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A CONTRIBUTION TO THE ROLE OF (FORMER) RED ARMY PRISONERS OF WAR AND WHITE ÉMIGRÉS IN SLOVENIA DURING THE GERMAN OCCUPATION, 1943–1945

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ABSTRACT

The article examines the role of Soviet prisoners of war and Russian émigrés that fought in Slovenia during World War II. The largest group consisted of Red Army soldiers who switched allegiances after being captured and agreed to fight for the Third Reich. They were joined by White émigrés who remained hostile to communism. But some émigrés and Soviets joined Slovenian partisans in the struggle against the occupiers, with most of them previously serving in German-led formations. Based on archival documents and published sources, the author provides an overview of such units and studies their impact.

Keywords: World War II, Slovenia, Soviet Union, White émigré, collaboration, Wehrmacht, Waffen-SS, partisans, Red Army

CONTRIBUTO RIGUARDO AL RUOLO DEGLI (EX) PRIGIONIERI DI GUERRA DELL'ARMATA ROSSA E DELL'«EMIGRAZIONE BIANCA» IN SLOVENIA DURANTE L'OCCUPAZIONE TEDESCA, 1943–1945

SINTESI

L'articolo prende in esame il ruolo dei prigionieri di guerra sovietici e gli emigrati russi che combattevano in Slovenia durante il secondo conflitto mondiale. Il gruppo più consistente era formato da soldati dell'Armata Rossa che dopo la cattura decisero di combattere per il Terzo Reich. A questi si unì un certo numero di «russi bianchi» emigrati all'estero, tipicamente ostili al comunismo. Alcuni di questi emigrati e cittadini sovietici, che si arruolarono precedentemente nelle formazioni costituite dai tedeschi, si unirono in seguito ai partigiani sloveni. Basandosi su fonti archivistiche e fonti edite, l'autore ci propone una disamina di questi reparti e ne analizza l'impatto a livello militare e politico.

Parole chiave: Seconda guerra mondiale, Slovenia, Unione Sovietica, «russi bianchi», collaborazionismo, Wehrmacht, Waffen-SS, partigiani, Armata Rossa

INTRODUCTION

For Slovenia, World War II began in April 1941, when Hitler's Wehrmacht invaded the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, which included today's independent republic. Slovenia's population already included some former White Russians who had emigrated there after their defeat in the Civil War against the Bolsheviks twenty years earlier (Milenković & Pavlović, 2006). After Germany launched its invasion of the Soviet Union that June, they were joined by Soviet POWs, who were sent to Slovenia (or neighbouring Austria, Italy) by their captors. Because of the Eastern front's high death toll, Germans increasingly recruited Soviet POWs for their (para) military organization and the local populations of the countries they occupied to supplement their dwindling (military and labour) personnel pool (Edele, 2017).

While most Soviet personnel in German-led units remained loyal to their new masters, some joined these units with the goal of deserting and joining the resistance (in this case, Slovenian or Italian). Others did so after escaping from concentration camps (e. g. work, POW, ... camps) in neighbouring countries, primarily Austria. In Slovenia, units of such collaborators – both willing and unwilling – first began to appear after Italy's capitulation in September 1943, when Germany needed additional forces to occupy the territory their erstwhile Axis partner had evacuated. Their presence was welcomed by partisan leaders, who valued their previous military training, war experience, and desire to fight once again against Axis forces, not to mention their (communist) Soviet origins. While far fewer "Russians"¹ fought for the partisans than the enemy, there were enough to form some separate units in their brigades.

The historiography on the phenomenon of collaboration of Russian/Soviet citizens with the Third Reich is plentiful, especially regarding Andrey Andreyevich Vlasov (*Андрей Андреевич Власов*; 1901–1946), the most visible Russian collaborator and leader of the Russian Liberation Army (*Русская освободительная армия*; POA/ROA).² Different ethnic groups of the Soviet Union also got academic attention, especially the Cossacks,³ and peoples of the Caucasus.⁴ In recent years, a lot of books on different Soviet-manned units in German service, connected with the SS or Waffen-SS, have been published.⁵

1 Both in wartime documents of the Slovenian partisans and Slovenian post-war literature, the term "Russian" is used not only for those of Russian ethnicity, but also as a synonym for all Soviet citizens of other nationalities. For the sake of simplicity, this article will not necessarily distinguish between the two. The Slovenian transliteration of Russian-language names is used to both preserve historical authenticity and to prevent any mis-transliteration. When known, the Cyrillic original is provided.

2 For more on Vlasov and ROA, cf.: Aleksandrov, 2001; Andreyev, 1987; Hoffmann, 1984, 2003; Kolesnik, 1990; Strik-Strikfeldt, 1970; Thorwald, 1974; Zaharov & Koluntaev, 1998.

3 For more on Cossacks in German service, cf.: Kern, 1964; Lannoy, 2000; Mueggenberg, 2019; Newland, 1991.

4 For more on Caucasians in German service, cf.: Hoffmann, 1974, 1976, 1991; Jeloscsek et al., 2003.

5 For more on Soviet nationals in German service, cf.: Munoz, 2000; Žukov & Kovtun, 2009, 2010, 2012a, 2012b, 2013.

On the other hand, the historiography on the role of Soviet (Russian) people during World War II in Yugoslavia, is not so plentiful. Generally, there are overviews for the whole Yugoslav territory,⁶ or dealing with specific units (regarding Russian Protective Corps,⁷ the largest military formation formed from Russians in Yugoslavia). Even smaller group are works on Russians (Soviets) in Slovenia during this time and the majority of these works are focused on the involvement of Russians in the Slovenian partisan movement.⁸ A specific group of literature deals with the presence of Cossacks and Caucasians, in German service, on the edge of Slovenian ethnic territory, in Carnia (North-eastern Italy),⁹ which was in the Italian part of the Operational Zone of the Adriatic Littoral (*Operationszone Adriatisches Küstenland*; OZAK).¹⁰

This article will provide an overview of the military units of émigrés and Soviets that fought in Slovenia both for and against the Germans. Aside from a few studies of specific collaborationist and partisan units, this aspect of military history has so far been largely neglected. Using wartime archival sources, primarily from the Slovenian national archives and the post-war literature, which were so far unexamined in the light of Soviet collaboration, it analyses the fragmentary documentation of Russian involvement in the fighting in occupied Slovenia during World War II. The story begins with the Russian collaborators, who were the first to take up arms.

