
REVIEW ESSAY

Syncretic Subculture or Stalinism without Stalin? Soviet Partisans as Communities of Violence

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Fedor Danilovich Gnezdilovo was born in 1898 to a poor peasant family in Voronezh province. Long before he became a famous partisan, he joined the counterinsurgency troops fighting the insurrections in Turkestan that began in 1916. During the Civil War he joined the Red Army to fight the Whites in the South, then returned to Central Asia to “liquidate bands” of rebels in the early 1920s. Having finished only a one-class peasant school, he was too illiterate to take advantage of an invitation to study at a party school, he recalled, but after demobilization at the end of 1922 he began work as an executioner for Soviet courts in Central Asia. “Eleven years I shot enemies of the people who were sentenced by our Soviet court,” he proudly told the Academy of Sciences Historical Commission, the so-called Mints Commission, in May 1942.¹ By 1929 he had “gone psycho” (*zapsikhoval*), as he readily admitted in his interview, but was cured after six months in a psychiatric institute. He moved to Moscow and found work in the department of prisons of the NKVD. He did

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¹“Stenogramma Besedy s komandirov partizanskogo otriada t. Gnezdilovym F.D. ot 31 maia 1942 g.,” Nauchnyi arkhiv Instituta rossiiskoi istorii Rossiiskoi Akademii nauk (NA IRI RAN), f. 2, r. II, op. 2, ed. khr. 26a, ll. 1–14. On the Mints Commission see: Oleg Budnitskii, “A Harvard Project in Reverse: Materials of the Commission of the USSR Academy of Sciences on the History of the Great Patriotic War—Publications and Interpretations,” *Kritika* 19 (Winter 2018): 175–202; D. D. Lotareva, “Komissiiia po istorii Velikoi Otechestvennoi Voiny i ee arkhiv: Rekonstruktsiia deiatel'nosti i metodov raboty,” in *Arkheograficheskii ezhegodnik*, ed. S. O. Shmidt (Moscow, 2014), 123–66; Jochen Hellbeck, *Stalingrad: The City that Defeated the Third Reich*, trans. Christopher Tauchen and Dominic Bonfiglio (New York, 2015), esp. 68–82.

not give any details about his work for the NKVD between 1933 and 1937, but in the opening year of the Great Terror he left both the NKVD and the Communist party. One can only speculate that he found it safer or more bearable to become a repairman of escalators and trucks for the city of Moscow—a skill that served him well during the war when his unit fixed up broken tanks.²

The outbreak of the war found Gnezdilovo mobilized as part of a militia (*opolchenie*) of the Kirov section of Moscow, guarding an airfield and a section of roads. Wounded twice in encirclement, hiding in a trench for twelve days, Gnezdilovo eventually reached El'ninskii raion of Smolensk oblast. The number of men under his command grew to several thousand by early 1942. He became the military commander of the 24th Anniversary of the Red Army Regiment, directing one of the main units of the so-called Dorogobuzhskii partizanskii krai that restored Soviet power in an area of approximately 8,000 km² in Smolensk oblast for six months in 1942. He was awarded the Order of the Red Banner by Marshall Zhukov himself.

The first, symbolic name Gnezdilovo initially gave his tiny partisan detachment in November 1941—consisting of “eight guys” (8 *rebiat*)—was “F.D.” These were the initials of his name and patronymic, Fedor Danilovich. But they also stood for Feliks Dzerzhinskii, creating a link between his own wartime prowess and “Iron Felix,” the Old Bolshevik founder of the Cheka.³

How can we understand this extraordinary trajectory? Insofar as Gnezdilovo's prewar experiences were preconditions for his wartime activities, Stalinism can be seen as shaping the wartime conjuncture well behind German lines. Mark Edele and Michael Geyer have underlined the important role played by “cadres of totalitarian violence,” those groups of Soviet citizens who were “not only mentally, but practically prepared” for the brutalization of the war on the Eastern front.⁴ On the other hand, Gnezdilovo's transformation into a partisan commander was only made possible by radically different wartime conditions. In his Mints Commission interview, Gnezdilovo bluntly recounted his exploits in a colloquial voice very different from the often still frank, yet more official tone used by the *raikom* secretaries, NKVD operatives, ex-army officers, and other more educated party-state officials who comprised the largest portion of the partisan “elite.” Preoccupied with his own importance, bragging about how many prisoners, marauders, and Germans he routinely liquidated, Gnezdilovo made it abundantly clear that his ascent to prominence could only have come with the collapse of the Soviet state in 1941.

In her landmark new book, Masha Cerovic describes how the partisans were born in the violence of total war, but claims that neither Stalinism nor Nazi terror alone suffice to explain the partisan phenomenon. In her often fresh and always interesting interpretation, they arose because the German occupants threatened their existence and created conditions approaching 1917: the collapse of the state and the massive return of soldiers to the village. Cerovic paints a collective portrait of partisan commanders as guerilla warlords reminiscent of the rough, independent partisans of the Civil War.⁵ In response, one can note the key

²“Stenogramma Besedy s komandirov partizanskogo otriada t. Gnezdilovym F.D.”

³Ibid.

⁴Michael Geyer and Mark Edele, “States of Exception,” in *Beyond Totalitarianism: Stalinism and Nazism Compared*, ed. Geyer and Sheila Fitzpatrick (Cambridge, England, 2009), 365.

⁵For a sample of Cerovic's work in English see her “Fighters Like No Others: The Soviet Partisans in the Wake of War,” in *Seeking Peace in the Wake of War: Europe, 1943–1947*, ed. Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann et al. (Amsterdam, 2015), 203–16.

difference between the revolutionary epoch and World War II. The fact that the two powerful, centralized, and hyper-ideological regimes and their warring armies remained intact in the second war gave the partial Soviet state collapse and resulting power vacuum a very different valence. In what ways does it make sense to connect the partisans to Stalinism? Where does a figure such as Gnezdilovo fit within the partisan phenomenon? The issue of how to explain biographical trajectories leads us to the bigger problem of how to conceptualize the partisan movement operating behind German lines on the Eastern Front in World War II.

The partisan war in German-occupied Soviet territories, according to the figures given by Cerovic, involved a half-million combatants and an equal number of deaths, most of them civilian. It encompassed approximately 110,000 partisans mostly based in forest camps and marshlands by March 1943, about 60,000 of them in Belarus (pp. 16, 62). It sparked a veritable civil war in the occupied territories between pro-Soviet partisans and local collaborationist policemen and village elders.

