

introduction to the subject for university courses on memory in East-Central European societies. In particular, it provides a succinct overview and good discussion points about the current state of Holocaust memory in the two countries. On the other hand, the author always provides his own distinctive interpretation of familiar topics, conveying a clear sense of his original authorship. Overall, the book makes a valuable contribution to scholarship on cultural memory of the region.

ANDRII NEKOLIAK

PhD candidate

Johan Skytte Institute of Political Studies  
University of Tartu

Alexander Gogun, *Stalin's Commandos: Ukrainian Partisan Forces on the Eastern Front*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2016. 336 pp.

This work was translated for publication in English after its initial release in Moscow in 2008 with the title *Stalinskie kommandos: ukrainskie partizanskie formirovaniia: maloizuchennyye stranitsy istorii, 1941-1944*.

In this contribution to the overall scholarship on the Second World War in Ukraine, Alexander Gogun examines the activities of all of the various irregular warfare units that fought in Ukraine. With pro-Soviet forces as the primary focus, it also covers the activities of the Ukrainian nationalists as well as pro-Polish partisan groups, especially Armia Krajowa, which operated in Western Ukraine. Some mention is also necessarily made of the methods used by German and allied anti-partisan forces in dealing with, and occasionally working with, this spectrum of groups. The broad utility of the study rests on an interesting fact, that compared with other regions, the Soviets had relatively little luck recruiting friendly partisan forces in proportion to the size of the region and population.

Gogun approaches his study as a historical timeline but divides the work into chapters focusing on various facets of the partisans' operations. The book commences with an overview of the changing command structure of the partisans, before then focusing on the history of their operations, their primary operational foci, and their personnel composition. The complicity of Soviet partisan forces in provoking harsh Nazi responses in communities opposed to Soviet aims is also noted, as are allegations of severe disciplinary infractions and internal conflicts among the Soviet partisans and their conflicts with external groups.

Unsurprisingly, efforts to organize rear area activities behind the Eastern front were haphazard in 1941, particularly before the front stabilized. The first efforts were therefore focused on intelligence gathering and simple survival, although from the very beginning, efforts were made to gather intelligence on anti-Soviet groups and to strike at them wherever possible. German efforts against the Soviet partisans were largely successful and Gogun notes that by 1942, the two largest and most successful of the partisan groups to survive were centered on Chernihiv and Sumy, both located on the east bank of the Dnipro, and far from the activities of the OUN and other anti-Soviet groups. With the reversal of German fortunes beginning in the autumn of 1942, partisan activity became more somewhat more robust, militarized, unified, and successful, although never to the extent of other Soviet republics, particularly Belarus.

What made Ukraine such a special case compared with other occupied areas? What factors limited pro-Soviet partisan activity? Gogun successfully demonstrates that the answers are political, physical, and economic. Unlike Belarus and Russia, Ukraine's open steppe country, unsuitable for partisan warfare, already meant that activity would be limited to the northern forested regions. Its relatively dense road net meant that anti-partisan forces could react more easily and control more area with less troop commitment. Relatively high economic development meant that Ukrainians were less "sold" on the Soviet Union ideologically. The historical independence, and tendency toward

individualism of Ukraine, combined with a recent assault on both by the Soviets in the form of the Holodomor also acted strongly against the widespread formation of pro-Soviet partisan groups. Finally, particularly in 1941 and early 1942, Nazi anti-Soviet propaganda was largely successful in Ukraine.

Perversely, after Stalingrad and Kursk, as the front lines again moved westward into and through Ukraine, larger parts of the country fell directly under direct Wehrmacht control. The higher density of German forces made partisan activity increasingly difficult, so that the high point for the pro-Soviet partisans can be said to have been from mid-1942 to mid-1943, or the period when the whole country was occupied, and in the deep rear, of the Eastern front. Of particular interest is Gogun's revelation that the best place to be occupied in Ukraine, if there can be said to be a "good" place, was in the area occupied by the Romanian armed forces, particularly in Transnistria, in which the main problem appeared to be rampant corruption by the occupying authorities.

Gogun's work is a valuable contribution to the historiography on this topic, particularly with the relative dearth of scholarship on Soviet partisans in Ukraine, and a tendency by interested scholars to focus more on the Bandera Army and the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists.

JOHN M. CALLAHAN

New England College

Henniker, New Hampshire

Vladlen Loginov, *Vladimir Lenin: How to Become a Leader*. trans. Lewis White; ed. Geoffrey Swain. London: Glagoslav Publications, 2019. 328 pp.

As we approach the centenary of Lenin's death, the casual reader may well wonder whether anything new remains to be said about the revolutionary founder of the world's first socialist state. The