WHITE EMIGRÉS IN INTERWAR YUGOSLAVIA

After the end of World War I and Russian Civil War, defeated (former) Tsarist soldiers sought refuge abroad (in Germany, France, Turkey, Bulgaria, China),¹¹ with majority of them settling in the newly formed Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes.¹²

6 For more on Soviet nationals in Yugoslavia during World War II, cf.: Bušueva, 1973; Kazak, 1975; Timofeev, 2014, 2014.

7 For more on the RSK, cf.: Munoz, 1999; Samcevič, 2019; Vertepov, 1963.

8 For more on Soviet nationals in Slovenia during World War II, cf.: Pilko, 2004; Pulko, 2009.

9 For more on Cossacks in the OZAK, cf.: Booker, 1997; Bolzoni, 2009; Carnier, 1993; Deotto, 2005; Di Sopra & Cozzi, 2010; Franzolini, 2015; Ivanov, 1989; Rossa, 2007; Rossi, 2014; Stadler et al., 2005; Stefanutti, 1995; Verardo, 2010, 2016; Vuga, 1961.

10 For more on the OZAK, cf.: Bajc, 2006; Di Giusto, 2005; Kaltenegger, 2019; Liuzzi, 2014; Wedekind, 2003.

11 For more on Russian military emigration after World War I, cf.: Zolotarev et al., 1998a, 1998b, 2001, 2002.

12 Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was formed on 1 December 1918 with merger of kingdoms of Serbia and Montenegro and short-lived State of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs. Under the rule of dynasty of Karađorđević, the kingdom was on 3 October 1929 renamed to Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Newly formed Yugoslavia was eager to except their brothers in faith (Serbs and Russians are majorly Orthodox Christians), who had military experience (due to several border conflicts with neighbouring countries) and were monarchists (and thus able to protect royal dynasty in the wake of emerging pro-republican trends in several European countries after World War I).

Between June 1921 and December 1922, around 42 thousand (former) Russian soldiers (and civilians), including family members arrived in Yugoslavia under the leadership of general baron Pyotr Nikolayevich Wrangel (*Пётр Николаевич Врангель*; 1878-1928). Wrangel tried to keep military discipline and organization in conjunction with Yugoslav officials; it was decided that (former) cavalry division would be included intact in the Yugoslav border guard, with Russian officers commanding. This arrangement lasted until April 1922, when the border guard was disbanded. Some Russian soldiers entered the newly established financial guard, but most became employees of the construction company *Tehnika*, still run as a military organization. The company was involved in several major construction projects in Yugoslavia and France. The number of Russians in Yugoslavia started to drop quite quickly due to migration in other European and South American countries; in 1937, there were 27,000 Russians still in Yugoslavia (majority in Serbia) (Milenković & Pavlović, 2004).¹³

Russians in Yugoslavia also formed or joined different émigré organizations: the most important was the Russian All-Military Union (*Русский Обще-Воинский Союз*; *POBC/ROVS*) (Robinson, 2002). While ROVS kept an apolitical stance, several political organizations were also established. Russian National and Social Movement (*Российское национальное и социальное движение*; *Рнсд/RNSD*), formed in 1935 with inspiration from German National Socialism (Jdanoff, 2003). Mihail Aleksandrovič Semenov (*Михаил Александрович Семенов*; 1894–1965), former Tsarist officer, became a leader of RNSD department in 1941, after the Independent State of Croatia (Croatian: *Neodvisna država Hrvatska*; NDH) was formed (Samcevič, 2015).

In Slovenia specific, the 3rd Cavalry Regiment was sent as a part of the border guard, which presented the largest Russian group. Together with other civilians, around 600 Russians were living in Slovenia in 1921, and this number remained unchanged until 1941, when 588 Russian immigrants were registered in Slovenia (Perovšek, 2015).

FROM THE APRIL WAR TO ITALY'S CAPITULATION

On 6 April 1941, the Third Reich attacked the Kingdom of Yugoslavia simultaneously from four different neighbours that it had either incorporated or cajoled to its side: Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Romania. The Wehrmacht rapidly overwhelmed the kingdom's weaker and technologically inferior armed forces, and their position became even more untenable when, five days later, Italian, and Hungarian troops joined the invasion. On the next day, Mussolini's soldiers occupied Ljubljana, the capital of Slovenia, and by April 17, Yugosla-

13 For more on Russian emigration after World War I, cf.: Schlögel, 1994; Figes, 1998.

via's military agreed to surrender. As a result, Slovenia's territory was divided between all four neighbouring countries: Germany took over the north, including Upper Carniola, Lower Styria, the northern part of the Lower Carniola, and north-western Prekmurje, while Italy obtained the southern regions of Inner Carniola, most of Lower Carniola and the capital.¹⁴ As for Hungary, it occupied most of Prekmurje, and the newly-formed Axis puppet state of Croatia annexed six villages in Lower Carniola (Klanjšček, 1978).

