at divisional level increasingly to eschew constructive efforts in favour of more ruthless ones, its ever more obvious failure in this area

during the summer of 1943 was likely to stoke a yet harsher approach to the anti-partisan effort. There was one other factor, meanwhile, which invested a "dead zones" policy with even more appeal.

11.1.3. The drive for *Ostarbeiter*

By late June 1943, WiKo Klinzy's agricultural section saw a particularly pressing need for intensified procurement of labour.[30] Its report, as well as bemoaning the fleeting nature of the 221st's anti-partisan successes of the spring, therefore pushed for a yet more economically-driven anti-partisan effort with labour procurement a top priority:

> *"The various military operations have brought no relief whatsoever, and German influence continues to disintegrate. Forced labour recruitment is having an extremely bad propaganda effect. It would be better to carry out labour recruitment in unpacified areas, so as to show the peaceful areas that they may work under German protection."*[31]

The ante was upped by a centrally-issued directive of 21st July. From 1st August, it ordered, the great majority of Army Group Centre's jurisdiction - both the Army Group Rear Area and the Army Rear Areas - was to be combed each and every week for an additional 3 800 workers. This quota must be met under any and all circumstances, and no misplaced notions of humanity must be allowed to interfere. All those born in 1925, except those already serving in the OD or as *Hiwis*, were to be procured. Those of working age gathered up in the course of anti-partisan operations were to be sent to the Reich as a matter of course, and accommodated and transported separately from the other *Ostarbeiter*.[32] This directive was part of a Reich-wide initiative to procure more labour from the East, which had been initiated earlier in July by Fritz Sauckel, the Reich Minister for Labour.[33]

The overall worsening in the economic and security situation and the failure of constructive engagement were thus joined by a need for renewed labour recruitment to create a cruel logic in favour of a "dead zones" policy. A fourth force which may have been at work was growing desperation in response to the realisation that Germany was clearly losing the war. The defeat at Kursk in July 1943 and the major Soviet offensives which followed it had probably brought home the increasing likelihood of Germany's eventual crushing defeat with particular force. All told, there were abundant conditions for altogether harsher conduct during the summer of 1943.

11.2. The new approach: "dead zones" and more ruthlessness

11.2.1. The "press gang" operations, June - July 1943

The decision to restrict its hold only to parts of its jurisdiction was not the only factor which allowed the 221st to release troops to devastate the rest; the division was further helped by the arrival of new Hungarian forces in its area at the beginning of July.[34] It was partly in anticipation of this that on 25th June the division announced an *Aktivierung der*

Bandenbekämpfung (galvanising of the bandit war), consisting of short-term active operations to be carried out if necessary at the temporary expense of passive security.[35]

Two things marked all these operations: the callous yet unsurprising destruction of large numbers of villages, and the initially more surprising apparent lack of partisans killed by the division's troops.[36] The two were in fact consistent with the logic of dead zones, especially when the need for labour was particularly strong; after all, a dead workforce was no use to anybody. Indeed, this was apparent in the first large-scale operation in Byelorussia whose explicit aim seems to have been the creation of such a zone. Operation *Hermann*, carried out mainly by SS units between mid-July and mid-August 1943, saw a horrendous death toll of over 4 000 people, but also the procurement of 9 065 men, 7 701 women and 4 178 children, for labour either in the Reich itself or in German-occupied Russia.[37]

With WiKo Klinzy's agricultural section and later Army Group Centre itself urging heightened priority for labour procurement, then, it can be assumed that the individual officers in charge of the 221st's operations were this time particularly aware of the need to "rein in" the excesses of their troops. The 25th June directive, which covered several envisaged operations, ordered requisition of crops and livestock up to quota level, evacuation and burning of "villages serving as bandit bases", the seizure of able-bodied men for *Arbeitseinsatz*, and a propaganda effort to "explain and justify" the measures to the population and entice forced partisan recruits to desert.[38] In other words, a uniform and systematic approach was to be pursued, with no room for unrestricted brutality by the troops. On 4th July, for example, the division ordered the 183rd Security Regiment: *"Evacuation, reprisals and destruction of villages only with division's authorisation."*[39] It would appear at first sight, then, not only that the conduct of those operations was driven by economics, but also that, in this case, the economic imperative actually countered the tendency to murderous brutality.[40] In addition, the low number of partisans recorded as killed by the division's troops themselves during July and August suggests that the division was trying to adhere to the OKH directive of 1st July, which had stipulated that all captured partisans be treated as POWs.[41]

In other senses, however, economics fuelled more merciless conduct. For one thing, it can be assumed that a great many "suspect" partisans or partisan accomplices fell into the hands of the GFP or SD, at whose hands death may well have awaited them.[42] As has been seen, however, such was the growing power of the partisans by this stage that a huge portion of the population could scarcely avoid helping them in some respect. Thus, whilst there is an absence of the kind of directives which, like those issued by *Ostheer* units in the Witebsk-Polotsk operations of early 1943, seem to have advocated the murder of men, women and children by other agencies,[43] the 221st's operations of summer 1943 almost certainly resulted in considerable loss of civilian life. Meanwhile, though the death toll inflicted by the 221st's

troops themselves might have been negligible, the burning of villages by the troops was not. WiKo Klinzy reported that, between 1st and 11th July,

> "Rayon *Mglin has been largely evacuated and burned to the ground. Extensive preparations need making for the crops there to be gathered during the next few weeks....likewise in* Rayon *Slinka twelve villages have been burnt down in the course of a military operation."*[44]

Among other things, the mass burning of villages facilitated a more ruthless level of requisitioning and, indeed, the 221st itself had a considerable incentive to ensure that this was the case; the need to keep the OD sweet demanded it. The orders for Operation *Sommerfest*, for example, directed that some of the requisitions should be distributed among deserving *starosten* and OD men.[45]

The cruelty of these operations needs therefore to be stressed again. Attempting to "explain and justify" the measures enacted was an almost perverse way of trying somehow to compensate for mass requisitioning, the wholesale destruction of villages, the evacuation, uprooting and effective enslavement of much of the population and the liquidation of the rest.

That the 221st's dead zones policy was adopted primarily in response to the division's particular situation, and not as the result of higher-level pressure, is also suggested by the fact that most of the devastation reported by WiKo Klinzy took place before Hitler's order of 10th July to evacuate the "bandit areas" of the northern Ukraine and central Russia.[46] Moreover, the ruthlessness which was coming to characterise the divisional level generally was becoming sufficiently strong to permeate the one-time stronghold of constructive engagement, the intelligence section.

11.2.2. The intelligence section: the new mood

There were signs, during the summer of 1943, that the ruthlessness which was infecting the 221st's divisional levels was now affecting the intelligence section also. For one thing there was now support for harsh anti-partisan measures, such as the evacuation of villages; this is made clear by Captain Meyer's endorsement of such methods in July 1943:

> *"Evacuating villages in the bandit areas has a detrimental effect upon the bandits. It prevents the bandits from filling their ranks with the inhabitants. The supply of food, which came primarily from the inhabitants of the evacuated villages, is no longer possible. When the bandits are prevented from harvesting and exploiting the best land, this affects their supply very badly. The bandits' mood is greatly impaired..."*[47]

By summer 1943, then, it seems that the 221st's situation had deteriorated so drastically that Captain Meyer himself had grown markedly harsher in his outlook. The process was more complicated, however, than simply a deteriorating situation. This becomes clearer in considering the injection of ideology into the propaganda which was distributed to the population.

Whilst the intelligence section's activity report for June had railed against the inadequacy of the rallying cry *"Kampf gegen den Bolschewismus"* for the population,[48] it was exactly this tired

kind of claptrap to which Captain Meyer reverted in his attempts during July to indoctrinate press-ganged *Ostarbeiter*: *"Jewish-Bolshevik and alien elements are destroying your homes, stealing your livestock and property and pressing your husbands and sons into bandit service, where they will be killed in pointless bloody undertakings."*[49] A supplement to the intelligence section's report for the period January to August 1943, which was compiled in November, trotted out the same sentiments:

> *"The Jews and Bolsheviks are mercilessly leading millions of your brothers, fathers and sons to certain death, in order to save their own miserable skins. Russian lives and Russian blood count for as little now as they did before the war. So long as life is treating him well, the Jew-Bolshevik is unmoved by the worst sufferings of the people."*[50]

There was in fact widespread use of ideologically-coloured material to secure the hearts and minds of those sections of the population which during 1943 and 1944 were still deemed sufficiently pro-German to be spared destruction. This seems to have been especially the case with the development of the *Wehrdorf* concept, which saw the principle of 'divide and rule" reach its furthest extension.[51] Yet ideological propagandising of *Wehrdorf* inhabitants seems to have been almost pointless for, as SS General von Gottberg was to point out, the civilians who volunteered to live in *Wehrdörfer* were for the most part driven by the desire for material advantage.[52] In the case of the 221st during the summer of 1943, moreover, the intelligence section's new diet of ideology was being fed not to pro-German *Wehrdorf* inhabitants but to press-ganged *Ostarbeiter* and to a population which, judging from the experiences of the summer, predominantly was not pro-German even in those areas of the 221st's jurisdiction which could still to some extent be administered and exploited.[53] Aside from the highly unlikely event of a wave of pro-German and anti-Bolshevik feeling having swept the population by November, it would seem that there was therefore little to be gained from injecting a heavier dose of ideology into propaganda for the population. That Captain Meyer did so, then, is a phenomenon which demands further explanation.

Meyer may in fact have continued to see the value of cultivating the population. In sales terms, however, his attempt to market the tangible benefits of German occupation had been so at odds with reality that the vast majority of the population clearly was no longer buying it. In the absence of any better ideas, Meyer may simply have been engaged in a desperate attempt to win back the hearts and minds of the population by whatever means. Under such desperate circumstances, it is perhaps not surprising that the means he chose were ones which resonated with himself personally - unreconstructed anti-Bolshevism and anti-Semitism - and clouded his judgement as to how effective they were likely to be. It is also possible that Meyer had become sufficiently disillusioned by constructive engagement to allow other elements of the 221st Security Division some opportunity to use the intelligence section as a channel for their own more ruthless outlook. On a more personal level, meanwhile, the captain's new-found enthusiasm for beating the ideological drum for the first time since 1941 may well have been

reinforced by the turning tide of war. In this situation, sheer desperation might bring ideological sentiments increasingly to the boil.[54] Desperation was also reflected across the German Army as a whole during 1943 in its intensified drive to indoctrinate the troops, an effort in which the 221st's intelligence section also took part.[55]

If then one can still speak of there having been a balance between "hawkishness" and "doveishness" at the 221st's divisional level during the summer of 1943, it seems to have been one which had clearly shifted in favour of the former. The increasingly intractable difficulties in the 221st's jurisdiction, in both the security and economic spheres, had combined with the increasingly obvious failure of the hearts and minds campaign to create the kind of situation in which growing desperation had caused officers increasingly to eschew constructive engagement. Increasingly they favoured an approach which, whilst trying to adhere to the measured OKH directive of July concerning partisan prisoners, was in many ways harsher than that which they had pursued before.

Even at this stage, however, the perceptions of individual officers at divisional level still had an important role to play. Nowhere is this clearer than in comparing the 221st Security Division to another unit which was operating in the same geographical area.

11.3. The personal dimension at divisional level: the clash with the Hungarians, July 1943

Just as the 221st Security Division had clashed with official policy over the deserter issue in December 1942,[56] so it found itself courting controversy in July 1943 over *Csobo*, an anti-partisan operation conducted by Hungarian VIII Corps in the 221st's jurisdiction south of Nowosybkoff.

On 2nd July the 221st's operations section and its quartermaster's section issued a joint order still adhering to the principle of judging the "reliability" of villages on their economic worth, and sparing or destroying them accordingly. In those villages to be spared, any requisitions were to be carried out only up to quota level. Quickly, however, the order was changed to cover *all* villages.[57] In the wake of this change, the 221st's operations section contacted the division's liaison officer with Hungarian VIII Corps:

> *"The division requests that the Hungarian troops refrain from any evacuation, destruction of villages, or reprisal action in the course of the operations. The division wishes to point out that general burning of villages and measures directed against the population are strictly forbidden by order of the army group commander."*[58]

This was not the end of the affair, however; after the operation, the Hungarian commander complained directly to Army Group Centre Rear Area command about what he perceived as the 221st's overly soft attitude:

> *"In the course of* Csaba (sic) *it has been necessary to annihilate entire villages within the operational area, and resettle their inhabitants. From communication*

> *with the 221st Security Division it has become clear, however, that the divisional command, as the senior field command, is opposed to this policy. I must urgently emphasise that only the most radical pursuit of this policy will prevent the partisans and inhabitants from pouring back in a very short space of time and polluting the area once more."*[59]

If, as seems clear, the 221st was itself adhering to a "dead zones" policy, why then did the Hungarian commander condemn the division as soft? A possible answer is that, whilst the 221st now fully accepted the "dead zone" principle, it may well have differed with the Hungarians over how far to apply it. It is possible that *Csobo* took place in an area which the 221st deemed as being still not beyond salvation; more significantly, it is equally possible that, whilst the 221st was now prepared to sanction the widespread destruction of villages in certain areas, it may have preferred to be more discriminating between particular villages than the Hungarians.

Why did the two units adopt such different approaches? The harsher Hungarian stance may have been due partly to the fact that Hungarian units were if anything even more poorly equipped on the whole than were German units. Coping as they had to with a particularly inferior degree of fighting power, they are therefore likely to have favoured especially ruthless measures by way of compensating. Certainly, the particularly pitiful condition of many Hungarian units seems to have played a role in their brutal behaviour in the Army Group South Rear Area during 1942.[60] On the other hand, the 221st's fighting power, with all the hardships the division had undergone, is by this stage unlikely to have been a great deal better than that of the Hungarians. Certainly, such inferiority as there was in the Hungarians' fighting power is perhaps too small to explain fully the vast difference between what the 221st wanted from the operation, and the 900 deaths, mostly of non-combatants, which the Hungarians delivered. Moreover, the restrained approach of the 221st clashed not just with that of the Hungarians but also with that of one of its own subordinate units; a report by the third battalion of the 45th Security Regiment had earmarked 22 "bandit-friendly" villages for destruction in the course of *Csobo*.[61]

Here then the importance of individual perceptions is clear once more. Certainly the ruthless ideological outlook of Colonel Wiemann, the 45th Security Regiment's commander, and possibly also that of the Hungarians, seem to have led them to a conclusion very different to that of the 221st as to whether the area was to be either cultivated or devastated.

The fact that such different conclusions could be drawn by different units concerned with the same area therefore suggests that the 221st Security Division was possessed of an outlook which, though it had hardened in absolute terms, was still markedly more restrained than that of other units. The more sensible, constructive legacy of 1942 still seems to have enjoyed at least some currency. How though did the picture differ at the division's subordinate levels?