There was a time when Western historians had access only to German military records and were primarily concerned with the partisans as ancillary players—neither insignificant nor decisive—in the military history of World War II.⁶ Post-Soviet historians have been able to mine massive amounts of internal Soviet documents, both central and local, moving the political, cultural, social, ideological, and biographical dimensions of the partisan movement to the center of scholarly considerations. Much attention has been paid to the role of Jewish partisans as analysis of interethnic and gender relations among the partisans has come to the fore. All the while, the glorification of the heroic partisan has only grown in the context of the burgeoning war myth and nationalistic memory politics of today's Russia, although the resulting public interest has arguably given certain related topics such as the history of the German occupation a boost among professional historians.⁷ Among the most notable recent Russian contributions to scholarship on the partisans is the annotated publication under review here of 146 documents and additional trophy German records declassified from the Presidential Archive of the Russian Federation.

The question of how to interpret the partisan phenomenon in all its dimensions raises another big issue, how to link the study of the war to bigger historical narratives about Soviet history. The time when historians “skipped” the war is long past. But there remains a strong dose of ambiguity about how to integrate the war years and the experience of occupation into the grand narratives of Soviet history. The partisan war, moreover, connects key issues in Soviet history with the study of the German occupation, which are still too rarely linked.⁸ From the outset, as I will discuss at the end of this essay, the partisan threat became a German obsession. In Nazi wartime ideology, the figure of the partisan became deeply intertwined with Jews and Bolsheviks. German antipartisan warfare quickly had a profound impact on German occupation policies and led to major atrocities. As a result, the partisans do not belong solely to Soviet history. The intertwined history of the partisan

⁶John A. Armstrong, ed., *Soviet Partisans in World War II* (Madison, 1964).

⁷There are many noteworthy works in Russian on the German occupation but see, *inter alia*, Igor' Ermolov, *Russkoe gosudarstvo v nemetskom tylu: Istoriia Lokotskogo samoupravleniia 1941–1943* (Moscow, 2009); and idem, *Tri goda bez Stalina: Okkupatsiia. Sovetskie grazhdane mezhdu natsistami i bol'shevikami 1941–1944* (Moscow, 2010).

⁸Here see Michael David-Fox, “The People’s War: Ordinary People and Regime Strategies in a World of Extremes,” *Slavic Review* 75 (Fall 2016): 551–59, which introduced a five-article cluster, “Occupations and Liberations in World War II.”

movement and the German antipartisan war points to a kind of entangled history of the Eastern front that expands and shifts the dimensions of the field.

DEBUNKING MYTHS AND COMMUNITIES OF VIOLENCE

One not uncommon approach to a topic so politicized as the Soviet partisan movement—and this applies to other aspects of Soviet history as well—is to make debunking myths into the primary purpose of scholarship. In the case of the partisans, this has meant highlighting the prevalence of all the features of the partisan movement that contradict the heroic image of the patriotic or ideologically committed partisan. That includes the prevalence of marauding, forced requisitioning, forced conscription, and terror waged against collaborators in the local population.

The problem with the scholarship of demythologization, however, is that its interpretive agenda is shaped in opposition as a kind of antithesis. Comparing the three most important books on the partisans—Kenneth Slepyan’s 2006 book in English, Bogdan Musial’s 2009 book in German, and Masha Cerovic’s new book in French under review—is instructive in this regard.⁹ The very subtitle of Musial’s book—*Mythos und Wirklichkeit*, counterposing “myth” to “reality”—signals that of the three it was most directed by a mission of puncturing Soviet and post-Soviet Russian mythology surrounding the partisans.¹⁰

When combined with in-depth research focusing on Belarus and close attention to the politics of organizing the partisan movement, Musial’s agenda did yield notable results. For example, Musial provided additional detail to Slepyan’s fine treatment of the early party-state institutional cacophony surrounding the fragmented, small, and harried partisan units formed in 1941–42. The three-way institutional conflict among the NKVD, the Red Army, and the party for control of the partisan movement is well established in the literature. As Musial emphasized, the fearsome NKVD initially held the dominant position. Pavel Sudoplatov, head of the NKVD’s Department of Special Tasks, later the Fourth Department/ Administration, was in charge of covert operations in the occupied territories. Focusing on Minsk oblast, Musial showed how many of the first partisans were jointly organized by local party activists and NKVD personnel together (regional party functionaries formed a fourth point in the institutional jockeying for influence). Lavrenty Beria, as others have also noted, was the first to push for more centralized command over the partisans, with the unrealized hope that the NKVD’s strong initial role would grant it primacy.¹¹

The Red Army, both its High Command and Lev Mekhlis, the ex-red professor who became its political chief, from the first also launched attempts to direct many partisan activities, and in the second half of 1942 seems to have lent support to the NKVD. But it was Panteleimon Ponamarenko, the Belorussian party first secretary who after a number of twists and turns in 1942 emerged victorious as head of a new, centralized organ, the Central Staff of the Partisan Movement (TsShPD). The NKVD’s terror over the party had been

⁹Kenneth Slepyan, *Stalin’s Guerillas: Soviet Partisans in World War II* (Lawrence, KS, 2006); Bogdan Musial, *Sowjetische Partisanen 1941–1944: Mythos und Wirklichkeit* (Paderborn, 2009).

¹⁰For another prodigiously researched work in a similar vein, in this case caught up in the Russian-Ukrainian memory wars, see Aleksandr Gogun, *Stalinskie kommandos: Ukrainskie partizanskie formirovaniia 1941–1944* (Moscow, 2012).

¹¹Alfred J. Rieber, *Stalin and the Struggle for Supremacy in Eurasia* (Cambridge, England, 2015), 269–70; and, more generally, *Organy gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti SSSR v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine: Sbornik dokumentov*, 5 vols. (Moscow, 1995–2007).

walked back between 1939 and 1941. In 1942, Stalin picked Ponamarenko, a party figure unversed in military matters, to strengthen the partisan movement and minimize disunity in Moscow's oversight over it. Ponamarenko met with Stalin five times in September 1942 as the more centralized direction for the partisan movement was put in place. Ponamarenko's win meant, as Musial put it, that "political-ideological considerations sharply influenced the decision about the direction of the Central Headquarters."¹² In other words, Ponamarenko's depiction of a supposedly mass, "all-people's movement" came into accord with Stalin's emphasis on the party-political element in directing the partisan struggle. This also explains the partisans' reinstatement of the office of political commissar after it was abolished in the Red Army.