As in most of occupied Europe, the resistance was quick to organise. On 26 April 1941, several leftist political groups formed the Anti-Imperialist Front (*Protiimperialistična fronta*; PIF), with the Communist Party of Slovenia (*Komunistična partija Slovenije*; KPS) quickly taking over the leadership. Later PIF was renamed to the Liberation Front of the Slovene Nation (*Osvobodilna fronta slovenskega naroda*; usually just *Osvobodilna fronta*; OF) (Čepič, Guštin & Troha, 2017). Two months later, on the day Germany invaded the Soviet Union, the Central Committee of the KPS formed the High Command of the Slovene Partisans' Companies (*Vrhovno poveljstvo slovenskih partizanskih čet*), which in September was renamed the Main Command of the Slovene Partisans' Companies (*Glavno poveljstvo slovenskih partizanskih čet*).¹⁵ At the same time, the nation's partisans were officially known as the National Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Slovenia (*Narodnoosvobodilna vojska in partizanski odredi Slovenije*; NOV in POS) (Čepič, Guštin & Troha, 2017; Klanjšček, 1978).

Italy's capitulation in September 1943 contributed to a large influx of volunteers as well as mass mobilization by the partisans. The ranks of the NOV in POS increased from about 5,300 to more 20,000 men and women. The partisans also disarmed retreating Italian troops. Slovenia's strategically important position between Italy, the Balkans, and Eastern Europe, thereby making them a dangerous threat to the Third Reich. Already a few days before his Axis partner's capitulation, Hitler had ordered his army to secure the Ljubljana-Postojna-Trieste railway, and then defeat or at least push partisan units away from major lines of communication and important towns in the territory that Italy was leaving (Haupt, 1977, 43–58).¹⁶

14 After World War I, Italy occupied the Adriatic Littoral (Primorska) region of current-day Slovenia.

15 Until the end of war, this command was renamed three more times: in early 1943 to the Main Command of Slovenian National Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Slovenia (*Glavno poveljstvo slovenske narodnoosvobodilne vojske in partizanskih odredov Slovenije*), in May of the same year to the Main Command of the National Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Slovenia (*Glavno poveljstvo narodnoosvobodilne vojske in partizanskih odredov Slovenije*; GŠ NOV in POS) and finally in March 1945 to the Main Command of the Yugoslav Army for Slovenia (*Glavni štab Jugoslovanske armade za Slovenijo*). At the same time, Slovenian partisan units also officially became part of the Yugoslav Army, previously the National Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Yugoslavia. With the complete integration of Slovenian partisan units into the Yugoslav Army, the command ceased to exist on 18 May 1945.

16 For more on Italian Campaign, cf.: Hoyt, 2002; Klinkhammer, 1993; Wilhelmsmeyer, 1995.

SOVIETS IN GERMAN SERVICE

Only a couple months after the invasion on Yugoslavia, Germany launched their most ambitious military campaign – conquest of the Soviet Union. In 1941, Red Army suffered terrible losses in territory, equipment, and military personnel; in addition to more than 500,000 killed soldiers (including those, that died due to their wounds) and more than 235,000 wounded, there were more than 2,3 million Soviet soldiers, that were missing or captured (Krivosheev, 1997, 96).

Some of these missing Soviet soldiers surrendered or defected to the German side due to the hopelessness of their situation, some were captured wounded, while most became prisoners of war (POW) in the mass surrender of entire military units, while being encircled by fast-advancing German formations. Altogether, at least 5.3 million Soviet soldiers ended up in German hands (Edele, 2017, 5; Otto, Keller & Nagel, 2008, 592).

From POW camps or in some cases directly after capture, between 600,000 to 1.4 million Soviets joined the German side, becoming *Hiwis* (German: *Hilfswilliger*) (Altstadt, 1992, 158). Hiwis were incorporated to German units, serving as truck drivers, ammunitions carriers, medics, labourers, etc. or were included to Soviet-manned (para)military formations. These formations could be indigenous security units (*Landeseigene Sicherheitsverbände*), used primarily for counter-insurgency operations or national units, formed for front-line combat (Alexiev, 1982, 27–29). While some collaborated with Germans because of ideological or revenge motives (as victims of Soviet persecution), most just wanted to escape deadly conditions of German POW camps, where they were dying due to deliberate starvation, mistreating, harsh conditions, and summary executions; it's estimated that around 3.3 million Soviet POW died while in German captivity (Gerhard, 2015; Streit, 1997).

SOVIET COLLABORATORS IN SLOVENIA

During the first two years of the German occupation, there were no units manned mostly by Russians (or Soviet nationals) in northern Slovenia. This changed when Italy capitulated in September 1943.

Field Marshall Erwin Rommel's Army Group B occupied this area. It had already taken control of strategically important positions there in late August, and by the end of the month had secured all the border crossings and railways. The Italian Supreme Command's announcement of unconditional surrender on 8 September triggered full German intervention. But Rommel's forces were too weak to do the job, and on 15 September Hitler ordered the 162nd (Turkistan) Infantry Division (*162. (Turkistan) Infanterie-Division*) to be moved from Neuhammer training camp (now Świętoszów, Poland) to Slovenia, where it would be supplied with captured Italian weapons and equipment (Ferenc, 1968). The division would finish their training in Italy/Slovenia and at the same time, be

used to fight local partisans (Dossena, 2014, 102–103; more on the early history of the 162nd Division, cf.: Cerkvenik, 2020). The main reason for such a move was that the German High Command did not trust completely Soviet-manned formations to combat their compatriots on the Eastern Front, and thus they were sent in other regions of Europe to be used against partisans (as in the case of Slovenia, Italy, etc.) or occupation troops (France, Belgium, etc.).