11.4. The lower-level picture, February - August 1943

As is shown in the table below, brutality was not uniform throughout the division's lower levels during 1943; clearly the "spirit of constructiveness" had not been extinguished, regardless of how far it was sustained by notions of sense, by particular "counter-values" or by an element, still, of careerism. Directives such as that issued by the OKH on 1st July or the OKW on 18th August may to some degree have countered the growing brutalisation which seems to have been engendered by the OKW directive of December 1942;[62] certainly this appears to have been the case to a certain extent at the level of the division itself.[63] As before, however, the 221st's onerous circumstances were felt particularly acutely at its lower levels, in ways which were more likely to stoke a ferocious response than they were at the divisional level. Further, the division's worsening situation - overstretch and isolation, falling fighting power, ever-rising partisan activity and an increasingly alarming supply situation - seems to have meant that the "threshold" for brutality was still lower than it had been during the summer of 1942. The particular mechanism through which increasingly difficult circumstances were translated into brutality remained a twisted affair nonetheless, shaped not least, again, by the dispositions of particular officers. This is demonstrated by three contrasting case studies drawn from Table 12.

Table 12: Atrocities perpetrated outside of major anti-partisan operations by the 221st Security Division's subordinate units, February - August 1943.[64]

Date	Unit	Details
14.2.	Unknown	Firefight. More than 30 partisans killed. German losses: none.
30.3.	OD	15 partisans killed near Tschetschersk in attack on OD strongpoint. OD losses: 2 dead.
18.4.	OD/Cossacks	Firefight. 25 partisans killed. OD losses: none. Captured weapons recorded: 19 rifles, 4 m.g.s, 2 revolvers.
22.4.	Unknown	At least 83 killed in attacks on strong- point near Nowosybkov. German losses: none. Captured weapons recorded: 1 rifle.
23.4.	Unknown	22 partisans killed near Lyssyje. German losses: 1 dead, 4 OD wounded.
5.5.	*Weißes Kommando* (OD)	15 partisans killed. OD losses: none.
17.5.	Security Battalion 242	Cleansing operation by battallion; c. 65 partisans killed, 120 – 150 wounded. German losses: none.
7.7.	Unknown	20 partisans killed in attack on strongpoint near Budischtsche. German losses: none.
29.8.	Security Battalion 242	Battallion attacked on road whilst withdrawing. 150 partisans killed or wounded. German losses: 15 dead, 13 wounded and 9 missing.
30.8.	*Weißes Kommando* (OD)	Firefight. 17 partisans killed. OD losses: 1 dead.

11.4.1. Security Battalion 242

Security Battalion 242 was responsible on two occasions, 17th May and 29th August, for the apparent massacre of large numbers of non-combatants. The situation which the battalion faced

was, even by the normal standards of the conditions endured by the 221st's subordinate units, an appalling one. Whilst this does not excuse the battalion's excesses, it does suggest that the unit was pushed to such excess without needing encouragement from a commanding officer who had already been particularly brutalised by his previous life experiences.

Security Battalion 242 was subordinate to the 183rd Security Regiment, whose jurisdiction comprised the north-western corner of the 221st Security Division's area. This area contained none of the major rail routes which criss-crossed the divisional area and its partisans were less active than those elsewhere. Consequently the area was far down the list of the 221st's priorities; responsibility for it was assigned to a single battalion, and Security Battalion 242 was the unlucky unit. The battalion was consistently neglected in terms of reinforcements, rations and equipment, and its isolated units therefore seem to have been particularly incapable of preventing the partisans from tightening their grip on the area and diminishing the German Army's standing in the eyes of the population.[65]

The wretched state of impotence and fear to which the battalion was reduced is vividly described in a series of miserable reports despatched to divisional command. By 10th May, a week before the first massacre which the battalion's troops perpetrated, it was reported that civilian labourers were no longer turning up to help deforest the area on either side of the railway tracks; instead, the Germans and the OD were virtually having to drag them there. A day earlier, German sentries had been murdered on duty. The OD itself, meanwhile, was growing increasingly disobedient and untrustworthy. One occasion on which this was clear was the killing of Corporal Nickel, of the battalion's third company, on the night of 13th/14th June. Nickel was inspecting the OD barracks in Janowka when the building suddenly came under attack from the partisans. To the third company, it was clear that the attack had taken place with the connivance of OD men.[66] The most telling sign of this was that Nickel, an unpopular figure with the OD men, had been shot in the back.

The fear engendered by such a situation is likely to have been exacerbated by the underhand methods which the partisans were reported as using all over the 221st's jurisdiction during 1943. February brought reports of female Russian agents posing as kitchen personnel and poisoning the troops' food, or throwing strychnine down wells.[67] In early February partisans managed to tune into the same wavelength as one of the division's regiments. The resulting exchange was recorded by the division's intelligence section: *"At the end of the conversation an unknown voice called down the line: "Thanks for the chat! Yours, the partisans.""*[68] It was later reported that the partisans were erecting dummies with guns in the middle of the forest; German troops who had approached them had opened fire and given their position away.[69] On 22nd June the intelligence section reported an increase in partisans wearing German, Slovak, Hungarian or pro-German Cossack uniforms. The same report also described

how the partisans often made false telephone calls to lure German troops and OD men out of their strongpoints.

Facing these pressures to a greater extent than the rest of the division, the morale of Security Battalion 242's troops was in danger of going into free-fall:

> *"The troops' pride and confidence are suffering, because their paltry numbers, inadequate weaponry and low mobility prevent them from delivering a powerful blow against the bandits. The bandits are in a poor state militarily and could certainly be destroyed if sufficient forces were deployed....the men are willing, as they showed at Kamenka and Lossof, but the current strained situation is creating demands which cannot be met in the long term."*[70]

Whilst the divisional files do not go into detail about the events of 17th May, then, this may well have been the first point at which mounting fear, distrust, frustration and a desperate need for concrete results against the partisans translated into indiscriminate massacre; arguably there was no need for officers to subscribe particularly enthusiastically to notions of "racial struggle" in order to be brutal in such circumstances. If the battalion's dire situation were not remedied immediately, moreover, such events were likely to repeat themselves. Nor was any remedy forthcoming; by the beginning of June the battalion's situation was worse in every respect:

> *"Last night, quite by accident, the OK in Propoisk uncovered a plot by some* Hilfswillige, *who until then had been reliable, to murder their officers and then, with the OD and bandits massing before Propoisk, to annihilate the other Germans there....*(meanwhile) *the battalion's strength continues to dwindle without any prospect of reinforcement, and its tasks grow more difficult and numerous. Things cannot continue as they are. The men on watch are being pushed to the limits, and every man down to the lowliest private is afraid in the face of the danger which grows more threatening all the time. No one can explain or understand why our side is so weak and inactive; this is a condition which the German Army has never before experienced.*
>
> *The companies can no longer spare any men for the training courses which have been ordered....the last replacements arrived in September 1942."*[71]

By mid-June the battalion's condition bordered on the pathetic. It had lost 47 dead, 53 wounded and 6 missing, and two thirds of these losses had been sustained since February 1943. The reinforcements consisted of one man and two NCOs, and even these were of third-rate quality.[72] The food situation in the north-western sector was especially shocking; it was described in all its depressing detail in a report of 10th July by the commander of the 183rd Security Regiment. *"The men don't understand why they are being supplied at this time of year with dry vegetables which are neither nourishing nor appetising,"*[73] wrote the commander. The result was that the food was atrocious even if it had been prepared by an expert - which in most cases it had not, for most outposts lacked a proper cook. Normally the troops received about 15 grams of fat per day to be distributed among four pieces of bread. *"This, as I have already reported, is barely enough for a single slice of bread. Of course, it's possible in theory to spread 15 grams over four slices, but the result is that you can hardly even see it."*[74]

The commander stressed the danger posed to the troops' morale, morale which was already suffering from the fact that the troops' families lived for the most part in one of the most heavily-bombed areas of the Reich. Perhaps most ominously, the commander pointed out that the troops saw their food situation as no better than that which had presaged the collapse of morale on the Western Front in 1918.[75] Neither this nor the battalion's own appeals seem however to have brought significant improvements in Security Battalion 242's situation, in a *rayon* now infested with as many as 3 000 partisans armed to a large extent, it was reported, with machine-guns.[76] Under the circumstances, it is perhaps surprising that the battalion did not commit further atrocities before that of 29th August.

Security Battalion 242, then, was a striking example of the link between poor fighting power and brutality. Equally striking, though for very different reasons, was the path to brutality of the 45th Security Regiment. In 1943, this was most prominent in the regiment's conduct at the end of April of Operation *Osterhase*.

11.4.2. The 45th Security Regiment and Operation *Osterhase*

To a considerable extent the barbarities of *Osterhase* were facilitated not only by the OKW directive of December 1942 - yet to be countered by the more restrained high-level directives of summer 1943 - but also by the ruthless division-level directives which placed particular emphasis on using economics to decide the fate of particular villages.[77] Ruthless though these orders were, however, they do not on their own explain the particular brutality of *Osterhase*; they may have provided the excuse for killing but they did not provide the actual impetus. Nor does the deteriorating situation of the 221st Security Division as a whole provide a complete answer; the still significant *variation* in conduct across the division's subordinate units during 1943 makes this clear. Of crucial further importance to the conduct of *Osterhase* was the interaction between the operation's particular circumstances and, perhaps most importantly, regimental command-level attitudes which due to the ideological proclivities of its commander, Colonel Wiemann, were brutal already.

On 27th April the main action centred around the village of Kamenka. There was a major clash in the forest near the village, with a surprise German attack on a partisan camp, before the Germans moved into Kamenka itself. It was reported that *"(t)he village of Kamenka had been built up as a well-stocked supply base, primarily with livestock and horses, all of which fell into the hands of the troops."*[78] In piecing together a picture of how 250 people were killed during *Osterhase* at next to no cost to the Germans, it seems likely that many of the villagers of Kamenka were killed when the Germans arrived that day. The requisition which was carried out in Kamenka was reported as "total" (*"restlos"*), and it appears that all the produce and livestock fell into the hands of the troops themselves, rather than into the hands of the requisition staff.[79] Troops who not only were clearly set on picking the village clean, but who also were gorged with success just after their surprise attack on a partisan camp, were unlikely

to handle the civilian population in a measured way. With Kamenka being used to stockpile partisan provisions, the villagers clearly would have been under suspicion anyway.

The second surge of brutality seems to have come on 29th April. It was on this day that heavy resistance was reported in a forest three kilometres west of Lossof:

> *"In the course of hard, day-long fighting it proved possible, thanks to the very well-equipped Luftwaffe units which were on hand, to drive the bandits into the forest and cleanse it by evening. After the two bandit camps in the forest were overrun, the enemy, having suffered very heavy losses, fled westward across the swamps."*[80]

If, as seems likely, this "engagement" also saw a high death toll, then at least part of the possible explanation lies with the Luftwaffe troops; certainly, it was these units who took credit for the success of this part of the operation: *"Without these troops, well-led and with modern equipment, the division's own weak and ill-equipped forces would have been quite unable to achieve success against such superior and well-armed bandits."*[81] This however explains only a very small part of the contrast between partisan and German casualties. Where the superior equipment of the Luftwaffe troops would have been decisive was in combat with actual partisans. These, however, seem to have constituted at most 15% of partisan dead during *Osterhase*.[82] The death of many non-combatants therefore requires a different explanation. Here again some of the explanation almost certainly lies with the Luftwaffe troops who, as has been seen, enjoyed a particularly merciless reputation.[83] But this too should not be overstated; indeed a later operation conducted by the 45th in the same area, code named *Junikäfer*, saw the Luftwaffe troops behave with relative restraint whilst the Order Police and OD units taking part finally wiped Kamenka off the map and killed everyone who lived there.[84]

A further possible explanation for the brutality of *Osterhase* lies in the fact that the forces that saw action on 29th April faced a particularly acute problem of overstretch. Already it had been recognised that the forces committed to *Osterhase* fell short of what was required for an effective encirclement:

> *"An encirclement, considering our own weak forces and our experiences of the previous winter, was out of the question. Attacks were targeted instead on particular points."*[85]

The quality of the forces committed was also a serious concern; Security Battalion 242 made for a particularly glaring contrast with the Luftwaffe troops. The battalion was thoroughly pessimistic about the state of its own mechanisation, claiming that its trucks were wholly unsuited to tasks like the fast delivery of supplies, or the transportation of reserves to a critical sector. Another source of depression was the age of the battalion's company commanders - 54, 52, 48 and 44. At platoon level the ages of the commanders were 54, 47, 45, 37 and 28.[86] On 28th April, furthermore, it had been announced that the forces which the 203rd Security Division had committed to the operation were to be sent back to the 203rd the following day.

Thus the forces still committed were now under even more pressure, and a likely result, as is already abundantly clear, was greater brutality.[87]

However, any explanation for the scale of barbarity committed during *Osterhase* is incomplete without incorporating the mind-set of officers in the 45th Security Regiment. After all, many of the 221st's operations during 1943 were marked by situational difficulties and ruthless economic imperatives, but it was the combination of all these forces with the 45th's long-standing ideological brand of ruthlessness which seems to have lent *Osterhase* a particular degree of fury. Just as the outlook of the regimental commander, Colonel Wiemann, had steered the unit toward particularly merciless conduct during 1942, so too does it seem to have played a critical role in the apparently murderous execution of *Osterhase*.

Indeed, there are indications from *Osterhase* itself that this was the case. For one thing, *Osterhase* was the only one of the 221st Security Division's anti-partisan operations of 1943 for which the regiment in charge compiled a report mentioning among other things the number of commissars who had been killed. Even more strikingly, it was the commissars who according to the 45th had been the driving force behind the ferocity of partisan resistance. They had, it was claimed, been shooting any partisans seen fleeing in the face of the Germans.[88] The fact that the main explanation of resistance was still the Bolshevik bogeyman, and not the partisans' genuine fighting effectiveness, says more about the ideological paranoia of the officer who wrote the report than about the true state of affairs. Indeed, the fact that German casualties in *Osterhase* were actually extremely light suggests that talk of "ferocious partisan resistance" was the work of an officer whose ideological drive blinded him to reality.[89]

What seems clear, then, is that *Osterhase* was a particularly bloody synthesis of all the situational and personal influences which generated brutality at the lower levels of the German anti-partisan effort. The result appears to have been a considerable amount of indiscriminate killing by the 45th Security Regiment's own troops.[90]

Another complex interaction of circumstances and personalities shaped the significantly different brand of ruthlessness displayed by the 930th Grenadier Regiment.

11.4.3. The 930th Grenadier Regiment

Operation *Zugspitze*, which the 930th Grenadier Regiment conducted in early February 1943 in the forests south-west of Belynkowitschi, was marked by an approach which, though undeniably ruthless, was significantly different to that of the 45th Security Regiment.