Quite unlike Cerovic, who stresses local autonomy from the center, Musial's demythologizing mission prompted him to overemphasize top-down control. He first depicted the influence of NKVD organs in forming the partisan movement and checking partisans for political loyalty as decisive. Later, he underlined that ideologically "firm" elements fueled the growth of the partisan movement. The creation of the Central Staff furthered "party control"—that hoary trope from the totalitarian school playbook—over the partisans.¹³ To be sure, when suggesting the powerful hostility of local populations to the partisans, especially in the initial phase after the German invasion, Musial only repeated what many other sources confirm. This began to change in 1942 and especially by 1943 in response to German rule, the harsh reprisals of the German antipartisan war and myriad other atrocities, and, not least, the fortunes of war in the wake of Stalingrad. Yet it remains the case that an agenda of debunking Soviet myths tends to prompt categorical formulations in response, as opposed to deeper investigation of evolving, often more subtle political, social, cultural, and ideological threads woven into the tapestry of motivations behind German lines.

But how much does the strong presence of NKVD cadres in setting up many partisan units or of *raikom* secretaries and other party-state elites in joining their leadership tell us about the partisan phenomenon? In war, as in revolution, the collapse of centralized state power can prompt often startlingly rapid evolutions in attitudes and practices. Although Musial emphasized party-state control, the very distance of partisans behind enemy lines and myriad Soviet agencies involved even after the formation of the Central Staff gave partisans on the ground unusually wide latitude to maneuver. How were the pro-Soviet forces, including prewar cadres of violence, welded into a new wartime amalgam? These questions demand attention not only to the politics and military activities of the partisan movement but also to the way the partisan movement fostered a kind of subculture or society-in-miniature.

This brings us to Kenneth Slepyan's *Stalin's Guerillas*, which remains the best comprehensive history of the Soviet partisans. On the contest for political control, the stages of the movement's development, the thorny issue of relations with local populations, and myriad other issues Slepyan provided well-informed, sure-footed guidance. But at the heart of his work lay an argument revolving around the partisan "ethos." Slepyan entered into the topic by way of the pejorative term *partizanshchina*, with its implications of ideological unorthodoxy, yet also holding connotations of the "rough egalitarianism" of the Red and anarchist partisans of the Civil War. "In the popular imagination," as he noted, partisans "were customarily associated with autonomy from the state, wildness, spontaneity,

¹²Musial, *Sowjetische Partisanen*, 149.

¹³*Ibid.*, 54, 86, 172.

and the freedom to pursue the ‘good life’—to enjoy wine, women, and song.”¹⁴ This kind of wartime *volia*, of course, differed greatly from the statist hierarchy of Stalinism.

This partisan “ethos” glorified freedom of mobility and a certain dashing style in a “wild, masculinized world” fueled by alcohol that “offered few of the refinements and none of the rules that constituted the Soviet ideal of modern, urbanized civilization.” It distinguished the guerillas from both civilians and front-line soldiers, and its egalitarianism clashed with “Stalinist norms of political control and subordination, social hierarchy, status, and duty.” One key corollary was that “bad behavior even in otherwise obedient units could be politicized ... as defiance to the center, whether or not the partisans intended it as such.”¹⁵ It may appear that this description of the partisan ethos was in tension with Slepyan’s concerted attempt throughout the book to draw out continuities not with the Civil War period but with the 1930s (the former was mediated through the cult of the 1934 blockbuster film *Chapaev*). For example, Slepyan’s chapter on the “imagined Stalinist community” among the partisans described a world replete with patriarchal mini-Stalins among the commanders, a vision of spies and traitors everywhere, widespread observance of Soviet political rituals, and rampant practices of denunciation. Are the two lines of analysis incompatible? Any answer to this question must balance partisan and wartime particularities with Soviet and Stalinist commonalities.

Slepyan analyzed the partisans not only in cultural terms, which cut across internal divisions in his discussion of ethos, but also in social terms, picturing the partisans as a kind of mini-society marked by striking social stratification. The partisan elite, with its leadership cadres drawn from former military, party, and NKVD officials—all those emphasized by Musial—formed a leadership core marked by exclusivity from the troubled early days of the movement. These predominantly Slavic and male elites enjoyed better rations, quarters, and matériel, while other groups were marginalized. As the partisan movement expanded in 1943, an influx of new members and hundreds of new detachments, the veterans successfully fended off many elements of the agenda of giving their exclusive communities a more “all-people’s” character. Minorities, Jews, women, locals, and former subalterns such as white-collar types without rural or military experience, and former collaborators joining the movement all remained “second-class citizens at best.”¹⁶

It might be seen as a virtue that Slepyan did not attempt to flatten out or homogenize the features of the partisan movement, both connected and autonomous from the Soviet “mainland” (*bol'shaia zemlia*). One must not forget that there existed an array of different types of partisan units. Partisan commanders and their units may not have found it overly difficult to stay in Moscow’s good graces, as the various agencies fighting for control over the partisans allowed local commanders to play them off against one another or ignore conflicting directives. The formation of the Central Staff in 1942 minimized the rampant early infighting, but there was still a constant flow of plenipotentiaries among the key players. Even so, Slepyan argues that the Central Staff’s command-and-control operations and rough insistence on at least outward ideological conformity was ultimately a success story. In less than a year, the Soviets had created a “partisan administration from scratch that addressed the multiple demands of waging a guerilla war.”¹⁷

¹⁴Slepyan, *Stalin’s Guerillas*, 2–3.

¹⁵Ibid., 140, 142.

¹⁶Ibid., 266.

¹⁷Ibid., 133.