At the time, the 162nd Infantry Division, which had been obliterated in Kalinin (Tver) on the Eastern Front in January 1942, was being reconstituted in Neuhammer into the 162nd “Turkistan” Division with several national “legions” of Soviet POWs, including the Armenian, Azerbaijan, Georgian, North Caucasus, Turkistan and Wolga Tatar Legions, commanded by its surviving German officers. The first five transport trains left Germany on 22 September and reached Ljubljana on 25 September. After the troops disembarked, the transport proceeded to the Italian city of Udine, to take on Italian weapons (Ferenc, 1968).

Initially destined for Istria, the men were instead sent to the Croatian capital of Zagreb. Their new task was to support the *II. SS-Panzer-Korps*, which was spearheading the German offensive against Slovenian partisans, although some units were left behind to help guard settlements in north-western Slovenia. The 162nd Division’s orders were to advance from the Croatian city of Karlovac and secure the Metlika-Kolpa River that separates Slovenia from Croatia, to prevent Slovenian partisans from escaping across the border (Ferenc, 1968).

The Turkistan Division then participated in “cleaning” the southern part of the Lower Carniola, which lasted until mid-November. While most of the division was fighting in Lower Carniola, some of its men also saw combat in the Primorska and Goriška regions, as well as in north-eastern Italy. After their campaign in Lower Carniola concluded, the rest of the division rejoined the others until the end of the operation against partisans in November (Dossena, 2015, 102–103; Ferenc, 1968).

The 162nd Division was subordinated to Lieutenant General Ludwig Kübler, the military commander of the OZAK, which also had the 71st Infantry Division under his control. But the latter was sent to the Italian Front early in 1944, and, together with some smaller units, the 162nd was the primary counterinsurgency force in the OZAK. Due to increasing partisan activity and the fear of an Allied naval invasion on the northern Adriatic coast, two more infantry divisions were relocated here later in 1944, while 162nd Division was sent to the Ligurian coast (Dossena, 2015, 130–133; Klanjšček, 1999).

In June 1944, the 4th Company of the *Schutzmannschaften-Bataillon 11* arrived in the Slovenian resort town of Bled (*Veldes*) from Minsk, while the battalion’s 2nd Company was sent to Klagenfurt, Austria. All its men, including some non-commissioned and junior officers were Russian or Belarusian, although under German command. Some 120 troops were tasked with protecting the headquarters of the *Sicherheitsdienst* (the intelligence service of the SS; SD) in Bled, to which the company was subordinated,

as well as for anti-partisan actions.¹⁷ The latter included punishing local civilians suspected of supporting the partisans, by robbing, pillaging, etc.¹⁸ The largest group of Soviet POWs that fought Slovenian partisans was not based in Slovenia, but in neighbouring Italy, more precisely in Carnia and the wider region of Friuli Venezia Giulia. Here, the Germans set up the so-called *Kosakenland* (also *Kosakia*), an area where Cossacks and other Soviet collaborators could resettle upon fleeing the Soviet Union after the collapse of German Army Group Center. Numbering some 24,000 men, women and children, the Cossacks had travelled more than 1,000 km from Belarus led by Timotej Ivanovič Domanov. Most of them settled around the town of Tolmezzo, Kosakenland's capital. In 1945, Domanov formed an Independent Cossack Corps, with two divisions, each of four regiments, which became part of the Armed Forces of the Committee for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia (*Вооружённые силы Комитета освобождения народов России; ВС КОHP/VS KONR*) (Landwehr, 2006, 89–95; Mueggenberg, 2019, 266). Before 1944, VS KONR was known as the Russian Liberation Army (*Русская освободительная армия; POA/ROA*). The Cossacks also fought against Slovenian partisans in March and April 1945 during operations *Rübenzahl* and *Winterende* in the Primorska region (Klanjšček, 1978, 371–407).

In September 1944, a new Russian-manned SS battalion (*SS-Jäger-Bataillon*; or *Sonderkommando K*) came to the Slovenian town of Kamnik in northern Upper Carniola. The unit's history began in April 1942 when it was formed in Serbia by local members of the White émigré community under Mihail Aleksandrovič Semenov. As part of the German auxiliary police (*Hilfspolizei*) there, its role was to protect the infrastructure of the towns of Smerderevo and Požarevac. But in summer 1943, the battalion was transferred to Upper Silesia, where it joined the SD's Operation Zeppelin (*Unternehmen Zeppelin*). Initially ordered to conduct sabotage and gather intelligence in the Soviet hinterland, it was re-tasked when Germany began to retreat on the Eastern Front. The battalion's remaining personnel, which now included Soviet POWs, were incorporated into the counterinsurgency brigade to combat Soviet partisans. But most of them rebelled and redefected to the Soviet side, while the remainder stayed loyal to the Germans, and were formed into a new light infantry (*Jäger*) battalion under Semenov (Central Intelligence Agency, 1946; Žukov & Kovtun, 2013, 214–216; For more on the Operation Zeppelin, cf.: Biddiscombe, 2000; Munoz, 2002; Samcevič, 2017).