From the point of view of locating and destroying the partisans, *Zugspitze* was a failure; the partisans, warned in advance, escaped before it had even started. The regiment claimed, however, to have made up for this failure in other respects:

> *"Though it was not possible to locate and destroy the bandits, the regiment was able to comb the area thoroughly, an area which previously had not been entered*

> *by German forces. In the course of the operation it became clear that a number of villages had been thoroughly infested by the bandits. With the division's permission, seven villages were destroyed. 141 accomplices of the bandits were shot by the GFP and about 400 people were taken to the reception camp in Unetscha."*[91]

This was harsh conduct indeed. For one thing, there was no hard evidence that the population of the condemned villages had been actively supporting the partisans. Two methods were employed to establish "guilt". The first seems to have been torture - indicated here by the euphemism "forceful questioning":

> *"The population pleaded complete ignorance concerning the bandits until, after some forceful questioning, the women claimed that their husbands were either "with the Red Army" or "at unknown whereabouts". Thirty women admitted that their husbands were fighting with the bandits."*[92]

The other was the less than completely reliable assurances of the inhabitants of neighbouring villages:

> *"The inhabitants of Petrowskij and Swoboda named Nowa Buda, Ignatowskij and Worowaja as major bandit nests, in which every inhabitant was a bandit. They clearly showed their satisfaction at the destruction of these villages."*[93]

The 930th's conduct of *Zugspitze*, then, seems at first sight to have been yet another example of unnecessary excess driven by the need to cover for failure. However, the 930th's conduct of *Zugspitze* differed significantly from the 45th's conduct of *Osterhase* because it was not the kind which spurred the regiment's own troops to unbridled excess against the civilian population. Ruthlessness was clear, in the fact that the 930th's troops burned several villages to the ground, were implicated in the torture of inhabitants and handed 141 more over to the GFP, on evidence which was hardly watertight, for summary execution. It seems however that the 930th's troops *themselves* were not allowed to indulge in the kind of indiscriminate massacre which had marked the 45th's conduct of *Osterhase*.

Over railway security similarly, the 930th stopped short of letting its own troops off the leash. This does not detract from the ruthlessness of the orders which were issued; the sharp rise, in March, of partisan sabotage along the railways in the 930th's jurisdiction is probably what led to the regiment's call, on 8th April, for its third battalion to enact the harshest measures to prevent explosions along the rail line in the Belynkowitschi-Irshatsch area.[94] There was to be ruthless execution of the no-man's-land order; any Russian civilian found either by day or by night on either the track or its environs was to be shot on sight. Another regimental order, also issued on 8th April, made clear that a court martial awaited any troops who failed to carry this order out.[95] Here too, however, there is no sign that the 930th was loosening the lid on widespread, indiscriminate brutality by its troops or advocating harsher treatment of the population as a whole.

The 930th's troops were burning villages, handing over inhabitants to die at the hands of the GFP, and shooting individual civilians trespassing on no-man's-land. This does not appear to

have been the kind of "measured" conduct which was primarily concerned about relations with the civilian population, but it was more discriminating than the unbridled massacre which the 45th Security Regiment's troops appear to have committed during *Osterhase*. It may be that the 930th was more concerned that reining in the brutality of its own troops was the only means of ensuring the essential maintenance of discipline. This was due perhaps to ruthless sentiments being less virulent - for whatever reason - among the 930th's officers than they were among those of the 45th.

Together, the contrasting examples of Security Battalion 242, the 45th Security Regiment and the 930th Grenadier Regiment show that, whilst the 221st Security Division's increasingly unmanageable situation was fuelling ruthlessness across the division's lower levels, the attitudes of commanding officers, shaped by whatever previous experiences, remained pivotal in influencing not only the degree of brutality but also the particular process by which circumstances translated into brutality.

That said, the further decline in the division's fortunes during the summer of 1943 seems to have caused some convergence in the paths to brutality which different units were taking. Nowhere is this convergence more apparent than in further comparison between the 45th Security Regiment and the 930th Grenadier Regiment.

11.4.4. Summer 1943: converging paths to brutality?

During the summer of 1943 the 45th Security Regiment's ruthlessness continued to enjoy rude health at all levels of that unit. Operation *Junikäfer*, conducted by the 45th during early June in the same area as Operation *Osterhase*, saw the village of Kamenka razed to the ground and its inhabitants wiped out.[96] A report of 16th June by Captain Backofen, commander of the 45th's 11th company, communicated his unit's experiences during the course of Operation *Nachbarhilfe* and in doing so displayed a view of the "dead zones" policy which seems to have been more pitiless than that which the 221st itself was advocating: *"This evacuated zone (no-man's-land) had to be monitored by random mobile patrols (mounted squadrons), which shot on sight and without warning any bandit or civilian whom they came across."*[97] Backofen gives a telling indication of how his total mistrust of the population had helped bring him to this conclusion:

> *"The population of the forest villages, or of the villages at the edges of the forest, is working without exception with the bandits. It is immaterial whether this co-operation is voluntary or coerced; it alone is sufficient reason to deal the partisans a decisive blow by evacuating the population and burning down the villages in these areas."*[98]

By summer 1943, however, such sentiments were echoed by the 930th Grenadier Regiment. For one thing, there is much similarity between the 930th's orders for the clearing of the Mamajewka forest, and the 45th's reports for *Nachbarhilfe* and *Csobo*. All advocated, either explicitly or implicitly, the wholesale destruction of large numbers of villages and the

indiscriminate killing of civilians found there. The 930th not only welcomed unequivocally the evacuation and destruction of villages but also emphasised that they must be carried out even more ruthlessly. For an operation to evacuate the Mamajewka forest in late June, the regiment issued directives to evacuate the populations of certain villages, but for other areas ordered:

> *"By burning the area indicated in red....the partisans' basis of supply and shelter is removed....as far as these areas are concerned, it has been made clear to the troops that every individual encountered is to be regarded as a bandit. This removes any source of confusion or consideration regarding the civilian population."*[99]

This approach appears to have been markedly harsher than the 930th's approach earlier in 1943. The regiment's attitude may well have been hardened by its loss of many troops to other units in late April and a massive increase, during May, in partisan sabotage of the railways in its area.[100] In general terms, the apparent convergence between the 930th and the 45th seems therefore to have been driven by the worsening situation in which the 221st as a whole found itself by the summer of 1943. This is not to argue that the perceptions of individual officers did not continue to play a role in shaping a particular unit's conduct; for one thing, as has been seen, brutalisation does not appear to have been uniform across the 221st's lower levels during the summer of 1943. However, just as the seemingly intractable problems which the 221st faced had turned the previously constructive outlook at divisional level into a noticeably more ruthless one, so too do they appear to have ensured that previously more "restrained" elements at the division's lower levels were now receiving a significant injection of viciousness.

11.5. Conclusion

The economic, security and propaganda situation faced by the 221st Security Division during the summer of 1943 was, in common with the German security effort as a whole, the most difficult yet. Combined with increasing desperation borne of growing realisation of Germany's eventual defeat, it seems to have provided a further push to ruthlessness at divisional level. By this stage, the erstwhile principal stronghold of constructive engagement, the intelligence section, was affected also. The result encompassed increasing execution of a ruthless dead zones policy, a renewed injection of ideology into the propaganda distributed to the population, and an intensified drive to indoctrinate the division's own troops. As before, however, the perceptions of individual officers were such that the 221st's divisional levels remained relatively committed to a degree of constructive engagement. The division's clash with the Hungarians over Operation *Csobo* demonstrates this clearly.

At the 221st's lower levels, however, the difficulties of the situation were again felt more acutely than at divisional level. Yet here too, brutalisation was not an inexorable, uniform process; the ongoing importance of individual officers' dispositions seems clear in the apparent continued adherence to a policy of restraint practised by some units. However, despite higher-level attempts to tighten the lid on brutality which had been loosened by the 16th December directive, deterioration was intensifying to such a degree that officers were increasingly likely to seek

respite in greater brutality. Whilst particular circumstances and personalities continued to play an important role in shaping the path to brutality taken by different units, a harsh overall trend, driven more and more by the pressures of the situation, seems unmistakable.

In the absence of further archival material, no analysis of the 221st Security Division is possible beyond the end of August 1943. There is therefore no way of knowing how far the brutalising trends of spring and summer 1943 would have continued in the division's new jurisdiction, or how far they would have been checked by the extremely belated and ultimately doomed attempts made at the Army's highest levels to rein in the excesses of the anti-partisan effort and put it on a more far-sighted footing than before.[101] Nor is there any way of knowing how far the 221st would have discriminated between different parts of its jurisdiction, between those sections of the population to be cultivated, above all for *Wehrdorf* projects, and those targeted for further merciless treatment in the name of "military and economic expediency". What is likely, however, is that both conduct and its causes would have continued to be shaped not just by higher-level directives and general trends, but also by particular circumstances and the varied perceptions of officers on the spot. This has been apparent after all at every stage of the 221st Security Division's partisan effort from 1941 to 1943, and there is no reason to suppose that it was a phenomenon restricted to that division.

The general results of the analysis of this two-year period and their implications for the future development of the *Wehrmachtsdebatte* are the subject of discussion in the following chapter.

Endnotes to Chapter 11

[1] See above, p. 111.

[2] NA T-315/1682, file 36509/5. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 11.6.43. Betr.: Bandenlage im Divisions-Bereich, insbesondere Dg VII und Pk-Straße. Rückführung abgegebener Bataillone.

[3] NA T-315/1683, file 36509/5. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 6.7.43. Monatsbericht, 1.-30.6.43, p. 3.

[4] NA T-315/1683, file 36509/5. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 6.7.43. Monatsbericht für die Zeit vom 1. bis 30. Juni 1943, pp. 3-4.

[5] See below, pp. 211-14, with further regard to Security Battalion 242.

[6] Translated from: *"Wenn auch bei den anderen Sicherungs-Regimentern das Durchshchnittsalter etwas tiefer liegt und bisher Anzeichen von Überanstrengung, wie sich beim Sich Batl 242 aufgetreten sind, nicht festgestellt wurden, so liegt das plötzliche Versagen eines Stützpunktes unter den gegebenen Verhältnißen immer im Bereich der Möglichkeit. Es kommt hinzu, daß trotz der dauernden Verluste....keine Außichten auf Ersatz bestehen, sodaß sich auf der einen Seite der Anforderungen stanedig erhöhen, während andererseits die Urlaubsmöglichkeiten aus Kräftemangel nicht immer voll ausgenutzt werden können."* NA T-315/1683, file 36509/5. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 6.7.43. Monatsbericht für die Zeit vom 1. bis 30. Juni 1943, pp. 3-4.

[7] NA T-77/1147, file WiID/864. WiKo Gomel 1-5.43. Monatsüberblick, Mai 1943.

[8] Translated from: *"Das Ablieferungssoll der Landbevölkerung ist gesunken. Letzteres ist allerdings auch direkte Folge der Bandentätigkeit."* NA T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 31.5.43. Betr.: Politische Überwachung der Bevölkerung, p. 2.

[9] NA T-77/1147, file WiID/863. WiKo Gomel 1-5.43. Monatsüberblick, März 1943, p. 2.

[10] See below, p. 214.

[11] Translated from: *"Frühjahrsbestellung würde überall mit Nachdruck durchgeführt.... Ablieferung landwirtschaftlicher Erzeugnisse und Abführung der Steuern haben in weiten Gebieten zufolge des Bandendrucks merkbar nachgelassen."* NA T-315/1683, file 36509/5. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 7.6.43. Monatsbericht für die Zeit vom 1. bis 31. Mai 1943, p. 13.

[12] Translated from: *"In der weitesten Umgebung des ausgedehnten Bandengebietes um Korma, Krassnopolje, Tschetschersk haben die Bauern unter Androhung von Vergeltungsmaßnahmen den Befehl erhalten, sofort nach der Ernte das Getreide zu dreschen und bis auf kleine Reste in der Gegend des Bandenflugplatzes von Ossinowka....abzuliefern. Die Banditen beschränken sich also nicht allein darauf, die Wirtschaftsbetriebe durch Überfälle und Sabotage zu zerstören, sondern versuchen anscheinend im höheren Auftrag die Ernte der Besatzungstruppe zu entziehen. Der Abtransport von Nahrungsmittelvorräten wurde durch wiederholte Überfälle starker Bandenkräfte trotz Sicherung durch eigene Truppe empfindlich gestört. Die von den Banditen beherrschten Gebieten wurden von den benachbarten Gemeinden in zunehmenden Maße isoliert, der Verkehr der Bevölkerung durch drakonische Strafen unterbunden und dadurch ganze Teile des Divisions-Bereiches abgeriegelt. Solche Räume werden der eigenen Aufklärung im erheblichen Maße entzogen und bilden eine besondere Gefahr, da in ihnen starke Feindkräfte und selbst Luftlandetruppen unbemerkt zusammengezogen werden können."* NA T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 27.7.43. Betr.: Bandenlage im Divisions-Bereich für die Zeit vom 26. Juni bis 25. Juli 1943, p. 1.

[13] NA T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Prop. Abt. W. Staffel Gomel, 21.7.43. Betr.: Monatsbericht, 20.6-20.7.43.

[14] NA T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 1.7.43. Betr.: Beitrag zu Monatsbericht 221. Sich-Division Abt. Ia für die Zeit vom 1. bis 30. Juni 1943, p. 1.

[15] NA T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 20.6.43. Betr.: Wirkung der Propaganda des Generals Wlassow. This failure seems to have been general; in March the 203rd Security Division reported a similar lack of success in recruiting for the Vlasov Army. NA T-315/1586, file 29186. Sich.-Div. 203 Abt. VII, 26.3.43. Betr.: Lagebericht für März 1943, p. 7.

[16] NA T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 1.8.43. Betr.: Politische Überwachung der Bevölkerung, p. 1.

[17] NA T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 19.11.43. Tätigkeitsbericht des Ic vom 1.1. bis 31.8.43., p. 9.

[18] Translated from: *"Insbesondere muß der Bevölkerung zum Verständnis gebracht werden, daß sie zu dem Neuaufbau Europas auch ihren Teil beitragen muß und nicht beiseite stehen kann....Vor Augen zu führen ist der Bevölkerung auch, daß es dem russischen Arbeiter in Deutschland gut geht und daß sein Arbeitseinsatz von beschränkter Dauer ist."* NA T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 28.7.43.

[19] Translated from: *"Der Widerstand der Bevölkerung hiergegen war so stark, daß die im Laufe des Juli 1943 durchgeführte Einziehung der Jahrgänge 1925/26 in den meisten Gebieten des Divisions-Bereiches ein völliger Fehlschlag war, obwohl durch geeignete Propaganda und Aufklärung seitens der Division alles Erdenkliche getan wurde."* NA T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 19.11.43. Tätigkeitsbericht des Ic vom 1.1. bis 31.8.43 p. 7.