In the end, Slepian's landmark overview of the partisan phenomenon established a terrain on which future in-depth investigations could productively build. His work depicted strong elements of autonomy and the center's improbable success in exerting influence from afar; an egalitarian subculture and a stratified partisan "society"; continuations of the 1930s and a specifically wartime paradigm. Partisans "consciously or unconsciously" maintained a Soviet mentality even as their movement displayed roots in the prerevolutionary past. Elements of Stalinist civilization were integrated into tightly-knit "collectives" that incorporated strong military and rural influences, along with new adaptations to living in German-occupied territory. Even as the partisan movement was a unique wartime phenomenon, it was one that was nonetheless impossible to separate from the society from which it emerged. In sum, the partisan phenomenon represented, in Slepian's words, a "hybrid."¹⁸

Masha Cerovic's new book is the most important study on the Soviet partisans since Slepian's. In its first incarnation as a dissertation, its title referred to the partisans not as "Children of Stalin," as in the book, but as *Les Enfants de Joseph* (The Children of Joseph).¹⁹ Cerovic borrowed this double entendre, evoking at once Iosif Vissarionovich and the biblical Joseph, from the words of a Ukrainian peasant woman quoted in the diary of the partisan Semen Vasil'evich Rudnev (1899–1943). In the Bible, a great misdeed forced Joseph into a long exile and separation from his family: he was sold into slavery. But in Genesis 48:5, Joseph finally was able to bring his sons Ephraim and Manassah to be blessed by his father, Jacob, at the end of the patriarch's life. Rudnev, commenting in his journal on the Ukrainian woman's words, claimed a role for the partisans even greater than long-lost offspring or disenfranchised heirs; they were "apostles" because of their role as the people's avengers.²⁰ Regrettably, "Children of Joseph" may have been too obscure to serve as the title for Cerovic's book. Yet the dualistic evocation of biblical imagery about outcasts long separated from their clan and Stalin the patriarchal *vozhd'* fits the book's message more than the current title, stripped of its rich ambivalence—the very quality Cerovic evokes at the outset for the figure of the partisan more generally (p. 17).

If Slepian referred to hybridity in the sense of a more or less equally weighted crossing between Soviet and novel wartime elements, Cerovic develops her own interpretation in terms of what she calls the Soviet partisans' "syncretic identity." In her words, they were "children of the village and of the Revolution, of a rural Russian culture penetrated by a religious *imaginaire* and a revolutionary messianism also incarnated by Stalin" (p. 20). As this suggests, Cerovic finds syncretism in an amalgamation of rural societies, with their longstanding traditions of guerilla insurrections, social banditry, and criminality, and certain incarnations of Soviet or Stalinist ideas and practices. In Cerovic's work, however, the weight of emphasis falls significantly more than Slepian and qualitatively more than Musial on partisan independence from the center. Syncretism appears in her overall formulation, but the central explanatory reference point becomes the local, group dynamics that drove the partisans in their forest camps and fighting formations.

No one in Moscow or Berlin, Cerovic argues at the outset, understood or controlled what happened in the forests and swamplands of Belarus, the western Russian Federation,

¹⁸Ibid., 287, 5.

¹⁹Masha Cerovic, "Les Enfants de Joseph. Les partisans soviétiques (1941–1944): Révolution, guerre civile et résistance armée à l'occupation allemande en URSS" (Ph.D. diss., University of Paris I Pantheon Sorbonne, 2012).

²⁰Cerovic, "Les Enfants de Joseph," 492.

and those parts of Ukraine where the partisan movement could take hold. None of the archives produced by either the Soviet or the German states can explain why partisans “without contact with Moscow” took up arms (p. 17). With the onset of war, she rightly emphasizes, the Soviet party-state had lost its jealously protected monopoly on violence. The shock of Barbarossa severely discredited the Soviet apparatus; for partisans, the dividing line was not between party and non-party, but between those who took up arms behind enemy lines and the *apparatchiki* who had evacuated to the rear (p. 94). In her conclusion, Cerovic advances the claim that the partisans were driven by immediate threats to their existence and, by extension, local dynamics rather than patriotism, idealism, or the appeal of Stalin (p. 304). In all of these formulations, the syncretism is conceptually weighted toward the local, wartime, rural communities rather than affinities with Stalinism. The partisans were more the children of the metaphorical, biblical Joseph than the canny Kremlin dictator. It is worth underlining, however, that in the pan-European context it was precisely institutionalized Soviet state sponsorship and oversight that distinguished the Soviet partisans from all other guerilla resistance movements in the greater Reich.²¹

Cerovic does include into the mix the bureaucratic politics on the Soviet side and adroitly incorporates military dimensions of partisan history. But the crux of her contribution lies in chapters 4, 5, and 8, where she focuses more intensively than previous historians on the forest camps, the brigades, the commanders of the partisan units, and partisan terror against collaborators in the village. In these chapters, Cerovic paints a collective portrait of the partisans as communities of violence. The masculine, folksy *noms de guerre* taken by the commanders—Batia, Dedushka, Diadia—were familial. Their communities, as this signaled, were in a way ersatz families. Forged by wartime isolation, partisan communities were exclusive and “closed,” in the sense that they were radically separated from the civilian order. Cerovic describes their values as in many ways communal and, more than the Red Army, predominantly Slavic and masculine. Inside the brigades Cerovic found no trace of discrimination among different Slavic nationalities, but non-Slavic minorities and Jews were quite another matter. Of particular interest is her discussion of sexuality and gender, which treats partisan relations with women as more multifaceted than traditional misogyny. “Their bodies were an object of suspicion, violence, pleasure, and prestige. In this war of men, they had their place as victims, martyred heroines, devoted mothers, faithful wives” (p. 109).

The partisans had thus left their often shattered lives for a new family that was formed in a wartime baptism of fire (p. 303). In a tactic typical of guerillas, partisans adopted a strategy of territorialization aimed at fragmenting German possessions into a multitude of sovereignties. Partisan-held zones resembled less Soviet territory than quasi-sovereign fiefdoms in conflict with one another, since the commanders often feuded against the other rivals and conducted themselves as charismatic warlords. Cerovic justifies this designation by describing the fiefdoms as closed systems in which commanders’ word was law; they operated not as part of a movement or party but as judge, jury, and executioner, even as they may have established what she calls at one point the “fiction” of Soviet power (p. 150). While the Soviet state provided resources and symbolic legitimization, the

²¹Slepyan, *Stalin’s Guerillas*, 104; Gogun, *Stalinskie kommandos*, 487–88. On the twists and turns of Soviet political and (in mid-1944) military support of the Yugoslav partisans see Tommaso Piffer, “Stalin, the Western Allies and Soviet Policy towards the Yugoslav Partisan Movement, 1941–4,” *Journal of Contemporary History* (forthcoming), pre-published online November 17, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022009417737602> (last accessed January 6, 2019).

underground party committees were in practice largely subordinated to the brigades. Partisan leaders in all these activities were not anti-Soviet but rather wished, Cerovic writes, to be true Bolsheviks without the apparatus of the party—a distinction impossible under Stalin (p. 89). The brigades and their leaders thus forged a novel legitimacy for themselves that derived not from the party-state or Stalinism, but from combat.²²

Above all, these were communities grounded in violence—the central motif of Cerovic’s work. Partisan violence was highly performative, as was in different ways much German violence, although Cerovic does not make such comparisons, relying on German archival sources primarily to establish military context. Whether the partisan objective was military, political, or economic, Cerovic writes, the method remained the same: a rapid nocturnal attack against an enemy identified in advance, contributing to the partisan legend and inspiring terror.