In October 1944, the new battalion participated in anti-partisan operations around Kamnik and Upper Carniola more generally, while also combatting partisans in Lower Carniola (Pavlin, 1970, 300–302). Initially part of

17 ARS-1851, 78, Zapisnik o zaslišanju vojnih dezerterjev iz nemške vojske, ..., 7. 11. 1944.

18 ARS-1848, 29, Uradi in postojanke Gestapa/Sicherheitspolizei und ZD/ na Gorenjskem, 5. 11. 1944.

the SS (under control of the SD, but supplied by the Waffen-SS), the unit was transferred to ROA (later VS KONR). The following month, Semenov's battalion was sent to Ljubljana, where it was reorganised into a regiment. For a week in December 1944, the battalion was sent to Lower Styria. The *SS-Sonder-Regiment I »Waräger«* (the SS Special Regiment "Varangians" was formally established on 20 February 1945 with two battalions of former POWs) (ARS-1851, 78, interrogation report of Jurij Artjuh, 11. 3. 1945). Early that month, parts of the unit were sent to Lower Carniola, where they were used to guard a string of villages along the Krka River, which marked the most southern extent of Germany's presence in Slovenia. The regiment fought here until the German retreat to Austria. Others participated in another anti-partisan operation in Upper Carniola between 19 March and 1 April (Kocjančič, 2017).

On 4 May, the *Waräger* began to retreat from their positions along Krka and managed to reach Austria, where on 11 May near the town of Villach they participated in the last battle against Slovenian partisans, who were trying to prevent their capitulation to British forces. During this time, the regiment was also transferred (on paper) to the Cossack group under VS KONR's General Anton Vasiljevič Turkul (*Антон Васильевич Туркул*), but remained under German control (Hoffmann, 2003, 81; Kociper, 1996, 373, 377; Smrke & Dokl, 1989, 88–91; Strle, 1976, 162–194; Timofeev, 2014, 52).

On 27 January 1945, a new Waffen-SS unit was formed from Caucasian POWs in the Italian part of the OZAK. In late February 1945, the Volunteer "North Caucasus" Brigade (*Freiwilligen-Brigade "Nordkaukasus"*) was formed from older (over 45 years old) men from the Caucasus who had settled in Udine Province, and the following month fought against partisans in Slovenia.¹⁹ In April, Slovenian partisan intelligence reported the formation of the "SS Volunteer Infantry Division 'Azerbaijan'" as well as plans for two additional Waffen-SS divisions of Armenians and Georgians. It had discovered the *Kaukasische Waffen-Verbände der SS*, which was to be constituted from four regiments of Armenians, Georgians, North Caucasians, and Azerbaijani collaborators.²⁰ However, due to the Third Reich's collapse, it never saw the light of day. The men most likely joined the Cossacks in Carnia and surrendered to the British.

In February 1945, another unit of Soviet collaborators, the 14th Grenadier Division of Waffen-SS (Ukrainian Nr. 1), recruited from Ukrainian volunteers, in July 1943, marched into Slovenia. Before being fully formed, the division

19 ARS-1760, 257, *Austellung des Kaukasischen Waffen-Verbandes der SS*, 27. 1. 1945; ARS-1760, 257, *Richtlinien für die Versorgung*, 10. 2. 1945; ARS-1760, 257, *Grundanweisung über die Gliederung der Kaukasier-Verbände*, 28. 2. 1945; Ferenc, 1977b, 22; Klanjšček, 1999, 395–405.

20 ARS-1848, 32, information report Nr. 74 of the Intelligence Center of the Headquarters of the 9th Corps; ARS-1848, 23, report for the English military mission at the Headquarters of the 9th Corps, 16. 4. 1945; ARS-1851, 80, interrogation report of Mihael Bagirov, 30. 3. 1945.

had already fought on the Eastern front in July 1944. Badly mauled by the Red Army, in September 1944 the division was sent to Slovakia, where it helped suppress a Slovak uprising (Logusz, 1997, 51–308).

In late January 1945, the 14th Waffen-SS Division was sent to Lower Styria (with some units across the border in Austrian Styria), where it would complete its restructuring and participate in anti-partisan operations. Responsible for security on the Maribor-Celje railway, the division was also involved in several operations against partisans in Lower Styria, and Carniola (Heike, 1988, 101; Klanjšček, 1999, 388–394; Logusz, 1997, 308–323; Melnyk, 2002, 217–246; Zupanc, 1976, 144). Four months later it was once again ordered to fight against the Red Army, this time in Hungary, followed by Slovenia and Austria (Melynk, 2002, 246–256). The Ukrainian division also had to fight against Slovenian partisans in Austria. While some units managed to reach British forces, the partisans captured others (Dolničar, 2001, 75; Fajdiga, 1994, 625; Strle, 1976, 55–57, 103; Žnidarič, 2009, 733–734; For more on the Galician Waffen-SS division in Slovenia, cf.: Kocjančič, 2019).

The 15th Cossack Cavalry Corps was also recruited from Soviet citizens in Slovenia, albeit briefly. The corps traces its history to April 1943, when the 1st Cossack Cavalry Division (*I. Kosaken-Kavallerie-Division*) was established under the command of the German general Helmuth von Pannwitz. First deployed to Croatia in October 1943 to combat its partisans, from January 1944, the Cossacks also fought Slovenian partisans in Lower Carniola (Neulen, 1992, 316–318; Timofeev, 2014, 120; Kiauta, 1973, 426; Lah, 1975, 192–200; Strle, 1995, 27 sq.). That autumn, various independent Cossack units were merged into the division, which was administratively transferred to the Waffen-SS in November. But the following month, the 2nd Cossack Brigade clashed with the advancing Red Army in Pitomača, in what had been described as the “last battle of the Russian Civil War”, since most of the troops on both sides were Russian.²¹