[20] Translated from: *"Bei ihrem jetzigen Zustand verdient diese Einheit jedenfalls nicht den Namen einer Propaganda-Staffel."* NA T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 2.7.43. Betr.: Einsatz der Prop-Staffel Gomel.

[21] NA T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 26.6.43. Betr.: Propagandistische Betreuung der Arbeitertransporte.

[22] NA T-315/1683, file 36509/5. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 7.6.43. Monatsbericht für die Zeit vom 1. bis 31. Mai 1943, p. 4. The precise wording was that partisan propaganda was "only" taking effect in the areas endangered by the partisans, but it must be remembered that by this stage a great deal of the division's jurisdiction fell into this category.

[23] Translated from: *"Es wurden handgeschrieben und gedrückte, an die OD- und landeseigene Verbände gerichtete Flugblätter gefunden, in denen zum Überläufen mit der Waffe aufgefordert. jeder OD-Mann bei seiner Nationalehre gepackt und die übliche Angstmethode angewandt wird, wonach die Rote Armee, die die Deutschen schon überall in die Verteidigung dränge, an allen OD-Männern grausam Rache nehmen würde. Fantasiezahlen über die Ausfälle der Deutschen sind stets gennant, außerdem Namen von übergelaufenen OD-Männern, bei denen die Verführung weiterer Kameraden und das Mitbringen von Waffen lobend hervorgehoben wird. Bemerkenswert waren verschiedene handgeschriebene Briefe, die von Banden-Häuptlingen an Bürgermeister und*

andere Zivilisten persönlich gerichtet wurden in denen diese mit den schlimmsten Repressalien bedroht wurden, falls sie weiter für die Deutschen arbeiteten. Flugblatttabwürfe und Verteilung wurden aus allen Rayonen gemeldet. Neuerdings sind auch Feindflugblätter auf russischen Märkten verteilt worden." NA T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Prop Abt. W Staffel Gomel, 21.7.43. Betr.: Monatsbericht vom 20.6.43 - 20.7.43, p. 1.

[24] Translated from: *"Um die immer wieder angekündigten Belohnungen und Entschädigungen für OD Leute mehr in die Tat umsetzen zu können, wird künftig bei jedem größeren Unternehmen ein Beamter der Abt. VII dafür sorgen, daß das Hab und Gut von Banditen und Banditenhelfern zur Verteilung für den OD sichergestellt wird."* NA T-315/1683, file 36509/5. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 6.7.43. Monatsbericht für die Zeit vom 1. bis 30. Juni 1943, p. 6.

[25] See above, p. 204.

[26] Re-defecting collaborators came to comprise a significant portion of new partisan recruits during 1943. In the Smolensk area from April to October 1943, for example, they comprised 12% (723) of new recruits. Slepyan, *Avengers*, p. 205.

[27] NA T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 1.8.43. Betr.: Politische Überwachung der Bevölkerung, p. 2.

[28] Translated from: *"Die Propaganda ist wendig und aktuell und behandelt jüngste Ereigniße, soweit sie verwendbar sind."* NA T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 18.43. Betr.: Politische Überwachung der Bevölkerung, p. 1.

[29] Translated from: *"Die Bevölkerung sieht der Truppe allgemein mit zweispältigen Gefühlen entgegen. Einesteils weiß sie, daß von den deutschen Soldaten nichts zu befürchten ist, andererseits ruft die starke Propagandatätigkeit der Banditen, besonders in den wenig vor uns berührten Gebieten, großes Mißtrauen gegen die Truppe hervor. Die Angst, von Nachbarn als Verräter bezeichnet zu werden und als solche den Banditen in die Hände zu falle, hindert die Leute, genaue Aussagen über Bandenbewegungen zu machen. Auffällig war auch, daß keiner der angetroffenen Starosten bandenverdächtige Personen nennen konnte oder wollte, wie überhaupt festzustellen ist, daß keiner der Starosten seines Lebens sicher ist."* NA T-315/1684, file 36509/9. III/SR 930 Stab, 10.8.43. Betr.: Abschliessender Bericht über Julikäfer II.

[30] NA T-77/1147, file WiID/856. WiKo Klinzy. Kürzer Überblick über die Tätigkeit der Gruppe La in der Zeit vom 1.4. bis 30.6.43, pp. 3-4.

[31] Translated from: *"Die verschiedenen militärischen Unternehmungen haben keinerlei Entlastung gebracht. Der deutsche Einfluß bröckelt immer weiter ab. Die zwangsweise Arbeiteranwerbung wirkt sich progandistisch sehr schlecht aus. Es wäre erwünscht, wenn die Arbeiteranwerbung in erster Linie in unbefriedeten Gebieten durchgeführt würde, um damit den befriedeten Gebieten zu zeigen, daß sie unter dem Schutz der Deutschen arbeiten können."* NA T-77/1147, file WiID/856. WiKo Klinzy, Kürzer Überblick über die Tätigkeit der Gruppe La in der Zeit vom 1.4. bis 30.6.43, p. 1.

[32] There is no specific mention of what the 221st's portion of the quota constituted.

[33] Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*, p. 917.

[34] NA T-315/1683, file 36509/5. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 3.7.43. Betr.: Unternehmen der 102. le. ung. Div..

[35] NA T-315/1683, file 36509/5. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 25.6.43. Betr.: Aktivierung der Bandenbekämpfung.

[36] See above, Table 6, p. 114.

[37] Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*, pp. 922-4.

[38] NA T-315/1683, file 36509/5. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 25.6.43. Betr.: Aktiveriung der Bandenbekämpfung, p. 2.

[39] Translated from: *"Evakuieren, Vergeltungsmaßnahmen gegen die Bevölkerung sowie Zerstören von Ortschaften nur mit Genehmigung der Division."* NA T-315/1684, file 36509/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 4.7.43.

[40] *Junikäfer* and *Sonnenwende*, two of the main operations executed as part of this effort, were in fact deemed failures from a security point of view; on 6th July it was reported that the insufficient forces available had achieved only a temporary easing of the pressure on the main highway under attack from the partisans. NA T-315/1683, file 36509/5. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 6.7.43. Monatsbericht, 1.-30.6.43, p. 1.

[41] See above, p. 110.

[42] Unfortunately there is barely any concrete information on the 221st's co-operation with the GFP or SD in the course of anti-partisan operations during this period.

[43] Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*, pp. 928-31.

[44] Translated from: *"Der Rayon Mglin ist....zu einem großen Teil evakuiert und niedergebrannt. Es müßen größere Vorbereitungen getroffen werden, um die stehende Ernte in den kommenden Wochen zu bergen...Im Rayon Slinka sind ebenfalls durch ein militärisches Unternehmen etwa 12 Dörfer niedergebrannt worden."* NA T-77/1147, file WiID/857. Wi Kdo 210 (Klinzy), Gruppe Landwirtschaft, 11.7.43. KTB, 1.7. - 11.7.43, p. 1.

[45] NA T-315/1686, file 36509/17. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ib, 27.6.43. Betr.: Unternehmen "Sommerfest", p. 2.

[46] An order which in the event was not followed to a great extent. Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*, pp. 939-41.

[47] Translated from: *"Die Evakuierung der Ortschaften in dem Bandengebiet wird sich für die Banden ungunstig auswirken. Eine Erfüllung der Banden durch Rekrutierung von Ortseinwohnern ist damit unterbunden. Die Lebensmittelversorgung, die bisher vorwiegend durch die Ortseinwohner der evakuierten Ortschaften erfolgte, ist nicht mehr möglich. Werden die bestellten Felder von eigenen Kräften geerntet und verhindert, daß die Banden sich in den Besitz der Ernte setzen, so wird sich dies auf die Verpflegungslage der Banden sehr nachteilig auswirken. Die Stimmung bei den Banden ist durch die Evakuierung der zahlreichen Angehörigen der Banden sehr beeinträchtigt..."* NA T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 4.7.43.

[48] See above, pp. 193-4.

[49] Translated from: *"Von Jüdisch-bolschewistischen und landsfremden Elementen werden Eure Häuser zerstört, Eure Besitztümer und Euer Vieh gestohlen und Eure Männer und Söhne zu den Banden gepreßt, wo sie schließlich in sinnlosen blutigen Unternehmungen umkommen."* NA T-315/1687, file 36509/27. Sich.-Div. 221. Abt. Ib, 5.7.43. Betr.: Zwangsrekrutierungen von Arbeitskräften für das Reich.

[50] Translated from: *"Um ihre klägliche Haut zu retten, führen die Juden und Bolschewiken Millionen Eurer Brüder, Väter und Söhne ohne Erbarmen in den sicheren Tod. Das Leben und das Blut des Ruaaen gilt im sowjetischen Staat heute ebenso wenig wie vor dem Kriege. Das schlimmste Leid des Volkes rührt den Juden und den Bolschewiken nicht, wenn es ihm nur gut geht."* NA T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 19.11.43. Tätigkeitsbericht des Ic vom 1.1. bis 31.8.43, Anlage 34: Flugblatt Übersetzung aus den Russischen: "Kameraden der Gruppe Fjodorow."

[51] See above, p. 111.

[52] Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*, p. 962.

[53] See above, pp. 202-5.

[54] Omer Bartov argues on the strength of his case studies that from 1943, as the situation became more hopeless, the troops' ideological convictions were strengthened by their need to feel that their suffering was in a noble cause. Bartov, *Eastern Front*, pp. 147-8.

[55] NA T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 19.11.43. Tätigkeitsbericht des Ic vom 1.1. bis 31.8.43; Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 14.6.43. Betr.: Unterrichtsaktion: Der deutsche Soldat und seine politischen Aufgaben; Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 19.8.43. Ic Befehle und Mitteilungen Nr 13, p. 2. On intensified indoctrination generally during 1943, see: Messerschmidt, *Die Wehrmacht*, pp. 329 ff.; Berghahn, "NSDAP", pp. 42 ff..

[56] See above, pp. 164-5.

[57] Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*, p. 907.

[58] Translated from: *"Division bittet seitens ungarischer Truppen von jeder Evakuierung und Zerstörung von Dörfern, sowie von Vergeltungsmaßnahmen im Zuge des Unternehmens Abstand zu nehmen. Die Division bittet, daraufhinweisen zu dürfen, daß generelles Abbrennen von Dörfern und Maßnahmen gegen die Bevölkerung gemäß Befehl der Heeresgrupe streng verboten ist."* NA T-315/1686, file 36509/19. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia. Betr.: Unternehmen südl. Nowosybkoff.

It is not clear what precise Army Group Centre ruling is being referred to here; rather than being a strict ban, it may well be yet another directive of the type which was open to interpretation. Even so, it is significant that the 221st chose to invoke the directive, whereas the Hungarians wished to take the opposite course of action, and this again shows the importance of the attitudes of individual units and officers.

[59] Translated from: *"Im Zusammenhang mit der Unternehmung Csaba zeigt es sich als unbedingt notwendig, sämtliche Ortschaften im Raum dieser Unternehmung zu vernichten und die Bevölkerung übersiedeln zu lassen. Aus der Zuschrift der 221. Sich Div ist aber darauf zu schliessen, daß das Div Kdo als OFK dagegen Stellung nimmt. Ich muß aber nachdrücklich darauf hinweisen, daß - wenn dies nicht radikal geschieht - in kürzester Zeit die Banden u. Einwohner zurückkehren und das bereinigte Gebiet wieder verseuchen werden."* NA T-315/1684, file 36509/9. RHGeb. Mitte Abt. Ia, 16.7.43. Betr.: Umgruppierung der 102. le ung Div. From commander of VIII Hungarian Corps.

[60] Anderson, *Conduct of Reprisals*, pp. 399 ff.; idem., "Hungarian Vernichtungskrieg".

[61] NA T-315/1686, file 36509/19. III/SR 45. Betr.: Unternehmen "Csobo", 2.7.43.

[62] As before, it is not entirely clear how far the disparities listed here were due to the killing of non-combatants and how far to the killing of genuine but inadequately-trained partisans who had been caught in the open. However, the particularly poor quality of Security Battalion 242 and the OD, the units to which five of these instances can be attributed, suggests that most of the killing was indeed of non-combatants. It is unlikely that either unit would have escaped so lightly as they did from any genuine combat situation, even if it had been against inferior-quality partisans.

[63] See above, p. 206.

[64] Sources: NA T-315/1682, file 36509/1. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 13.2., 14.2., 30.3., 18.4., 22.4., 23.4.43. KTB, 1.1.-1.5.43; idem., file 36509/2. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 5.5., 17.5., 7.7., 29.8., 30.8.43. KTB, 1.5.-31.8.43. As with the examples of the 8th Police Regiment and Security Battalion 791 in Chapter Eight, there is little information on the incidents involving "unknown" units. The 18.4.43 and 22.4.43 incidents are the only ones for which the number of captured partisan weapons is recorded. On 18th April 19 rifles, 4 machine-guns and 2 revolvers were captured. This tallies neatly (perhaps too neatly) with the number of partisans recorded as killed. Overall it suggests that this incident was a genuine combat engagement, one in which the partisans were taken by surprise. By contrast, the fact that only one rifle was retrieved from at least 83 bodies after the incident of 22nd April points to a massacre of non-combatants rather than a genuine attack on an OD stronghold as the reports claimed.

[65] NA T-315/1684, file 36509/8. SB 242, 10.5.43. Betr.: Bandenlage im Bereich des Sich Batl 242, p. 2.

[66] NA T-315/1684, file 36509/9. 3/SB 242, 14.6.43. Betr.: Tagesmeldungen.

[67] BA-MA, RH 26-221/51b 13.2.43, p. 2. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 13.2.43. Ic Befehle und Mitteilungen Nr. 3 NfD, p. 2.

[68] Translated from: *"Am Ende des Gesprächs wurde von unbekannter Stimme in die Leitung folgender Staz gerufen: "Wir danken Euch für diesen Spruch, Eure Partisanen.""* NA T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 13.2.43. Ic Befehle u. Mitteilungen Nr. 3, p. 3.

[69] NA T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 21.4.43. Ic Befehle und Mitteliungen Nr. 7, p. 1.

[70] Translated from: *"Der Stolz und das Selbstbewußtsein der eigenen Truppe leidet darunter, daß sie bei der geringen Stärke, unzulänglichen Bewaffnung und geringen Beweglichkeit nicht einen kräftigen Schlag gegen diese militärisch minderwertige Bande führen kann, wo doch ihre Vernichtung bei gegebenen Mittel gesichert sein könnte....Die Männer sind, wie sie auch bei Kamenka und Lossof gezeigt haben, willig und gut. Doch wird die augenblickliche Beanspruchung, bedingt durch die angespannte Lage, auf die Dauer nicht ausgehalten werden können."* NA T-315/1684, file 36509/8. SB 242, 10.5.43. Betr.: Bandenlage im Bereich des Sich Batl 242, p. 2.