This enemy was, moreover, most often not German, but an intimate one, those local “traitors to the Motherland” serving the Germans as policemen and village elders. It was characterized by a mentality of vengeance and an advocacy of total extermination against both Germans and their servants. The “civil war” mentality animating the partisan terror against civilian collaborators often went beyond what the Soviet state was prepared to do on the eve of re-Sovietization. In keeping with the theme of this distinctive, wartime partisan culture, Cerovic emphasizes the difficulties partisans faced in reintegrating into the Soviet order toward the end of the war.

HYBRIDITY, SYNCRETISM, AND STALINISM

Cerovic’s intensive twin focus on partisan culture inside the camps and brigades, on the one hand, and partisan commanders and the role of violence, on the other, takes us away from the Moscow management of the movement that generated many of the sources and deeper into the question of partisan distinctiveness. But it is open to critique and, like all important works, raises questions for further investigation.

On the face of it, asserting the hybrid or syncretic nature of the partisan movement seems uncontroversial. It seems clear enough that the partisan movement incorporated a number of Soviet, popular, and rural strands reshaped into a new amalgam forged in the crucible of war on the Eastern Front. But Slepyan and Cerovic advanced the notions of hybridity and syncretism without delving into the implications of those concepts themselves. Both hybridity and syncretism as scholarly concepts run up against the problem of how discrete and pure are the parts that are pictured as welded together.²³ In anthropology, syncretism refers to the combination of two or more cultural traditions that blend together into a new combination, the classic example of which is the merging of a major religion with indigenous traditions. In this sense, the term fits very well with Cerovic’s stress on a rural-Soviet diarchy in wartime partisan culture. But it becomes problematic if we conceive of both partisan and Soviet culture as more complex amalgams of multiple elements and orientations. All cultures (and this goes even for Stalinist political culture in its most isolationist phases) are not discrete and bounded, but made up of many elements and never

²²By contrast, Alexander Statiev portrays partisan violence against civilians stemming from the proclivities of “Stalinist culture” exacerbated by conflicts such as those over requisitioning. See Statiev, “Soviet Partisan Violence against Soviet Civilians: Targeting Their Own,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 69:9 (2014): 1525–52.

²³The annual theme of *Ab Imperio* in 2018 was “Rethinking Hybridity and Purity in a Global Perspective,” and the first two numbers of the journal have explored this problem in depth.

static. In the conclusion to her book, Cerovic offers yet another metaphor when referring to the partisan “mutation.” This implies a departure from an originally shared genetic makeup.

Writing in sweeping, dramatic prose, Cerovic has striven in this book to distill the essence of partisan wartime culture and violence. She explicitly aims to generalize about the partisans as a whole, announcing at the outset that the work strives for a synthetic, overall, or “global” analysis of a “unique” phenomenon (*une analyse globale de ce phénomène unique* [p. 20]). But cultural-historical “lumping” runs in different directions than political, social, and ideological “splitting.” How fully merged were the different elements of the partisan movement? Can internal conflicts within the partisan movement be ascribed to a less-than-seamless fusion? After all, the partisan movement was made up of many subgroups: local rural recruits, Red Army *okruzhentsy*, and, as both Musial and Slepian convincingly emphasized, an “elite” strongly grounded in local and regional party-state cadres, supplemented by the center in partisan training schools. We know least about both the rural and *okruzhentsy* pillars of the partisan rank-and-file, many of them either conscripted or drawn into the movement by the imperative of survival. In questioning the importance of the communist component, Cerovic reports that the 22,000 Communist partisans in Belarus during the war comprised only 10 percent of the total number, yet about 10,000 of them had been admitted to the party in unregulated admissions during the course of the conflict itself. It is not clear where this figure comes from, since endnote 55 on page 84 leads only to a secondary work on the intelligentsia of Belarus under German occupation. However, I. P. Shcherov’s figures on the overall composition of Belarus partisans for the entire war includes 10,055 party members and 11,869 candidate members (7.8 percent combined), which is roughly equal to Cerovic’s round figure of 22,000. If half of them were new Communists, that indeed significant. Yet Shcherov’s figures also include 54,928 Komsomol members, or an additional 19.44 percent of the Belarus total. In terms of the rural element, Belarus partisans included over 39 percent peasants, but the figures also include 12.26 percent white-collar workers, 12.16 percent students, 2.51 percent teachers, a small number of professionals, and 17.1 percent workers. In Orlov and Smolensk oblasts closer to the front lines, moreover, Shcherov reports significantly higher numbers of party members, candidate members, and Komsomols among the partisans in 1943: about 48 percent of the total.²⁴ It seems that any consideration of the nature of the partisan phenomenon must consider party-state cadres among an elite, the large numbers of Komsomol youth, and the rural element—as well as their interaction.

At the same time, a closer look reveals a biographical complexity that sometimes can defy summary synthesis. To cite one example, the commander of the Lazo partisan regiment in Smolensk, Vasilii Vasil'evich Kazubskii (b. 1906) had emerged from a poor peasant family in the El'nia district to become a local intelligentsia school principal and administrator. He took over a *sel'sovet* near El'nia district on the eve of German invasion when other notables fled or evacuated, and his thoughtful and insightful reports on both the peasantry and the partisans set him apart from those of many *apparatchiki* and cadres of violence. He was awarded the Order of Lenin in 1942, was appointed later in the war to the regional apparatus of the Central Headquarters of the Partisan Movement, and became a *raikom* secretary in 1944. From 1947 until his death in 1958, as representative of the Council for Religious Affairs in Smolensk oblast, Kazubskii devoted much time working with surviving Jewish communities in local efforts to memorialize the Holocaust. He was no warlord, nor

²⁴I. P. Shcherov, *Partizany: Organizatsiia, metody i posledstviia bor'by (1941–1945)* (Smolensk, 2006), 356, 358.

would we gain anything by labeling him a Stalinist. But Kazubskii was, at various times, a local intelligentsia notable, partisan commander, bureaucrat, party politician, and, in his work with the Jewish community, perhaps even a kind of humanitarian.²⁵ Future research must find ways to acknowledge substantial differences not only in outlook and biographical trajectories among the partisans but also within the spectrum or typology of brigades. Some, for example, were far closer to the organs of the party-state, while others were not even in contact or known to them at all.