Planning to establish the 15th Cossack Cavalry Corps with two divisions began in late 1944 as well and was completed by late February 1945. Later that month, the corps added a third division (Littlejohn, 1987, 277; Timofeev, 2014, 132–133). Hopes of integrating the corps into the Russian Protective Corps were dashed when the latter’s members objected to the move. On 24 March, an all-Cossack congress met in Virovitica and elected General von Pannwitz, as their *Ataman* (supreme military commander) (Munoz, 1999, 32; Timofeev 2014, 134–135). As the corps began retreating to Austria in late April, it marched through Slovenia, where it had to confront both Slovenian and Croatian partisans, as well as Soviet-Bulgarian units (Fabian, 2013, 16–21; Hnilicka, 1970,

21 ARS-1851, 64, Sestav sovražnih edinic, 31. 1. 1945; ARS-1851, 64, Pregled sovražnih edinic, nahajajočih se na teritoriju, katerega kontrolirajo edince NOV in POS in na sosednem obmejnem ozemlju Hrvatske, 22. 7. 1944; Landwehr, 1983, 28–29; Mueggenberg, 2020, 267; Timofeev, 2014, 124–132.

141; Hribovšek, 1975, 177–210; Landwehr, 1983, Timofeev, 2014, 133–134). While the former captured some of the Cossacks, others managed to surrender to the British when they reached Austria.

The Russian Protective Corps, another formation of collaborators, also retreated through Slovenia. That unit began as the Separate Russian Corps (*Das Abgesonderte Russische Korps*) in September 1941, after the Germans occupied Yugoslavia. Later renamed the Russian Factory Protection Group (*Russischer Werkschutzgruppe*), it guarded important industrial sites in Serbia. At its height, the corps comprised four infantry and one cavalry regiment manned by White émigrés from Yugoslavia, Hungary, and Bulgaria, who were subsequently joined by Soviet POWs. In October 1942, the corps was once again renamed the Russian Protective Corps (*Russisches Schutzkorps*) and incorporated into the Wehrmacht that December, but by the end of 1944 it was simply called the Russian Corps. Fleeing across Slovenia in late April and early May 1945, its soldiers managed to reach Austria (Samcevič, 2019, 49 sq.).

Large numbers of East Europeans, including Soviets, were also recruited into other German units in Slovenia. One such unit was sent to the OZAK where, led by Odilo Globočnik, it participated in Action Reinhardt (*Aktion Reinhardt*), a systematic, industrial scale campaign to murder so-called *Untermenschen*, i.e. Jews, Slavs, Roma people, etc., In occupied Poland, these units set up the concentration camps of Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka, as well as a training camp in Travniki. The latter's *Trawniki-Männer* (officially *SS-Wachmannschaften*) were mainly Ukrainians who were being taught to be guards at the concentration camps (Arad, 1999, 14 sq., Black, 2011, 5 sq.).

As the Germans retreated on the Eastern front, they closed the camps, and in October 1943, Globočnik and some of his German and Ukrainian staff were sent to the OZAK. Here they set up a new concentration camp in a former rice factory (*Risiera di San Sabba*) in the Italian port of Trieste, where they continued to exterminate Jews and others (Di Giusto & Chiussi, 2016, 16; Ferenc, 1974a, 218; 1974b, 375 sq.; Wedekind, 2003, 310). The Soviet collaborators who arrived in Trieste formed the nucleus of the *SS-Wachmannschaften* "*Triest*." Soon joined by local recruits, the formation guarded the camp as well as local roads and the surrounding area. In February 1944, "*Triest*" consisted of one company of Ukrainians and three more of local (Italian, Slovenian, and Croatian) recruits. Globočnik and his men fled to Austria on the night of 28–29 April 1945 (Di Giusto & Chiussi, 2016, 28 sq.; Ferenc, 1977b, 284–285).

SOVIET PARTISANS IN SLOVENIA

While many Russians in Slovenia served the Germans during the occupation, several hundred of their compatriots ended up in the ranks of Slovenian partisans. They did so in various ways. The smallest (and least well known due to the lack of sources) group consisted of White émigrés living in Slo-

venia and elsewhere in Yugoslavia. One example is Aleksander Glebov, the son of Colonel Ivan Glebov, the president of the Russian All-Military Union (*Русский Обще-Воинский Союз*; ROBC/ROVS). When the war began, the Glebov family was living in the Slovenian city of Maribor, while Alexander had already been commissioned in the Yugoslav Royal Army. At first, he joined the military of the NDH, but in 1942, he defected with his whole battalion to the partisans. He survived the war with the rank of major. Another White officer who lived to see the end of the war was Oleg Križanovski. The son of a Tsarist colonel and a noble mother he joined the Second Group of Detachments (of NOV in POS) in March 1942, reaching the rank of captain. From Kranj, Timofej Ponomarenko joined the partisans in 1944, while Mihael Kostjukovski, from Novo Mesto, became a political commissar of the Lower Carniola Detachment (*Dolenjski odred*). One more active Yugoslav officer of Russian origin, Viktor Ljaševski, was captured in April, but was then liberated by the Red Army. He joined them in fighting at the Srem front and served in the Yugoslav (People's) Army until the Informbiro affair (Pulko, 2004, 60–61).