[71] Translated from: *"In der vergangenen Nacht ist man der OK Propoisk durch Zufall einer Verschwörung auf die Spur gekommen. Bisher zuverlässige Hilfswillige sollen die Absicht gehabt haben, die Offiziere zu ermorden, um danach zusammen mit den OD und den dicht vor Propoisk liegenden Banden die anderen Deutschen zu vernichten....So schwindet die Stärke des Batl immer mehr dahin, ohne daß Ersatz kommt. Die Aufgaben werden aber andererseits immer schwerer und zahlreicher. Wie es jetzt geht, kann es auf die Dauer nicht weitergehen. Die Leute auf den Feldwachen sind bis auf's Äußerste beansprucht. Jeder Deutsche, auch der einfachste Mann, macht sich Sorgen und sieht die Gefahr, die immer mehr droht. Niemand kann sich die Untätigkeit oder die Schwäche auf unserer Seite, die bisher im deutschen Heere nicht bekannt war, erklären oder verstehen.*

Für die befohlenen Lehrgänge sind Leute aus den Kompanien nicht mehr herauszuholen. Um die jetzigen Feldwachen noch besetzen zu können, müssen bei der besonders schwachen 1. Kompanie einige andere Feldwachen geschwächt werden, was auf die Dauer ein unhaltbarer Zustand ist.....Der letzte Ersatz ist im

September 1942 eingetroffen." NA T-315/1684, file 36509/9. SB 242, 30.5.43. Betr.: Lage im Bereich des Sich Btl 242.

[72] NA T-315/1684, file 36509/9. Sich.-Rgt. 183, 17.6.43. Betr.: Bandenmeldung im Gebiet Propoisk u. Korma, pp. 1-2.

[73] Translated from: *"Die Truppe hat kein Verständnis dafür, in der jetztigen Jahreszeit, mit Trockengemüse beliefert zu werden, dem man weder einen guten Geschmack, noch ausreichenden Sättigungswert nachsagen kann."* NA T-315/1684, file 36509/9. Kommandeur SR 183, 13.7.43. Betr.: Verpflegung.

[74] Ibid.. Translated from: *"Diese reichen kaum für ein Stück Brot, wie ich bereits gemeldet habe. Natürlich kann man theoretisch diese 15 Gramm auch auf vier Stück Brot verteilen, mit dem Erfolg, daß auf keinem mehr ein Aufstrich zu finden ist."*

[75] NA T-315/1684, file 36509/9. Kommandeur SR 183, 13.7.43. Betr.: Verpflegung. General Ludendorff himself called lack of food the biggest single assault on morale. Kellett, *Fighting Power*, p. 246.

[76] NA T-315/1684, file 36509/9. 2. Komp. SB 242, 13.8.43. Betr.: Meldung über Mannchaftslage der 2. Komp. in Stützpunkt Krasnopolje. This report may well be exaggerated - a partisan group this strong could have overwhelmed the company whenever it wanted to - but it is almost certain that the company was in a very bad state.

[77] See above, pp. 191-2.

[78] Translated from: *"Der Ort Kamenka war als Versorgungsstützpunkt ausgebaut und mit reichen Vorräten, vor allem an Vieh und Pferden, besetzt, die restlos in die Hand der Truppe fielen."* NA T-315/1685, file 36509/13. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 2.5.43. Betr.: Bericht über Unternehmen Osterhase, p. 2.

[79] Ibid..

[80] Translated from: *"Dank der zur Verfügung stehenden Luftwaffen-Verbände mit ihrer modernsten Bewaffnung gelang es, in schweren, den ganzen Tag über andauernden Kämpfen in den Wald einzudringen und diesen allmählich bis zum Abend von den Banditen zu säubern. Der Feind wich nach Inbesitznahme seiner im Wald vorhandenen 2 Lager nach schwersten Verlusten nach Westen über den Sumpf aus."* Ibid..

[81] Ibid..

[82] Judging on the basis of the difference between captured partisan weapons and recorded partisan dead. See above, Table 6, p. 114.

[83] See above, p. 103.

[84] NA T-315/1686, file 36509/18. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 11.6.43. Betr.: Bericht über Unternehmen "Junikäfer", p. 5.

[85] Translated from: *"Auf eine Einkesselung wurde im Hinblick auf die schwachen Kräfte im Hinblick auf die vielfach unbefriedigenden Erfahrungen des Winters bewußt verzichtet. Es wurde vielmehr schwerpunktarig angegriffen."* NA T-315/1685, file 36509/13. NA T-315/1685, file 36509/13. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 2.5.43. Betr.: Bericht über Unternehmen Osterhase, p. 5.

[86] NA T-315/1685, file 36509/13. SB 242, 4.5.43. Erfahrungsbericht aus dem Unternehmen "Osterhase" vom 27.4. - 30.4.43, pp. 1-2.

[87] See above, pp. 23, 106-7, 177-9.

[88] NA T-315/1685, file 36509/13. SR 45, 1.5.43. Erfahrungen über den Kampf bei Kamenka und Lossow. The report was written by a Lieutenant Klapproth of the regimental operations section, on Colonel Wiemann's behalf.

[89] In the course of research, no other report was unearthed from spring or summer 1943 which attributed ferocious partisan resistance mainly to the threats and merciless exhortations of the commissars. Whilst other such reports probably were made and are not available in Federal German archives, it seems likely that they were at least comparatively rare. A clear demonstration of just how rare and how at odds with reality the 45th's comments were is to contrast them with those of General Hermann Hoth. Though Hoth issued a particularly ruthless ideological general order to his troops in the autumn of 1941 and was also at the forefront of efforts to radicalise conduct of the *Kommissarbefehl*, even he recognised that the Russians were not fighting primarily out of fear of their commissars. By 1943 there was if anything infinitely greater reason to draw this conclusion. Streit, *Keine Kameraden*, p. 84; Förster, J., "Rußlandbild", p. 149.

[90] Indeed, the 221st's divisional level was itself moved to comment about the noticeable discrepancy between German and partisan dead in the operations. The 45th Security Regiment claimed that 70 partisans had been killed by anti-tank guns, but even if this was true a massive shortfall remained. Indeed, the recording of 250 partisan dead but just 34 guns captured seems to confirm that the vast majority of dead were non-combatants. The regiment's further claim that the partisan dead/partisan weapons disparity was because the partisans had transported many of their weapons away seems dubious; it was unlikely that partisans who presumably wished to break out of the regiment's cordon would have allowed themselves to go weaponless. NA T-315/1685, file 36509/13. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 29.4.43; idem., Sich.-Rgt. 45, 29.4.43.

[91] Translated from: *"Wenn es auch nicht gelang, die Bande zu fassen, so wurde dieses bisher noch nicht betretene Gebiet gründlich gesäubert. Dabei ergab sich, daß eine Anzahl von Orten völlig banditenverseucht war. Mit Einverständnis der Division wurden daher 7 Dörfer zerstört. 141 Banditenhelfer durch die GFP erschossen und etwa 400 Personen dem Auffanglager in Unetscha geführt."* NA T-315/1686, file 36509/17. GR 930 Abt. Ia, 8.2.43. Bericht über Verlauf und Ergebnis des Unternehmens "Zugspitze".

[92] Ibid.. Translated from: *"Die Bevölkerung wollte zuerst von Banden überhaupt nichts wissen, bis auf energische Nachfrage die Frauen aussagten, daß ihre Männer "bei der roten Armee" oder "unbekannten Aufenthalts abwesend seien." 30 Frauen gaben zu, daß ihre Männer bei den Banden seien."* The "forceful questioning" was probably conducted by the GFP. Ibid., p. 2.

[93] Translated from: *"Die Einwohner von Petrowskij und Swoboda bezeichneten Now Buda, Ignatowskij und Worowaja als Hauptbandennester, wo jeder Einwohner Bandit sei. Sie bezeigten offen ihre Befriedigung, als diese Dörfer brannten."* Ibid., p. 2.

[94] Ibid.. According to the 221st's war diary – an incomplete record, admittedly - there seem to have been ten rail attacks in the 930th's jurisdiction during March, as opposed to just two in the area of the 45th Security Regiment. NA T-315/1682, file 36509/1. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 1.-30.3.43. KTB, 1.1-1.6.43.

[95] NA T-315/1684, file 36509/8. GR 930 Abt. Ia, 8.4.43.

[96] See above, p. 215.

[97] Translated from: *"Diese evakuierte Zone (Niemandsland) müsste in unregelmäßigen Abständen von schnellen Streifen (Reiterschwadron) überwacht werden, die jeden Zivilisten, Banditen oder dergleichen ohne Anruf oder Verhör an Ort und Stelle erschießen."* NA T-315/1683, file 36509/5. Hauptm. Backofen, 11/Sich.-Rgt. 45, 16.6.43. Bericht über Erfahrungen in der Bandenbekämpfung (insbes. "Nachbarhilfe" I u. II), p. 2.

[98] Ibid.. Translated from: *"Die Bevölkerung in den Walddörfern oder den um die Wälder gelegenen Dörfer arbeitet ausnahmslos zusammen mit den Banditen. Dabei ist es unerheblich, ob diese Mitarbeit freiwillig oder erzwungen ist. Schon aus diesem Grunde ist die Evakuierung der Bevölkerug und die Vernichtung der Dörfer in den Gebieten, wie oben ausgeführt, erforderlich, um den Banditen in den Wäldern einen entscheidenden Schlag zu versetzen."*

[99] Translated from: *"Durch die Abbrennung des rot eingezeichneten Bezirkes....ist den Banditen Versorgungsbasis und Unterschlupf genommen....In diesen Gebieten sind nun für die Truppe klare Verhältnisse geschaffen, d.h., jeder dort Angetroffene ist als Bandit anzusehen. Verwechslungen und Rücksichtnahme auf Zivilbevölkerung ist hier ausgeschlossen."* NA T-315/1684, file 36509/9. SR 930 Abt. Ia, 23.6.43. Betr.: Evakuierung des Mamajewka-Gebietes.

[100] Between 1st and 21st April the 930th's combat strength fell from 659 to 439. According to the divisional KTB, 13 successful partisan attacks on railways took place in the 930th's jurisdiction during May as opposed to 6 during April. NA T-315/1684, file 36509/8. Gefechtsstärke der 930. Gren.-Rgt., 1.2.-11.5.43; NA T-315/1682, file 36509/1. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ia, 1.4.-31.5.43. KTB, 1.1-1.6.43.

[101] Operation Orloff demonstrates the "other" side of the dead zone policy, the need to cultivate the population of those areas deemed worth saving. Orloff, it seems, was a purely security-driven operation against a particular partisan unit which appears tp have infiltrated one of the areas of the 221st's jurisdiction which had been "spared the axe". The order directed, among other things, that deserters were to receive significantly better treatment, in terms of transportation, rations and medical attention, than were ordinary prisoners. In part of the area in which the operation took place the entire male population aged between 16 and 65 was to be collected and sent to the temporary prison camp in Propoisk to be vetted, but it was stressed that "rough treatment" was to be avoided under all circumstances. There is no mention of evacuation of villages or procurement of labour. From this it seems clear that the division was extremely anxious to keep the population of these select areas "on board". NA T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Sich.-Div. 221 Abt. Ic, 26.8.43. Betr.: Unternehmen "Orloff".

CHAPTER 12: EVALUATION AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter considers how far analysis of one particular *Ostheer* security division over the period 1941 to 1943 supports the argument forwarded at the beginning of the thesis. What conclusions can be drawn about the behaviour of the security divisions in general, and what are the implications for the *Wehrmachtsdebatte*? The chapter firstly reiterates the main argument and the various elements which generated the more specific questions which have been investigated. The methodology is evaluated, and the thick narrative of the thesis is then summarised and the ways in which it has addressed particular historical questions assessed. Finally, the contribution of the thesis is evaluated in terms of how far the research results can be generalised for *Ostheer* security divisions as a whole.

12.1. The central argument reiterated

The argument forwarded at the outset of the thesis contained three strands:

i) that the conduct of officers in the *Ostheer*'s rear area anti-partisan units was shaped by interactions between *real or perceived* military necessity, ideology, economics, the need for constructive engagement, and the personal perceptions of officers;

ii) that perceptions were shaped by a variety of ideological, military, pragmatic, ethical and careerist influences;

iii) that the resulting conduct displayed different shades of brutality and restraint.

The forces of "cumulative radicalisation", characteristic of the Third Reich as a whole, had ensured that the German anti-partisan effort overall had been marked by ultimately self-defeating destructiveness borne of ruthless military and above all ideological imperatives and, later on, of economic forces. The brutality which it had unleashed had therefore gone beyond what might have been expected as a consequence of the normal pressures of counter-insurgency warfare. Officers on the ground had nonetheless enjoyed some freedom of action which had ensured that their behaviour was shaped not only by orders from above but also by their situation and by a range of personal perceptions. Both situation and perceptions had to a large extent worked in a brutalising direction, albeit in varied ways. The security divisions had faced a daunting task; with manpower and equipment at their disposal which had been inadequate in both quality and quantity, they had had to face an unseen and ruthless enemy who, aided by the alienating destructiveness not just of German anti-partisan methods but also of the German occupation as a whole, had been able progressively to loosen the Germans' administrative and economic grip over the occupied territories. Whilst this situation had contributed to German brutality, however, it had also been a spur to a considerable amount of cultivation, both of population and of potential partisan deserters. It was here that personal perceptions had helped determine the direction in which an officer went, shaped as they had

been by a combination of wider societal and political events, exposure to ruthless institutional mind-sets, and formative life experiences.

How far has the thesis validated its central argument? There are three strands to this question just as there are to the central argument itself. The first task is to evaluate how successful the methodology has been. The following section concerns itself with this, paying particular attention to the methodological advances which it has made from which the *Wehrmachtsdebatte* as a whole might benefit.

12.2. The methodology evaluated

Chapter One expressed the hope that the thesis would benefit from the particular methodological innovation of a "longitudinal" study of a single German Army security division.[1] It was hoped that focusing at divisional level would enable the "interaction" between wider forces, specific circumstances and individual motivations to be analysed more fully than in a jurisdiction-level study of the kind conducted by Truman Anderson. Thus, elements of *Täterforschung* - the study of motivation among individual perpetrators or groups of perpetrators - might be particularly fruitfully combined with elements of region-level studies. It was also hoped that the longitudinal treatment would deepen analysis by enabling patterns over time, shaped by changing circumstances, to be identified. This was seen as a development from previous case studies which, whilst important, are limited by the fact that they only focus on periods of weeks or months or, as with Schulte's *The German Army*, are arranged thematically rather than longitudinally. At the same time, it was acknowledged that all this was contingent upon the nature and quality of available sources.