Cerovic's attempt to emphasize local partisan divergences from the Soviet center also runs up against the concept of Stalinism, at once deceptively simple and notoriously difficult to define. A main dilemma is that it is impossible completely to extract Stalinism from the Soviet system in earlier and later incarnations, and there were many radically divergent subperiods within Stalin's long rule—including, notably, the wartime period.²⁶ Was it completely incompatible with Stalinism, or Leninism for that matter, that some partisans dependent on local food supplies may have not only sanctioned de facto de-collectivization by peasants in the occupied territories, but strategically stoked expectations of a postwar new Soviet rural order? The one moment Gnezdilovo and his unit "FD" are mentioned in Cerovic's book, she depicts the brigade "inviting the villagers to divide up the wheat" at least until the Red Army arrives (p. 166). But neither the identity of the person speaking in the quotation from the archival document nor its date are made clear (p. 334n.4).

Study of the Dorogobuzhskii partizanskii krai northeast of Smolensk, where Gnezdilovo and his partisans helped reestablish Soviet power for six months in 1942, as well as of other partisan "republics," such as the Iuzhnyi El'ninskii krai to its south, paints a rather more complex picture than suggested in Cerovic's treatment.²⁷ To be sure, there is plenty of evidence of feuding partisan units, terror against collaborators, *samogon*, requisitioning, and a great deal of separation and autonomy from Moscow. But the restoration of Soviet power was not a fiction. A civilian power structure including *raikomy* and *raispolkomy* was put in place, with extensive attention to cadres, along with a propaganda blitz and a basic welfare system including medical and educational institutions. Some of the new leadership were party-state cadres who moved over from the partisan units or underground party committees, but in El'nia, for example, six "responsible" cadres were airlifted in on

²⁵"Stenogramma besedy s. t. Kazubskim V. V. Shtab partizanskogo dvizheniia, d. Ratkevshchina Smolenskogo raiona Smolenskoï oblasti. 9 dekabria 1943 goda," NA IRI RAN, f. 2, r. II, op. 2, ed. khr. 31b, ll. 1–10; Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii (RGASPI), f. 17, op. 41, d. 160, l. 33; Mariia Viatchina and Anna Iudkina, "Memorializatsiia Kholokosta v Smolenskoï oblasti (1943–1990)," in *Evrei pogranich'ia: Smolenshchina* (Moscow, 2018), 237–50; Michael David-Fox, "Pedagogue, Kolkhoz Director, Partisan: V. V. Kozubskii's Analysis of De-Collectivization in El'ninskii Raion, 1941–1944," at conference "A 'Memory Revolution': Soviet History Through the Lens of Personal Documents," Moscow, Higher School of Economics, June 2017.

²⁶For a sustained discussion of these issues see Michael David-Fox, "Razmyshleniia o stalinizme, voine i nasilii," in *SSSR vo Vtoroi mirovoi voine: Okkupatsiia. Kholokost. Stalinizm*, ed. Oleg Budnitskii and Liudmila Novikova (Moscow, 2014), 176–95.

²⁷The eleven partisan kraï identified by Shcherov totaled over 50,000 km², larger than Denmark and Luxembourg put together. They included four in Smolensk oblast, two more major territories in the famous Briansk forest, and, among others, the area of the so-called Surazh gate in Vitebsk oblast. Most of them were created during the Red Army advance in early 1942, when *okruzhentsy* and partisans joined forces. The Dorogobuzh territory was 8,000 km² and contained about six thousand partisans; the territory south of El'nia, connected to it by a corridor, spanned 1,200 km² with about fifteen hundred partisans, including the Lazo Regiment (Shcherov, *Partizany*, 129–36). The only treatment in English is in Gerhard L. Weinberg, "The Yelnya-Dorogobuzh Area of Smolensk Oblast," *Soviet Partisans in World War II*, 390–457.

obkom orders on April 1, 1942. The dreaded NKVD *osobisty* (members of the IV Osobyi otdel attached to army units, including the 33rd Army in this area), brought to the territories standardized instructions about installing new rural appointees and re-collectivizing agriculture.²⁸ Although the partisan territories were inclined to walk this forward slowly, with significant compromises for the sowing season underway in spring 1942, re-collectivization does appear as a prominent part of the agenda.

The broader issue, however, is not just that wartime Stalinism itself sanctioned significant strategic compromises, but that Stalinism always looked very different on the ground in the localities and regions than in Moscow at the top. Did the “little Stalins” far from Moscow not enjoy their own cults and areas of *de facto* autonomy, if hardly as much as wartime partisan commanders in their forest camps? In the Stalin years, particular milieus and institutions were marked by very distinct subcultures—including those of the local branches of the NKVD that ran amok during the Great Terror, which few would wish conceptually to separate out from Stalinism.²⁹ The partisan movement’s “small” terror against local collaborators as traitors to the Motherland flowed from, justified, and even seemed to give concrete local faces to the Great Terror’s enemies of the people. Even partisan singularity could be inscribed into a broader orthodoxy. When Briansk forest partisans were told to go home after the Red Army had driven out the Germans, according to their commander A. P. Gorshkov, hardened fighters broke down and cried. “They [had been] a collective, and when they left, they felt some sort of emptiness, they suddenly were struck with horror at being alone.”³⁰ The brigade communities easily fit into the notion of “collectives” (*kollektivny*), which by the 1930s had been turned into the basic building blocks of the Soviet system.

However much the relentlessly overbearing ideology may have been flouted or ignored on the ground, it had a strong symbolic and ritualistic dimension. In forests, swamplands, and rural areas far from Moscow, some wings of the multifaceted partisan movement, more than others, were caught up with the extensively documented Soviet rituals, celebrations, and “mass-political work.” Both performance and faith are key elements of ideology; and such rituals and obligations held the key political function of paying fealty to the system and its central cult of Stalin.³¹ Many, but not all, partisan brigades and commanders successfully negotiated to remain in good standing. They had strong incentive to do so, not least because they needed Moscow’s support and supplies. Indeed, it was political rituals well beyond this context that bound many far-flung elements of the Stalin system into an outwardly coherent whole. Ultimately, to place the partisan phenomenon within the broader sweep of Soviet history, the idea of Stalinism without Stalin can be a thought-provoking alternative to syncretism, hybridity, or wartime mutation. The Scylla of Stalinism and the Charybdis of fascism shaped not only the Eastern Front but also the interwar period of the twentieth century. Conceptually severing partisan terror from that devil’s choice elides this central fact.