Escaped Soviet citizens, both civilians and POWs interned in Slovenia, Italy or Austria, some as forced labour, joined the partisans in larger numbers. Bezargalij Nurekinov was one of them. Born in 1915 in West Kazakhstan, he joined the Red Army's 309th Division and was captured during the battle for Viazma that October. Until May 1942, he was among the 18,000 Soviet POWs in Zhitomir Oblast. Then sent to a labour battalion that toiled in Poland and Czechoslovakia, in June 1944, he was transferred to France along with 1,400 others. However, after a mass desertion, the remainder were quickly rerouted to Karlsruhe in Germany and, on Christmas Day 1944, to Lugo. Here he looked after the horses of the German 356th Infantry Division's artillery regiment. As the division moved back to Germany in late January 1945, Nurekinov and a compatriot jumped from the train near Udine, where they met up with Italian partisans, who sent them to their Slovenian comrades.²²

Mihael Kudimov was another escapee. Born in 1923 in Kujbyševská *Oblast*, he volunteered for the Red Army in September 1941. He was captured in August 1942 near Voronezh and sent to a POW camp in Graz, Austria. However, in May 1944, he managed to escape and made it to Maribor, where he joined the partisans.²³

The largest contingent of Soviet citizens in the ranks of the Slovenian partisans were former soldiers of German-led units. Most had volunteered to fight for their captors as POWs to escape the camps, where harsh conditions, abuse by guards, malnutrition and hard labour caused thousands of deaths. Others joined the Wehrmacht because of their ideological leanings, being anti-communists or nationalists.

22 ARS-1848, 28, interrogation report of Bezargalij Nurekinov, 5. 2. 1945.

23 ARS-1851, 79, interrogation report of Mihael Kudimov, 3. 10. 1944.

Feodor Čeoboterjov, a Cossack veterinarian from Rostov *Oblast*, was mobilized into the Red Army's 34th Cavalry Division in August 1941. During the fighting on the Don River a year later, the Germans captured him, and he was sent to various POW camps in Poland and Germany. In May 1944, he and other Cossacks were gathered in a camp near Warsaw, where they formed a Don Cossack regiment. After several months in Poland, they were sent to Austria in August and then to Tarcento, Udine Province. As a member of the 1st Cossack Regiment, he participated in the clashes around the town of Nimis in September. After being wounded and captured by Slovenian partisans, he convalesced in one of their hospitals.²⁴

Nikolaj Sopotkin was still a high school student in Smolensk when the Germans invaded the Soviet Union. While hiding in a forest with other villagers, he was shot and sent to a German hospital and eventually a camp. In late February 1944, Nikolaj had been conscripted into a Russian-manned cavalry regiment in Belarus, where it built fortifications and fought Soviet partisans. The regiment was redeployed in July to Poland, where it was disarmed and he was then enrolled in the German 194th Grenadier Regiment in Kozina, Slovenia. Here he tended horses for an artillery battery. On duty for just 10 days, he fell ill. He was sent to a hospital in Gorizia, where he deserted and joined Slovenian partisans, which sent him to the "Russian Battalion".²⁵

Russians served in many, if not most (or even all), units of the NOV in POS, but the majority were in the partisan units that operated against their compatriots in German service. There was ample opportunity for the latter to desert and join the partisans. To date, Bušueva has identified the following Slovenian partisan units with Russians in their ranks:

- 14th and 18th Slovenian divisions (both part of the Slovenian 7th Corps of NOV in POS),
- 1st Russian Assault Brigade (part of the 30th Division of the 9th Corps),
- 1st Brigade "Tone Tomšič" (of the 14th Slovenian Division),
- Russian Company of the 3rd Brigade "Ivan Gradnik" (31st Slovenian Division),
- 6th Brigade "Slavko Šlander" (15th Slovenian Division),
- Russian Company of the 11th Brigade "Miloš Zidanšek",
- 15th Brigade (of the 15th Slovenian Division),
- 16th Slovenian Brigade "Janko Premrl Vojko" (of the 30th Division),
- 17th Slovenian Brigade "Simon Gregorčič" (of the 30th Division),
- Russian Battalion of 19th Brigade "Slavko Kosovel" (30th Division),
- Upper Carniola Partisan Detachment (*Gorenjski partizanski odred*),
- Russian Platoon of Goriška Brda-Benečija Partisan Detachment (*Briško-beneški partizanski odred*),

24 ARS-1848, 28, interrogation report of Feodor Čeoboterjov, 8. 11. 1944.

25 ARS-1848, 28, interrogation report of Nikolaj Sopotkin, 24. 2. 1945.

- Kamnik-Zasavje Partisan Detachment (*Kamniško-zasavski partizanski odred*),
- Kozjansko Partisan Detachment (*Kozjanski partizanski odred*),
- Inner Carniola Partisan Detachment (*Notranjski partizanski odred*),
- Pohorje Partisan Detachment/Slavko's Battalion (*Pohorski partizanski odred/Slavkov bataljon*),
- Battalion of Tank Detachment of the Main Command of NOV in POS,
- The Main Command of NOV in POS itself.

Some Russians/Soviets also served, or were patients, in partisan medical units, including the Medical Detachment, the 15th Brigade, the 15th Division, and the 7th Corps, or in such hospitals as “Zalesje”, “Snežnik”, “Por”, “Košuta”, “Topolščica”, “Vinica”, “Zgornji Hrastnik”, “Jelendol”, among other (Bušueva, 1973, 197–205).