How far have these hopes been fulfilled, and what are the implications for further development of the *Wehrmachtsdebatte*? To begin with it must be conceded that a division-level study does not seem *intrinsically* to constitute any advance beyond the depth of analysis which can be achieved in a larger-scale jurisdiction-level study. Both types of study *per se* appear similar in terms of being able to pitch research at a level combining the bigger picture and the individual-level picture. Moreover, like the studies of Schulte, Anderson and others, the analysis of the 221st Security Division over the entire 1941-3 period has been aware of the source-related problems of incompleteness and unintentional distortion, intentional distortion, sanitising of events and above all the drawbacks of using mainly official sources to try to explain personal motivations. In the absence of a lucky find such as the material used in the case studies by Michael Geyer and Mark Mazower, it has had to battle these problems by reading between the lines and drawing on sources of other command levels and agencies to achieve a more comprehensive picture. At the same time, it is accepted that there will ultimately need to be recourse to Soviet sources in order to address a number of issues with the necessary thoroughness.

In what ways, if any, is the source base used in this thesis an improvement on what has gone before? Purely in terms of the sources themselves, it seems clear that the use of personal officer files, however limited, brings a number of issues about personal motivation into sharper focus. This is certainly so in the cases of General Pflugbeil, General Lersner and above all Colonel Wiemann. Granted, analysing personal motives remains a labyrinthine task involving a great deal of speculation, and the picture presented in this thesis remains far too fragmentary a basis for making confident assertions about "generational" effects. Personal files do however facilitate a somewhat more confident degree of speculation, and the next chapter will among other things consider ways in which exploiting this kind of source more extensively could benefit future research. Regarding the other sources which have been used, this is certainly not the first low-level case study to combine *Einsatzgruppen* or economic agency reports with Army files which contain detailed material generated by sub-divisional units, but it is the first to use this combination over the entire 1941-3 period.

This is an important distinction, and this new depth of *longitudinal* analysis is arguably the main contribution the thesis has made. There are several individual cases of officers whose conduct as illustrated in the 221st's files over a two-year period has been combined with information from their personal files to enrich understanding of their possible motives beyond the point which would have been reached had the analysis restricted itself to a period of weeks or months. For example, that frustrated military ambition rather than ideological hatred helped fuel General Pflugbeil's ruthless temperament during the Jelnja-Dorogobush operations of 1942 seems more likely when one considers both his daring actions at the battle of Bialystok in 1941 and his subsequent career up to 1945.[2] To take another case, Captain Meyer's cultivation of both population and potential partisan deserters during 1942 can be more confidently ascribed to pragmatism rather than humanity - thus scuppering attempts which might be made to put an apologist "spin" on it - when set against his more ideological and ruthless approach both in 1941 and when the mask slipped in the summer of 1943.[3] Thirdly, the particular viciousness of the 45th Security Regiment's conduct of Operation *Osterhase* during April 1943 is more readily explainable when the long-running ruthlessness which the regiment's commander displayed during 1942 is considered. In turn, that this ruthlessness was ideologically-driven seems more likely when one bears in mind the three-pronged set of potentially ideologically brutalising influences to which Colonel Wiemann was subjected in the course of his earlier life.[4] Whilst conclusions about motives remain speculative, then, it is speculation which is more informed than would have been the case in a short-term study.

The longitudinal approach has also allowed more informed conclusions to be reached about the approach of the 221st Security Division as a whole. Over a lengthy period, this division displayed what appears to have been a significant degree of pragmatism in its handling of both population and potential deserters. There is a clear thread running from the autumn of 1941 through to the winter of 1942/3; it can be seen in the 221st's particularly extensive recruitment

of civilians and ex-POWs into the security effort, through its policy on deserters in the Jelnja-Dorogobush operations, its attempts to sugar the pill of internment for civilians detainees during the summer of 1942 and, perhaps most notably, its criticism of higher-level deserter policy in December of that year. Even by the summer of 1943, by which time the division's overall attitude and conduct seem to have hardened markedly, its argument with the Hungarians over Operation *Csobo* shows that a spirit of relative constructiveness, albeit one borne probably of calculated pragmatism rather than civilised decency, was far from dead.[5] Comparisons with different divisions at different points in time over the period as a whole bear out the view that the 221st Security Division, whilst certainly not on the side of the angels, was far from being the German Army's worst case of Nazi thuggery and excess. In turn this conclusion has important implications, as will be seen below, for evaluating the conduct of the *Ostheer*'s rear area anti-partisan units in general, and it could not have been reached without the longitudinal approach which this thesis has adopted.

The thesis therefore has "held its own" methodologically and indeed in some respects has provided new methodological pointers for future research. The next task is to consider how far the research findings have validated the central argument of the thesis, in the context of the historical issues which the debate on the *Ostheer*'s anti-partisan effort has generated. The best means of addressing this question is to break the picture down into the periods 1941 and 1942-3, periods which, historically, correspond to the two most distinctive phases in the development of the *Ostheer*'s anti-partisan effort.

12.3. Addressing the historical questions

12.3.1. 1941

The high-level security directives of 1941 targeted not just actual partisans but also any potential source of opposition, including escaped POWs, refugees and above all communist functionaries and Jews. Stalin's decision to escalate the war in the Germans' rear was greeted by Hitler as an excuse to intensify German harshness even further. Whilst ideology was of central importance, particularly in the mushrooming viciousness of the German Army's "security" campaign of autumn 1941, many aspects of the situation which the security divisions themselves faced constituted a recipe for fear and frustration and, consequently, even greater brutality. They did not yet have to contend with a partisan movement of any size, but they did have to reckon with the fact that their insufficient manpower was overstretched across vast areas of often inhospitable terrain. The behaviour of each individual unit nonetheless was influenced by that unit's particular situation and the perceptions of its commanding officer.

Within the 221st Security Division there are strong indications that ideologically-driven ruthlessness did indeed exist to a large degree, both at divisional level and below. Probably by any reckoning, officers' belief in the *Jude gleich Bolschewik gleich Partisan* equation should

be assigned major importance in any assessment of the killing process which was later to unfold. Judged against that of other security divisions, however, it seems that the 221st's potential for ideologically-driven brutality was not quite so uniformly acute as it might have been. Moreover, it appears to have been shaped by forces which were considerably more complex than undiluted ideological conviction, forces which included pragmatism and careerism. Nor is it clear how far officers were ideologically brutalised by their experiences before the campaign and how far by their subsequent experiences.

The 221st's practical difficulties provided another potential source of brutalisation. The division's situation is likely to have been viewed as particularly alarming by officers afeared of guerrilla warfare, accustomed to rapid overwhelming victory and distrustful and contemptuous of the Slavic population. For some officers in the 221st the comedown may have been particularly hard in view of the division's recent success in capturing Bialystok. Indeed, if the 221st's potential for ideological brutality was not as great as that of other security divisions, its potential for brutality borne of its perception of the military situation may have been somewhat greater. The importance of the 221st's situation in fuelling its brutality is indicated perhaps most strongly by the fact that Major Haupt's directive of 6th September, perhaps the single most important trigger for the autumn killing campaign, was issued at a time when it was particularly likely to tap into the fear engendered by suddenly deteriorating military conditions.[6]

There is plenty of support here for Jürgen Förster's emphasis on the importance not only of ideology but also of the military situation in fuelling the spiralling ruthlessness of the German security effort during 1941.[7] It is nonetheless essential to emphasise the importance not just of the situation but also of the harsh anti-guerrilla attitudes which, whilst doubtless strengthened by Nazism, had permeated the German military mind-set since 1870 and ensured that the situation was perceived by many officers in unreasonably dark terms. The attention which Fattig, Browning and Anderson pay to this older mind-set is therefore vindicated.[8] If the military situation did indeed provide the bridge between ideology and mass killing, many of the rivets came supplied courtesy of the Army's military mind-set.

Overall, the picture is one of differentiation. Thus whilst Hannes Heer may have a strong case for arguing that Hitler, higher command levels and many senior field commanders were set on systematically brutalising their troops, the 221st's case suggests that in the field itself this process took place neither systematically nor uniformly. Corresponding as this does to the findings of Truman Anderson's study of the Army Group South Rear Area during 1941, it seems that brutalisation at the *Ostheer*'s lower levels was considerably more varied in cause and degree than Heer gives credit for. The fact that it *was* differentiated, however, means that Heer's interpretation may well apply to some officers, perhaps belonging to the *Frontkämpfergeneration* who arguably had been particularly hardened by their formative life

experiences. The brutalisation process may have been eased in the 221st's case by the fact that General Pflugbeil seems to have had a rather "hands-off" attitude when it came to curbing excess.

Similarly, whilst Joachim Hoffmann, Jörg Friedrich *et al.* cannot be supported in their view that increasingly ruthless German conduct was basically provoked by the ruthlessness of the partisans themselves, their interpretation may be relevant in explaining the brutalisation of a significant number of individual officers. If the 221st's example is anything to go by, however, the full barbarity of *Ostheer* security units in the autumn of 1941 can be attributed only in small degree to this kind of provocation. By no sensible measure was the 221st's conduct in proportion to the pinpricks which the partisans had already managed to inflict upon it. Nor is there any evidence that it can be explained primarily by righteous outrage at reports of the Soviet atrocities which were being encountered by other units. If provocations such as these did indeed contribute to tipping an officer over the edge, they are likely to have had considerable help from the harsh ideological and military attitudes which that officer harboured already.

Nor does the killing seem primarily attributable, as Jörg Friedrich would also have one believe, to the practical notion that victimising Jews and communists as a *Pariahvolk* was a sure means of cementing the loyalty of the population to the German cause. This almost certainly was a consideration, but comparison between lower-level units across security divisions suggests that the degree to which a unit did target Jews and communists, in both the summer and autumn 1941, was determined primarily not by cold pragmatism but by its degree of genuine ideological conviction. This conviction in turn bolstered the belief that Jews and communists were indeed a genuine threat, and not just a pool of convenient reprisal victims.

All told, whilst the end results were morally inexcusable, it seems from analysis of the 221st - along with selective comparison with other units - that conduct was not monocausal but was shaped by complex and varied interactions of ideological, military, circumstantial and personal influences. Whilst the precise make-up of personal influences remains blurred and subject to much speculation, it certainly seems clear that they did play a role in determining the different shades of restraint and brutality which resulted. The analysis of 1941 therefore essentially bears out the central argument of the thesis. It reinforces the picture, which has been tentatively emerging from other low-level case studies of recent years, of a killing process shaped in varied ways by forces more diverse than ideological conviction, the bridge linking ideology, necessity and brutality, or righteous indignation at partisan ruthlessness.

How these findings might be further developed is one of the concerns of the following chapter; meanwhile, the next issue to consider is how far the central argument of the thesis is borne out by analysis of the period 1942-3.

12.3.2. 1942-3

The directives issued by Hitler, the OKW and the OKH during 1942-3 responded to circumstances which were very different to those of 1941. Most of the Jews in the Army Group Centre Rear Area had been either murdered or deported, and the priority now was containing a genuine, expanding and ever more threatening partisan movement. Institutional chaos ensured that the directives which ultimately reached the *Ostheer*'s security divisions were marked to a great extent by confusion and contradiction. Thus whilst the anti-partisan effort cultivated both the population and potential deserters through a range of propaganda and practical means, it also unleashed anti-partisan operations of extreme ferocity and destructiveness which caused the deaths of at the very least tens of thousands of non-combatants. During 1943 in particular, a new dimension of ruthlessness would be added by economic imperatives.

Nonetheless, it would be wrong to describe the ruthlessness of the *Ostheer*'s anti-partisan effort in blanket terms either as a murderous programme of ideologically- and economically-driven barbarity, or as a necessary response to the tensions inherent in any counter-insurgency campaign. It seems rather from the 221st Security Division's example that the mix of cultivation and ruthlessness arrived at by each security division and, in turn, by each of its subordinate units, was shaped in varied ways not only by wider forces but also by particular circumstances and perceptions. The need for inventiveness thrown up by conditions on the ground combined with the freedom of action afforded by higher-level directives, even expressly ruthless ones, to facilitate a myriad of responses in the field.

In the case of the 221st, the emphasis on constructiveness seems to have been more marked than it was in the case of a number of other units. Indeed, the 221st appears on occasion to have outdone what was expected of it in this department. Some of this was generated by the division's situation; in the Jelnja-Dorogobush operations in the spring of 1942 it had to reckon with partisans who were considerably better-equipped and better-trained than the second-rate units at its own disposal. In the Gomel region, it faced first of all a particular dearth of intelligence and then, over a longer period, a severe problem of overstretch. On both occasions, the sensible course of action was to compensate through more effective cultivation of both population and potential deserters. That the 221st took the sensible option was due not just to its situation, however, but also to the personalities shaping policy at divisional level. In contrast to much-cited arguments, then, the 221st's case shows that difficult circumstances and increasing brutality did not necessarily walk hand in hand.[9]

The increased ruthlessness which emerged at the 221st's top levels during 1943 does seem to have been driven primarily by circumstances - namely the worsening economic and security situation. Even at this stage, however, the more sensible heads at the 221st's divisional level seem to have ensured that the division's conduct remained relatively measured; nowhere is this clearer than in the clash with the Hungarians over Operation *Csobo*.[10] *Csobo* is not the only

instance in the 221st's conduct to raise the question of just how uniformly fundamental economic imperatives were to the German anti-partisan effort of 1943. Christian Gerlach depicts a process which, though it varied in pace and form across different areas, was driven primarily by economic factors. Cold economic calculation, he asserts, both radicalised the conduct of operations but also intervened against such "uneconomic" viciousness as was committed by the troops. The 221st's example indicates however that tensions also existed between economic ruthlessness and the more sensible, measured execution of security policy which some *Ostheer* units wanted to pursue. Here as before, the picture of motivation and conduct varies more than much of the previous literature gives credit for.

Meanwhile, the 221st's clash with the 45th Security Regiment over *Csobo* exemplifies the contrast which existed between perceptions at divisional level and perceptions further down. Whereas the 707th Infantry Division seems to have won approval from subordinate units for its particularly ruthless approach,[11] the 221st apparently had less success in winning its subordinate units over to a more measured way of thinking. This was probably due in large part to the fact that the difficulties which assailed a division as a whole, such as partisan ruthless and diminishing fighting power, were felt by the subordinate units in specific, direct and acute ways which often made brutality the more attractive option. Thus, there is some support for the argument that German conduct, during 1942-3 at any rate, was brutalised at least partly by partisan ruthlessness and the security divisions' often insurmountable practical difficulties. That the 45th Security Regiment appears to have been the most consistently vicious subordinate unit during this phase, however, seems to have been due to the pre-existing ideological proclivities of its commanding officer. Thus whilst the anti-Slavic extermination mentality of the type described by Hannes Heer and Wolfram Wette[12] does not offer a blanket explanation for brutality, different degrees in its intensity do seem to have helped ensure that the conduct of some officers and units remained worse than that of others.