²⁸Sheherov, *Partizany*, 135. Materials on these partisan territories are contained, *inter alia*, in Smolensk obkom materials in RGASPI, f. 17, op. 43, dd. 1718, 1719. The re-Sovietization efforts form part of the chapter on Smolensk partisans contained in Michael David-Fox, *Crucibles of Power: Smolensk under Nazi and Soviet Rule*, under contract, Harvard University Press.

²⁹Here see Lynne Viola, *Stalinist Perpetrators on Trial: Scenes from the Great Terror in Soviet Ukraine* (New York, 2017).

³⁰Slepyan, *Stalin’s Guerillas*, 272.

³¹Michael David-Fox, *Crossing Borders: Modernity, Ideology, and Culture in Russia and the Soviet Union* (Pittsburgh, 2015), 75–103.

Did the partisan war against collaborators constitute a “civil war” behind enemy lines? Even beyond the partisan terror against local collaborators, the population contained warring factions, as the Germans, for their part, concertedly mobilized starving Soviet POWs, relatively privileged local policemen, and other forces into antipartisan units under German command. Both belligerents accepted and promoted side-switching as a frequently successful tactic. It is precisely this strong presence of two top-heavy states with their armies and ideologies standing in back of the local conflicts that makes the label civil war a contested one. The partisan movement, however unique, represented Soviet power behind enemy lines and in many areas provided powerful reminders that Soviet power had not disappeared. Alfred Rieber, cited by Cerovic, adopts the civil war concept. But he does so only with caveats: “In their conduct of the war on the Eastern Front both Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union adopted radically transformative means and aims that deeply affected the demographic and social structures of the civil population under their control.” For his part, Aviel Roshwald warns that the strong “exogenous” forces provoking internal conflict in all Axis-controlled countries “reminds us how problematic any simplistic use of the term ‘civil war’ can be in the context of the twentieth century’s greatest international and global conflict and its immediate aftermath.”³²

SOURCES, STATISTICS, AND ENTANGLEMENTS

Cerovic’s central achievement—penetrating the culture of violence of the partisan brigades—is clarified when considering the crucial question of archival sources. In this context, the difficulties of assessing the balance between wartime uniqueness and Soviet commonalities also comes into focus. After all, most of the voluminous sources generated on the partisan movement, however much valuable information they contain, are bureaucratic, formulaic, and ideological. Mountains of reports and correspondence were most often generated by or sent to Moscow and the organs of the party-state. The dilemmas this creates are, in fact, typical for the field of Soviet history. Cerovic has avoided the common trap of writing from the perspective of the institutions that generated the reports and has completely sidestepped the danger of writing a kind of bureaucratic history.

But how does one read party-state reports in order to penetrate the culture of the partisan units far from Moscow? The solutions that present themselves require time and imagination: to read large quantities of run-of-the-mill documents to glean the revealing tidbit of information; to read between the lines and “against the grain”; and to find less conventional or especially revealing sources (Cerovic makes heavy use of certain partisan diaries). A robust element of source criticism can also be part of the solution. Cerovic’s text avoids much explicit discussion of sources, and while this absence is in part made up for in the endnotes, only some of the archival references in *Les Enfants de Staline* identify the kinds of materials that lie behind the “alphabet soup” of the alphanumeric archival citation. Instead of analysis of the ambiguities and limits of interpreting sources, which authors and book publishers all too often see as pedantic or technical, Cerovic along with many others prefers to present a bravura synthetic argument.

³²Alfred J. Rieber, “Civil Wars in the Soviet Union,” *Kritika* 4 (Winter 2003): 130; Aviel Roshwald, “Europe’s Civil Wars, 1941–1949,” in *The Oxford Handbook of European History, 1914–1945*, ed. Nicholas Doumanis (Oxford, 2016), 537.

The huge collection of high-level reports published in *Partizanskoe dvizhenie* perfectly illustrates the problems of piercing party-state conventions in mountains of often bureaucratic reports on far-flung partisans behind enemy lines.³³ These declassified Presidential Archives documents are not revelatory. Rather, they supplement the massive collections of the Central Staff, its local affiliates, and wartime *obkom* collections from the relevant oblasts, which have long been available. Indeed, the tidbits of archival gold that can be panned from the documentary streams of those “lesser” collections—such as personal correspondence, ground-level reports written by special emissaries to individual party secretaries, and, in general, more local materials—can shed as much if not more light than the high-level reports on the partisan units and their relations with civilian populations in the occupied territories. The most important feature of the new publication from the Presidential Archive, in fact, is that it puts on display a broad slice of the high-level documentation that made it onto the desks of Stalin and the Politburo. The newly published documents supply more detail on the high-level bureaucratic struggle over the partisan movement within the party-state, the rulings of the GKO, and the positions of important players, in particular Ponamarenko. Students of specific regions will find documents of interest from their bailiwicks. Above all, the high-level reports are chock full of military updates, economic and logistical developments, and statistics, statistics, statistics.

The same Soviet system that produced superhuman Stakhanovite outputs and industrial production norms also relayed impossible numbers of German casualties. According to Oleg Mozokhin and Sergei Kudriashov, the compiler who selected and annotated the documents and main editor of the collection, respectively, some Soviet-era authors in their day claimed that partisans killed or wounded up to 1.5 million Germans. The two historians note in their introduction that German archival figures report 35–40,000 casualties. In terms of estimates of the overall number of partisans in the occupied territories, Soviet public figures spoke of as many as 1,150,000, which Mozokhin and Kudriashov call “highly optimistic.” The *otchet* the Central Staff provided Stalin were more modest but still high: 90,000 at the end of 1941, 120,000 in early 1943, and up to 250,000 in 1944 (casualties need to be factored in to the overall figure).³⁴ As the two scholars drily conclude, “the question demands serious statistical analysis” (p. 20).

What do the Presidential Archive documents have to say about the questions of autonomy versus control at the center of historiographical debate? Reading over six hundred pages of documents brings us no closer to a single truth. For one thing, we do not really know the criteria Mozokhin used in selecting the documents or the quantity that remain unpublished. It is relevant to note both that his field is military history and that he is an FSB institutional (*vedomstvennyi*) historian, editor of numerous documentary publications from the FSB archive. A professor at the Academy of Military Sciences who holds the rank of colonel in the FSB, Oleg Borisovich Mozokhin graduated from the KGB Higher School and has worked for state security as an institutional historian since 1979.³⁵ More generally, of course, the more one reads high-level Soviet reports, the more one receives an impression

³³The documents published in *Partizanskoe dvizhenie* were supplemented by additional documents published in O. B. Mozokhin, ed., “‘Partizanskoe dvizhenie dolzhno stat' vsenarodnym’: Dokumenty AP RF o deiatel'nosti Tsentral'nogo shtaba partizanskogo dvizheniia. 1942–1943 gg.,” *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, 2015, no. 3:3–25.