Conversely the good sense or more moral, traditional outlook of other officers may have contributed to restraining the ruthlessness of their units. Here again, the clear variations in conduct which existed at the 221st's lower levels during the period support the view that brutalisation not only was borne of a multi-faceted process but also was not inevitable. Nonetheless, "decency" may be far too charitable an explanation for much of this restraint; certainly the motives of the 221st's division-level officers in pursuing some degree of constructive engagement seem to have been more pragmatic than moral. Alexander Dallin's description of rear area officers as having been a lone source of decency in a sea of criminal conduct seems a good deal less convincing, on the whole, than Theo Schulte's more sober arguments about calculating pragmatism.[13] Nonetheless, whilst explanation of personal motives must again remain very speculative, the fact that the degree of brutality which marked some other units was sometimes eschewed in favour of a measure of cultivation again highlights the

importance of personal perceptions. It also shows once more that brutality was not an inevitable outcome of the tensions inherent in the conditions which the Germans faced.

Here as in 1941 then, the picture of motivation and conduct which emerges bears out the central argument of the thesis. It seems that at this stage also wider forces interacted with circumstances and individual perceptions to create varied dynamics across different units. Again, whilst a great deal of speculation remains about the particular make-up of personal motivation, particularly the pre-existing elements forged from earlier life experiences, the differences in perceptions seem to have played a crucial role in shaping the varied and nuanced picture of conduct which emerges.

The final part of this chapter considers how far one can expand from the conclusions which have been reached to come to an assessment of *Ostheer* security units as a whole.

12.4. The continuum of brutality

Whilst the attention of this thesis has focused primarily upon one security division, the many examples of other units which are cited suggest that the varied and nuanced picture presented here is indeed generalisable; indeed, this view is borne out by the sum of previous detailed low-level *Ostheer* case studies.[14] What appear essentially ungeneralisable are the particular balances between ruthlessness and cultivation which existed within particular units, and the mixture of circumstances and personalities which helped strike those balances. That said, it is possible at least to engage in some informed speculation about the wider picture. A simple yet effective way of visualising it is to see the *Ostheer*'s security units strung out along two intersecting continuums, the horizontal labelled "situation", and the vertical "inclination". The place of each security unit on either is determined by how far its conditions (situation) or the mind-set of its officers (inclination) were likely to fuel brutality.

Admittedly, placing any one unit on either continuum is no easy task; its location is determined by complexly interacting situational or personal factors, both of which appear to have changed over time. More daunting still is the task of trying to place the units into some kind of order; indeed, arranging a "representative" sample of units along the continuums with sufficient confidence would be a task for future research utilising a wider range of sources. For now, the tentative conclusion which can be drawn is this. Whilst a great deal of the 221st Security Division's behaviour during the period 1941-3 was morally indefensible, the "intersection" of situation with inclination led in the 221st's case to conduct which was less brutal than that of several other security divisions considered in the course of this thesis. The 221st does not appear to have been unique in this respect - there are clear signs that the 339th Infantry Division, for a time at least, was of a like mind. Though this does not mean that the mentality of either division was "typical" of *Ostheer* security units, it must be stressed that those divisions which were of a more brutal persuasion were not typical either; thus for example whilst the

203rd Security Division found itself in a similar situation to the 221st but was possessed of a markedly more ruthless attitude, the ruthlessness of the 707th Infantry Division's mind-set outdid that of both the 221st and the 203rd.[15] Similarly, ideological ruthlessness during the 1941 campaign seems to have varied significantly if not necessarily greatly - the contrast between the 221st on the one hand with the 286th and 454th on the other illustrates this point clearly.[16]

Nor was there such a thing as a typical, average situation in which a security division found itself. All were subjected to circumstances with the potential to brutalise conduct, but not to the same degree. To take just two examples: firstly, during the period 1942-3 the 201st and 286th Security Divisions were assigned particular priority in terms of manpower allocation, due to the especially alarming degree of partisan disruption taking place in their jurisdictions.[17] Consequently both divisions were allocated a greater portion of available manpower, and this in turn increased their propensity for large mobile operations and therefore brutality. For much of the same period, by contrast, both the 203rd and 221st Security Divisions found themselves further down the pecking order for allocation of reinforcements, and their potential for brutality *generated by this particular cause* was stymied accordingly. Secondly, whilst the potential for brutality of both the 201st and the 203rd Security Divisions during 1942-3 may have been bolstered by the "institutional rivalry" which they may have felt with the SS units with whom they sometimes operated,[18] no such rivalry was a consideration for either the 221st Security Division or the 707th Infantry Division. Whilst this particular well of brutality was closed off, however, the 707th clearly had others to draw from, so far apart was it from the 221st in terms of the overall level of butchery which it inflicted during the eastern campaign. None of this is even to mention a wider set of potential influences upon conduct, the myriad of environmental conditions and ethnic permutations which characterised the German-occupied Soviet Union as a whole and together encompassed not just central Russia but also the entire area from the Baltic to the Caucasus.

As far as possible, moreover, the picture needs to be broken down a level further to encompass not just security divisions but also their subordinate units. Clearly, though the research presented in this thesis enables a better glimpse of the wider picture, the potential for more low-level study of the *Ostheer*'s anti-partisan effort remains great.

12.5. Conclusion

To a significant extent, the thesis has borne out the central arguments, made at the start, about the diversity in the causes and form of conduct at the lower levels of the *Ostheer*'s anti-partisan effort. Whilst the nature of the sources necessarily compels much speculation about particular personal motives, the combination of extensive low-level sources with a longitudinal approach

does constitute a methodological advance and provides insights into a number of historical issues which further the development of the *Wehrmachtsdebatte.*

The final chapter considers potential sources and directions for further development of the research.

Endnotes to Chapter 12

[1] See above, p. 13.

[2] See above, pp. 67, 72-3.

[3] On Meyer's cultivating side see above, Chs. 7-11. On his ideological side see above, pp. 73, 207-9.

[4] See above, pp. 136-8, 214-16.

[5] See above, pp. 209-10.

[6] See above, pp. 83-8.

[7] See above, pp. 6-7.

[8] See above, pp. 5, 10.

[9] On these arguments see above, pp. 6-7, 9, 22-3.

[10] See above, pp. 209-10.

[11] See above, p. 155.

[12] Heer, "Die Logik"; Wette, "Rassenfeind".

[13] Dallin, *German Rule*, pp. 507-8; Schulte, "Wehrmacht", p. 171.

[14] See esp. Schulte, *German Army*; Anderson, *Conduct of Reprisals*; idem., "62. Infanterie-Division", "Incident"; Arnold, "Die Eroberung". See also above, pp. 7-10.

[15] See above, pp. 148-9, 152-6.

[16] See above, pp. 60-3.

[17] See above, footnote 76, Ch. 6; above, p. 150. Both divisions were active in the Witebsk-Polozk area, scene of particularly bloody anti-partisan operations in early 1943. Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*, pp. 828, 928-31.

[18] See above, footnote 50, Ch. 8; Gerlach, *Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik*, pp. 828, 928-31.

CHAPTER 13: DEVELOPING THE RESEARCH

There are numerous ways in which the research presented in this thesis, properly developed, might make further contributions not just to the *Wehrmachtsdebatte* but also to wider research areas in war and society in the twentieth century. This final chapter suggests ways in which this might be achieved.

13.1. Contributing to the *Wehrmachtsdebatte*

There are a number of ways in which new sources might be incorporated to deepen analysis of officer conduct at the lower levels of the *Ostheer*'s anti-partisan effort. For one thing, time constraints prevented a comprehensive examination of every German archive for the purposes of this thesis, but the Bundesarchiv-Zentrale Nachweisstelle near Aachen and the Deutsche Dienststelle in Berlin house diverse low–level sources, including among others literally millions of registration cards and other personal documents, which might be utilised to develop research on particular divisions and units even further down the command structure. They might shed further light on many of the influences upon conduct generated by both situation and by individual officers' perceptions.[1] Meanwhile, the archives which were tapped in the course of this thesis themselves contain further potentially useful sources. A number of the many front-line divisions which were temporarily engaged in anti-partisan operations, for example, are well-represented in the Federal German military archive (BA-MA).[2] It would also be worth systematically accumulating the personal files of rear area security officers, encompassing those housed in both the BA-MA and the Deutsche Dienststelle, in order to investigate further, among other things, the link between different types of conduct by officers and the subsequent patterns of their promotion.

None of this is to mention the potentially vast array of sources in former Eastern bloc archives, including both material generated by German Army units, which subsequently fell into Soviet hands, and Russian-language material. It may prove possible, for example, to locate the administrative files of the 221st Security Division, a potentially highly useful source which is unfortunately absent from federal German archives. It may also be possible to obtain material generated by individual battalions and regiments.[3] Russian-language sources, such as the trials of former German soldiers, *Ost-Truppen* and OD men might prove well worth locating. More fundamentally, the influence of partisan behaviour upon German conduct and the general viewpoint of the civilian population need to be properly considered in order to achieve a fuller picture, and this necessitates consultation of the kinds of Russian-language sources which illuminate that side of events.[4] A search for these kinds of sources might encompass not only major archives but also local-level archives and, indeed, interviews with civilian eyewitnesses.[5] Certainly, there is a need to avoid unwarranted excitement about tapping vast wells of undiscovered sources - former Soviet archives remain very much uncharted water and one

should not necessarily expect them to yield a historiographical pot of gold. Many of these sources are also likely to be accompanied by considerable methodological difficulties which will need to be borne in mind. This line of enquiry remains worthy of consideration nonetheless.

Utilisation of all these extra sources might facilitate more thorough consideration of the circumstantial and personal influences which shaped the conduct of security division officers. Issues which could be considered at greater length rather than just touched upon, as this thesis has sometimes had to do, include the effect of whether a unit was a rear area security unit or had been drafted in temporarily from the front-line,[6] the degree and form of co-operation with other agencies such as the SS, and the length of time which a unit had previously spent in the particularly harsh conditions of the East.[7] The role which partisan groups played could also be researched more fully; seeing as it has proved possible to draw attention to varied conduct among German units, there are also grounds for investigating variation across partisan units and the effect which this had upon the German response. Partisan-generated sources might also reveal more about the true composition of the massive body counts which the *Ostheer* security effort inflicted.

Greater variety and abundance of sources might also enable more detailed comparative study of shorter time-periods. It might for example prove possible to carry out a more detailed comparison of the 221st Security Division with the 203rd Security Division or the 707th Infantry Division during the second half of 1942, focusing particularly on the precise mechanisms of their passive and active security operations.[8] With a more reliable and detailed breakdown of casualty figures, provided in documents generated by both sides - perhaps recording them on a daily basis rather than at the end of the operation - it might be possible to analyse the number of "partisan" dead which a German unit inflicted during a particular operation in relation to aspects of that unit's own situation. Analysis might focus more precisely upon changes in the quality and quantity of the manpower and weapons available to a unit, the size of the area which it had been assigned the task of cleansing and the time limit which it had been set.

Another possibility is to carry out comparative, lower-level analyses of particular phases in the *Ostheer*'s anti-partisan effort. An obvious candidate would be the intensification of autumn 1941. Given that recent studies by Christian Gerlach and others have shown the development of the Final Solution at this time to have been a differentiated process, shaped not only by ideology but also by particular conditions and the ambition and initiative of different agencies and individuals, there seems plenty of call to subject the parallel escalation of the *Ostheer*'s anti-partisan effort to similar scrutiny.[9] There is potential for rigorous comparison, both across and within different security divisions, of the developing situations which units faced during the

period, the changing degree of ideologically or militarily ruthless content in their directives, and the perceptions of the officers who commanded them.

Finally, there are possibilities for an approach extending analysis to the period prior not just to the invasion of Russian but also to the Third Reich itself.[10] With material from the BA-ZN and the Deutsche Dienststelle establishing the identity of officers in terms of social class, religious denomination and other factors, it might prove possible to investigate how the conduct of different generations was shaped by social, political and economic developments from the 1890s on.[11] Research might focus particularly fruitfully on a comparative basis between regions. It might be interesting, for example, to compare the officers of a security division hailing from an industrialised Protestant area - such as the Silesian 221st Security Division - with one from a rural, Catholic background such as the Bavarian 707th Infantry Division.

All this constitutes plenty of food for thought, contingent though it obviously would be upon the quality of the sources which could be unearthed. In addition, there are wider debates to which future research could contribute.

13.2. Contributing to wider debates

One potentially very fruitful line of enquiry involves analysing the lower levels of the *Ostheer*'s anti-partisan effort alongside units of other combatant nations of the Second World War. This would be a means of investigating how and how far the brutal conduct of warfare in general was shaped by the immediate situation, by influences particular to certain societies, by various kinds of racism or by the trend toward mass industrialised warfare during the first half of the Twentieth Century. In the first instance this kind of study might compare German anti-partisan units in Russia with units of Germany's satellites which fought in the same theatre; certainly, questions in this direction are raised by the clash between the 221st Security Division and the Hungarian VIII Corps over Operation *Csobo* in July 1943.[12]

Analysis need not restrict itself to the Eastern Front, however. A further potential area of comparative investigation lies between the Eastern Front and the Pacific War during the same period. Whilst the Pacific War did not approach the Eastern War in terms of destructiveness, loss of life and, on the German side at least, ideologically-driven brutality, research has shown that it encompassed a brutal and pronounced racial aspect and is therefore in some ways comparable.[13] Moreover, whilst not actually a guerrilla war, the hostile environment and ruthless unseen enemy which the US marines faced during their "island-hopping" campaigns made for an experience similar to that of the Germans in Russia; similar to some extent also was the often brutal American conduct.[14] Moreover, with Germany, America and Japan all having industrialised, modernised and expanded at breakneck speed during the 19th and early 20th Centuries, there is particular potential for comparative research into how far brutality was shaped by transnational influences on the one hand and by influences particular to certain

countries on the other. Particularly fruitful, arguably, would be a longitudinal Germany/United States comparison. Whilst there is certainly a danger of overstressing the parallels, the American record on ruthless, racially-influenced military practice prior to the Second World War shows that the German Army did not enjoy a monopoly on brutality. The ransacking of South Carolina by General Sherman's troops during the American Civil War, and then the frequent massacre of Indian tribes and later, during the Spanish-American War, of Philippinos (though not, significantly, of Spaniards) are cases in point.[15]

Investigation might actually go beyond the confines of historical research. Detailed comparative historical studies of the German anti-partisan effort in Russia and other counter-insurgency operations of the Twentieth Century, analysing both their successes and their failures, might prove of considerable value in current efforts by governments, the military or international bodies to organise effective and hopefully more constructive and less unnecessarily brutal counter-insurgency operations. The ongoing prevalence of bloody and often unsuccessful counter-insurgency operations such as those in Vietnam, Afghanistan, the Balkans and most recently Chechnya shows not only that this issue contains much potential for further exploration but also that such an undertaking is very necessary. Here, the rigours of historical analysis might be combined with concepts such as organisation theory.

13.3. Conclusion

This thesis not only contributes to the ongoing *Wehrmachtsdebatte*; it also provides a sound base for further enrichment of the debate utilising a wider range of both German- and Russian-language sources. Its implications also reach beyond the confines of the *Wehrmachtsdebatte* itself, extending to investigation of wider aspects of twentieth-century warfare and also, of most immediate practical benefit, to efforts to realise effective, constructive and less brutal counter-insurgency operations in today's world.

Endnotes to Chapter 13

[1] Christoph Rass, a researcher based in Aachen, has compiled a large amount of such low-level data for the 253rd Infantry Division, a front-line unit which served in central Russia.

[2] See Unpublished Primary Sources.

[3] See: Anderson, "Incident". This article develops Anderson's work on the 62nd Infantry Division using among other things battalion-level material found in Ukrainian archives.

[4] For recent low-level studies of the civilian population in the German-occupied Soviet Union, see: Chiari, *Alltag*; idem., "Die Büchse"; Hill, "Between Two Fires".

[5] Kohl, *Krieg*; Anderson, "Incident".

[6] Anderson, "62. Infanterie-Division"; ibid., "Incident"; Klinkhammer, "Partisanenkrieg", p. 818.

[7] As suggested in: Klinkhammer, "Partisanenkrieg", p. 818.

[8] See above, pp. 152-7.

[9] See above, p. 12; above, footnote 4, Ch. 5. Indeed, the fact that the Army's vicious and to a large extent racially-determined reprisal policy in Yugoslavia during 1941 was initiated without higher-level prompting indicates that this was an instance of just such a radicalised killing process fuelled by regional-level circumstances and individual initiative. See above, p. 5.

[10] Bartov, "Wem gehört die Geschichte?"; Schulte, "German Soldier"; Müller, R.-D., "Die Wehrmacht – Historische Last und Verantwortung".

[11] As suggested by Theo Schulte. Schulte, "German Soldier", p. 279. For an introduction to the debate on the relationship between the Third Reich, the Holocaust and "modernity", see: Kershaw, *Nazi Dictatorship*, pp. 131-49.

[12] See above, pp. 209-10. See also: Anderson, "Hungarian Vernichtungskrieg". For a particularly illuminating comparison of the conduct of German officers and administrators in the Holocaust with the strikingly different behaviour of their Italian counterparts, which considers a diverse range of influences specific to each of the two societies, see: Steinberg, *All or Nothing*.

[13] See: Dower, *War Without Mercy*; Cameron, *American Samurai*. The latter is a unit-level study of the 1st U.S. Marine Division during the Second World War.

[14] Dower, *War Without Mercy*, pp. 61-71.

[15] Truman Anderson cites these cases, though he does not actually draw the same inference. Anderson, *Conduct of Reprisals*, pp. 61-2.

UNPUBLISHED PRIMARY SOURCES

This table lists the bulk of the source material which was consulted over the course of the thesis (the remainder is listed on the pages following the table). The table contains all the information necessary for locating the principal files both in their original form at the Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv (BA-MA) and in the microfilmed versions at the U.S. National Archive (NA). It was felt that such detail was not necessary for every single file which has been used; thus, those which were consulted before the final research topic was decided upon are listed together under their BA-MA numbers only.

The German Army files which survived the Second World War were initially shipped out to the United States, where they were microfilmed before being returned to the German Federal Republic. The originals now reside in the BA-MA, whilst the NA has retained its microfilmed copies. Neither version, however, is 100% complete.

For one thing, a small number of the original documents which were transferred to the BA-MA have subsequently been removed. The number of such missing documents is far too small to suggest any higher-level conspiracy. The most likely explanation is that there have been a handful of cases over the years of "incriminating" documents being removed, either by a particular archivist upon the documents' arrival or, more recently, by an individual visitor to the archive. Conversely, a little "sloppy practice" on the part of some of the American archivists who filmed the original files during the 1940s and 1950s seems the most likely explanation for the absence of a small number of documents from the NA microfilmed versions. All this means that it is important for researchers to check both versions of the files against one another. This is likely to be easier for European researchers than for their North American colleagues, for the BA-MA itself houses its own copies of most of the NA microfilms.

Army Group files

BA-MA group no.	BA-MA file no.	NA series no.	NA file no.
RH 19 II	123	NA T-311	III H371/4B
	124		III H371/4C
	139		65002/30
	153		H 11-8/24
	163		65002/35
	165		65002/37
	166		65002/38/53
	170		65002/20/75852
	170 D		75852
	171		65002/21
	172		65002/22
	173		65002/23
	174		65002/24/69
	175		65002/26
	176		65002/25
	177		65002/28
	178		65002/33
	383		No concurrence

Army files

BA-MA group no.	BA-MA file no.	NA series no.	NA file no.
RH 20-9	373	NA T-312	—
RH 20-18	1279-1281		—

Panzer Army files

BA-MA group no.	BA-MA file no.	NA series no.	NA file no.
RH 21-2	374	NA T-313	28499/58
	403		28499/85
	489		37075/58
	521		37075/91
	541		37075/113
	558		37075/133
	564		37075/141
	574		37075/158
	584		43407/36
	713		75118/34a
	718		30233/66
	719		30233/65
	720		37075/162
	725		37075/167
	727		37075/169
	732		85387
	901		28499/88
	908		37075/90

Army Group Rear Area/Army Rear Area files

BA-MA group no.	BA-MA file no.	NA series no.	NA file no.
RH 22	2	NA T-501	16407/1
	3		16407/2
	4		16407/3
	5		16407/4
	6		16407/5
	7		16407/6
	8		16407/7
	9		16407/8
	10		No conc.
	11		16407/10
	12		16407/11
	13		30910/36
	170		16407/17
	171		16407/18
	185		16133
	186		15338/1
	187		15338/2
	188		15338/3
	224		14684/2Pt1
	225		14684/3
	226		14684/4Pt1
	227		14684/4Pt2
	228		14684/4Pt3
	229		24693/1
	230		24693/2Pt1
	231		24693/3
	232		31491/1
	233		31491/2Pt1
	234		31491/2Pt2
	235		31491/3Pt1
	236		31491/3Pt2
	237 K		14684/2Pt2
	238 K		24693/2Pt2
	243		24693/4
	244		31491/4
	247		14684/5
	248		24693/6
	249		31491/6
	250		18916/1
	251		18916/2
	215		75156/1Pt1
	298		75156/1Pt2

Division files

BA-MA group no.	BA-MA file no.	NA series no.	NA file no.
RH 26-5	7-11	NA T-315	—
RH 26-6	8-52; 56, 57K, 59-60, 62-72, 86-104; 109-11, 114, 116		—
RH 26-9	81, 82, 85-90		—
RH 26-35	88-9, 95-6, 103-5		—
RH 26-50	85		—
RH 26-72	79, 85-92, 98, 100-105		—
RH 26-93	38-9		—
RH 26-96	33		—
RH 26-201	5		29196/1
	6		29196/2
	7		38204/1
	8		38204/3
	9K		77827/1
	10		38204/2
	11		29196/3
	12		38204/4
	18		29196/4
	19		38204/6
RH 26-203	1		29186/1
	2		29186/2
	3		32104
	4		35950/1
	5		35950/2
	6		29186/3
	7		36050
RH 26-207	13		33300/1
	14		33300/2
	15		33300/3
	16		33300/4
	17		33300/5
	18		33300/6
	19		33300/7
	20		39100/1
	21		39100/2
	22		39100/3
	23		44225/1
	24		44225/2
	27		33300/8
	29		39100/4
RH 26-213	3		14424/1
	4		14424/2
	6		14424/4
	7		27358/1
	8		19661/1
	9		27358/2
	11		35307/1
	12		35307/2
	13		42150/1

Division files (continued)

BA-MA group no.	BA-MA file no.	NA series no.	NA file no.
RH 26-221	14	NA T-315	42150/2
	15		27358/4
	17		35307/3
	10		16748/7
	11		16748/8
	12		16748/9
	13b		16748/10
	13a		16748/10
	14		16748/11
	15		16748/12
	16		16748/13
	17		16748/14
	18		16748/15
	19		16748/16
	20		16748/17
	21		16748/18
	22		16748/19
	23		16748/20
	24		16748/21
	25		16748/22
	26		19344/1
	27		19344/2
	28		19344/3
	29		19344/4
	30		19344/5
	31		19344/6
	32		22639/1
	33		22639/2
	34		22639/3
	35		22639/4
	36K		22639/5
	37		29380/1
	38		35408/1
	39		35408/2
	40		29380/2
	41		29380/3
	42		29380/4
	43		29380/5
	44		29380/6
	45		29380/7
	46		36509/1
	47		36509/2
	48		36509/3
	49		36509/4
	50		36509/5
	51		36509/6
	52		36509/7
	53		36509/8
	54		36509/9
	55		36509/10

Division files (continued)

BA-MA group no.	BA-MA file no.	NA series no.	NA file no.
RH 26-221	56	NA T-315	36509/11
	57		36509/12
	58		36509/13
	59		36509/14
	60		36509/15
	61		36509/16
	62		36509/17
	63		36509/18
	64		36509/19
	65		36509/20
	66		36509/21
	67		36509/22
	68		36509/23
	69		W5934/3
	70		16748/23
	71		19344/9
	72		19344/10
	73		22639/6
	74		29380/8
	75		29380/9
	76		36509/24
	78		23562
	79		29380/10
	80		36509/25
	83		16748/24
	84		16748/25
	85		16748/26
	86		19344/7
	87		19344/8
	88		22639/7
	89		22639/8
	90		29380/11
	91		29380/12
	92		29380/13
	93		36509/26
	94		36509/27
	95		36509/28
	98		19344/11
	101		19344/12
	104		23563
RH 26-227	36-76, 96-101, 107-112, 130-150		—
RH 26-251	13, 15-19, 81-2		—
RH 26-253	46		—
RH 26-254	6-7		—
RH 26-258	40-1, 85		—
RH 26-281	2		15954/1
	4		15954/2
	6		15954/5
	7		37996/1

Division files (continued)

BA-MA group no.	BA-MA file no.	NA series no.	NA file no.
RH 26-281	8	NA T-315	77842/1
	9		77842/3
	10		37966/4
	11		43887/2
	12		43887/1
	13		15954/4
	14		43494
	25 A		15954/14
	25 B		77842/2
	29		37996/9
	31		37966/10
	33		43887/4
RH 26-285	4		14878/3
	5		14878/4
	7		22041/1
	8		22041/3
	10		29241/2
	12		35155/2
	15		43060/2
	17		14878/5
	18		22041/8
	19		29241/3
	20		35155/4
	21		43060/4
	42		43405/1
	44		43405/3
	46		43405/4
RH 26-286	2		16182/1
	3		16182/2
	4		16182/3
	5		16182/4
	8		38424/1
	9		38424/2
	10		16182/5
	12		29027
	13		38424/3
	14		16182/6
	16		16182/8
RH 26-299	124		—
RH 26-339	5		13914/4
	7		13914/6
	16		29087/2
RH 26-339	18		29087/4
	36		22441/7
	38		29087/9
	39		44418/6
RH 26-403	2		15701/1
	3		15701/2
	4		15701/3
	7		32103/2

Division files (continued)

BA-MA group no.	BA-MA file no.	NA series no.	NA file no.
RH 26-444	6	NA T-315	19403/1
	7		30260/1
RH 26-444	8		35770/1
	9		35770/2
	10		19403/2
	11		30260/2
	12		35770/3
	17		19403/5
	18		30260/4
	19		35770/5
RH 26-454	5		20179/1
	6		20179/2
	7		20179/3
	8		20179/4
	9		20179/5
	10		20179/6
	12		22866/1
	13		22866/2
	14		22866/3
	15		22866/4
	17		34026/1
	18		34026/2
	19		34026/3
	20		34026/4
	21		35222/1
	22		35222/2
	23		35222/3
	25		20179/8
	26		20179/9
	27		20179/10
	28		20179/11
RH 26-707	2		WK VII/527
	3		No conc.
	4		27797/1
	5		27797/2
	6		27797/3
	7		27797/4
	8		27797/5
	9		41762/1
	10		41762/2
	11		41762/3
	12		41762/4
	13		41762/7
	15		WK VII/527
	15 D		WK VII/527
	16		27797/6
	17		41762/5
	18		41762/5
	19		41762/6
∫	21		45546

Panzer Division files

BA-MA group no.	BA-MA file no.	NA series no.	NA file no.
RH 27-11	91	NA T-315	21708/6
	95		26009/8
	96		27973/4
	97		30137/5
	98		34132/7

Wirtschaftsinspektion/Wirtschaftskommando files

BA-MA group no.	BA-MA file no.	NA series no.	NA file no.
RW 31	554	NA T-77	WiID/358
	555		WiID/359
	556		WiID/360
	557		WiID/361
	558		WiID/362
	559		WiID/363
	560		WiID/364
	561		WiID/365
	562		WiID/366
	563		WiID/367
	564		WiID/368
	565		WiID/369
	566		WiID/370
	567		WiID/371
	568		WiID/372
	569		WiID/373
	570		WiID/374
	571		WiID/375
	575		WiID/379
	576		WiID/380
	577		WiID/381
	580		WiID/394
	584		WiID/336
	585		WiID/354
	586		WiID/356
	588		WiID/345
	590		WiID/347
	592		WiID/349
	593		WiID/350
	594		WiID/351
	595		WiID/352
	602		Wi/ID/4.34
	603		Wi/ID/4.22
	767		WiID/876
	768		WiID/877
	769		WiID/878
	771		WiID/846
	772		WiID/847
	773		WiID/848
	774		WiID/849
	775		WiID/850

Wirtschaftsinspektion/Wirtschaftskommando files (continued)

BA-MA group no.	BA-MA file no.	NA series no.	NA file no.
RW 31	776	NA T-77	WiID/865
	787		WiID/818
	795		WiID/733
	796		WiID/735
	807		WiID/734
	814		WiID/811
	816		WiID/748
	817		WiID/749
	818		WiID/750
	819		WiID/751
	820		WiID/752
	821		WiID/753
	824		WiID/861
	825		WiID/862
	826		WiID/863
	827		WiID/864
	830		WiID/853
	831		WiID/854
	832		WiID/855
	833		WiID/856
	834		WiID/857
	837		WiID/1082
	848		WiID/842
	849		WiID/843
	870		WiID/816

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Bundesarchiv Koblenz

File B 120/589.

Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv, Freiburg-im-Breisgau

Pers 6 files: RH7/704, /707, /714; Pers 6 1616H/AS35747, 546H/AS63343, 853H/AS46467, 8709H/AS32213, 10239H/AS96, 12278H/AS49246, 888H/47779, 943H/AS62045, 796H/Bem. s. a. H6/26a MsG109, 2577H/AS32860, 673H/AS28303, 6900H/AS60275.

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