³⁴For a more extended consideration of statistics on the number of partisans and units by region see Shcherov, *Partizany*, chap. 8.

³⁵He maintains a website on archival documents related to state security, <http://mozohin.ru/>, last accessed January 17, 2019.

of centralized control. However, the sheer scope of the collection provides grist for many relevant observations. We see that reporting on “party-political work” within units and “mass-political work” in the population was a standard feature of oversight, but that it was often formulaic (p. 401). We get fascinating tidbits, such as a *politruk* on the western front begging Stalin on October 27, 1941, to create unified oversight of the partisan movement, since the NKVD and the military were singularly unqualified to affect political and organizational matters within the units (p. 94). We find information on the special training schools for partisans (p. 233). We see the ways “mistakes” and insufficiencies were described, the contours of accusations, and the relatively rare cases when commanders definitively overstepped their bounds with the center (p. 413). The collection provides important information about the numerous ways that economic and material incentives—salaries, support for families, and, not least, medals—tied partisans in the occupied territories to the Soviet mainland (p. 119). Especially if we view economics and ideology not as polar opposites but as mutually reinforcing elements of Stalinism and the Soviet cadres system more generally, this is an important and understudied facet of the partisan phenomenon. Above all, we perceive the size and scope of the administrative-bureaucratic effort involved in monitoring the partisan movement.

In introducing this handsomely bound, deep red tome embossed in gold with a partisan medal featuring silhouettes of Lenin and Stalin, Mozokhin and Kudriashov navigate a middle ground between scholarly rectitude and political caution. They implicitly organize their remarks around a balance sheet of positive and negative phenomena connected to the partisans, emphasizing that the partisan war was a “complex and many-sided phenomenon” (p. 20). Characterizing the debate in terms of a military historiography that for the most part assessed the partisan movement as an auxiliary rather than a decisive factor, Mozokhin and Kudriashov ultimately highlight the “effectiveness” of the partisan movement. Yet it is telling that they do so not with reference to partisan military activities, but by seemingly reaching beyond military history *per se*. The partisan threat—something hidden yet seemingly ubiquitous and spreading—fed a constant sense of German insecurity. What they write is convincing and on the mark: the partisan movement produced a “powerful psychological effect” on the German occupiers (p. 20).

Yet this only scratches the surface of an important dimension to the partisan phenomenon. Wehrmacht, SS, and Nazi forces “intentionally mobilized” the partisan threat as early as the Mogilev conference (known as the “Partisanen-Lehrgang”) in late September 1941—a time when the partisan movement hardly existed—in order “to provide useful ideological, psychological, and tactical expedients with which to incorporate the Wehrmacht further in the process of the Holocaust in the east.”³⁶ Among the eleven trophy German documents from the Presidential Archive published in *Partizanskoe dvizhenie* is a November 18, 1941, order written by Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler on the antipartisan struggle. It tied the partisan movement to Bolshevism and the NKVD, underlining the goal of destroying it rather than driving it back. The order suggests seeds of escalation with grave implications for the civilian population, since it contained a directive to uncover hidden partisans among workers, women, and children (pp. 587–89).

By 1942, faced with a long war of attrition and the need to implement a viable occupation over a large swathe of territory between the front lines and the

³⁶Waitman Beorn, “A Calculus of Complicity: The Wehrmacht, the Anti-Partisan War, and the Final Solution in White Russia, 1941–42,” *Central European History* 44 (June 2011): 309.

Reichskommissariats, high-level Wehrmacht officers were voicing considerable concern about the hearts and minds of local populations.³⁷ Another trophy document translated here is a German army intelligence report on the partisan war from September 6, 1942. It is typical of those who warned that ongoing atrocities would produce a backlash: “Every unjustified execution ... of Russians whose guilt is not completely proven ... creates enemies among the relatives of the executed, that is partisans, and beyond that the Russian population loses faith in our fairness. Such cases aid the growth of the partisan movement rather than diminish it. The Army will pay for this with blood” (p. 593).

The irony was that by the time this document was written the more moderate line promoted especially by Wehrmacht intelligence—including a large-scale propaganda effort, rewards for collaborators, and attempts to limit requisitioning—had already been attempted in the spring–summer 1942 offensive against the Dorogobuzh and El'nia partisan territories. With nine divisions committed by May 1942, this was the “largest Eastern Army antipartisan effort of the war.” The attempt at moderation from above was drowned by lower-level brutality on the ground, and it led into the “dead zones” campaign of 1943 that ravaged “pro-bandit” areas. General Max von Schenkendorff of Army Group Center, who from the Mogilev conference of 1941 on positioned himself as the leading expert on the partisan war, came out at once for more moderate occupation policies to foster a pliant Russian population and the liquidation of the partisans through more aggressive, offensive antiguerilla warfare. The result, in the words of Ben Shepard, was “a confused and ultimately self-defeating mix of terror and cultivation.”³⁸

Given the large-scale German conscription of Red Army POWs to fight the partisans, evidence of considerable side-switching among collaborators and partisans, and the centrality of the antipartisan war to the course of the German occupation, there is a marvelous opening to investigate the partisans as part of a Soviet-German entangled history. Future work will undoubtedly build on the considerable contributions of Kudriashov and Mozokhin’s documentary collection and Cerovic’s interpretive monograph.

³⁷The administration of territory by the Wehrmacht is the subject of Dieter Pohl, *Die Herrschaft der Wehrmacht: Deutsche Militärbesatzung und einheimische Bevölkerung in der Sowjetunion 1941–1944* (Munich, 2008).

³⁸Ben Shepard, *War in the Wild East: The German Army and Soviet Partisans* (Cambridge, MA, 2004), 33, chaps. 5–6. On von Schenkendorff and his role see above all Jörn Hasenclever, *Wehrmacht und Besatzungspolitik in der Sowjetunion: Die Befehlshaber der rückwärtigen Heeresgebiete 1941–1943* (Paderborn, 2010), esp. 363–66.