As the list shows, while most Russians served individually in various units, there were some where they formed a separate (sub)unit. For example, in January 1944 the headquarters of the Slovenian partisans' 31st Division of the 9th Corps issued an order to the 7th Assault Brigade “France Prešeren” and other units regarding “former members of the Red Army who had escaped from the German army or had surrendered to our units in battle”. The partisan commanders noted that these men “don't realize the severity [of their situation] and there were several cases of indiscipline as well as of volunteers leaving their units”. Furthermore, “they don't realize that they committed treason against their country when they fought with weapons in German ranks”. To rectify this, the division's command decided to form “a special company or platoon from all Red Army members, which will have its own commander and political commissar,” and be subordinated to one of its brigades. At the same time, all partisan detachments had to transfer former Red Army troops to the division to form such units.²⁶

There were formal links between the Red Army and the Soviet partisans in Slovenia thanks to the presence of a Soviet military mission led by Lieutenant-Colonel Ivan Petrovič Ribačenko (*Иван Петрович Рыбаченко*) in the 9th Partisan Corps. Ribačenko even paid a visits to some of his countrymen among the partisans ranks. Thus, on 20 August 1944, he met Russian partisans in the 2nd Battalion of the 18th Brigade led by Anatolij Ignjatovič Djačenko (*Анатолий Игнйатъевич Дьяченко*) (Pilko, 2004, 434–435). Former Red Army soldiers and other Russians who had served in German-led units, were worried about their fate after the war, and Ribačenko addressed them to allay their concerns. While he harshly condemned those, who had carried German arms, he stated that the only way to be a true Soviet citizen was to atone for

26 ARS-1843, 2, order of the headquarters of the 31st Division to the headquarters of the 7th Assault Brigade “France Prešeren”, 25. 1. 1944.

their treason with blood. Convinced that they could return home if they fought sincerely as partisans, the Russians reacted positively to his speech (Bavec-Branko, 1970, 323–324).²⁷

There were also some Soviet citizens in the *Gradnikova brigada* of the 9th Corps, such as the Azerbaijani Mehti Huseynzade. He was mobilized into the Red Army in 1941, but was wounded and captured by the Germans in August 1942 during the Battle of Stalingrad. Forced to join the 162nd Division, he managed to organise a mass desertion in February 1944. The Slovenian partisans sent him to the *Gradnikova brigada*'s Russian Company, but he later became a saboteur (*diverzant*), where he was known as Mihajlo. In this new capacity, Huseynzade would infiltrate Trieste and other German-held settlements to talk to other Soviets and convince about 150 of them to desert. He also planted explosives in buildings the Germans frequented. Thus, on April 2nd he blew up a cinema, followed by the *Soldatenheim* some three weeks later, killing over 100 enemy troops in both cases. At the same time, he set off bombs in six other German barracks, two electrical stations, and the office of a fascist newspaper. He was killed on 2 November 1944 while returning from another successful mission, and was posthumously awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union in 1957 (Petelin, 1983, 350–354; Zupanc, 2007).

The Russian battalion began as a company formed of Russians in the fall 1943 as part of the 2nd Battalion of the 18th Bazovica Brigade. As the number of Russians and other non-Slovenians in the brigade grew, in December the headquarters of the 30th Division, to which it was subordinated, organized them into the 2nd (International) Battalion with three companies, composed of Russians, Serbo-Croatians, and Slovenes. Additional desertions and POWs from the German 162nd Division led to the battalion's reorganization in early 1944 into two Russian companies and one Yugoslav. In March, the 30th Division decided to group all foreign personnel in units according to their nationality. As a result, the 18th Brigade now consisted of the 1st (Slovenian) Battalion, 2nd (Russian) Battalion and 3rd (Serbo-Croat-Slovenian) Battalion. The Russians even formed their own cultural group with singers, dancers and reciters, and published a newspaper. The battalion fought in all the brigade's actions, and the partisan commanders regarded its members highly. Thus, on 3 May 1945, the battalion distinguished itself in the fight for the Opčine, the last German-held settlement before Trieste. On the same day, Ribačenko asked the division to have all its Soviet personnel assembled to be sent back to the Soviet Union before the long-awaited attack on Trieste. But before they left, 88 members of the 2nd Battalion were decorated, and some were also promoted. For example,

27 First Soviet military mission arrived in Slovenia on 17 March 1944 and was attached to the GŠ NOV in POS. The second Soviet military mission was attached to the Command of the Partisan 9th Corps (from June 1944) and the third was attached to the command of the 4th Operational Zone (from December 1944) (Dornik-Šubelj, 1995, 108–109).

one of the few partisans who had been with the 18th Brigade from the start, Djačenko was made a major. Formed into a Russian march brigade (*pohodna brigada*), rather than an assault brigade, they left for their homeland (Bavec-Branko, 1970, 198–533).

The *Zidanškova brigade* included the more short-lived Russian battalion in April 1945. Initially a company of about 50 men, as 148 Polish, Ukrainian and Hungarian volunteers joined them, it grew into the 5th (Russian) Battalion. The battalion participated in heavy fighting against German units trying to reach Austria, including the 14th Waffen-SS Division and the Cossack Corps. The brigade entered Maribor, the largest city in Lower Styria, on 10 May 1945. That same day two Soviet officers demanded that brigade headquarters release the Russian battalion. While this was carried out the following morning, some of the partisans escaped to avoid falling into the Red Army's hands (Fajdiga, 1975, 655–694).

One of the lesser-known episodes of Soviet (Russian) internees in Slovenia is the story of company (later brigade) “Stary”, which was formed from Eastern European internees from the concentration camp Mauthausen-Loibl. After the liberation of two Loibl camps on 8 May 1945, internees formed two units (French-led brigade “Liberté” and Polish-led “Stary”) as part of the NOV in POS. Among the members of the “Stary” unit were also 20 Russian internees and 3 female forced labourers in Austrian Carinthia. The “Stary” participated in the last battles of World War II in Carinthia and was then repatriated from Slovenia on 1 June 1945 (Tišler & Rovšek, 1995, 392–407).

AFTER THE WAR

When Viktor Cvelbar-Stane, the *Zidanškova brigada*'s former commander went to the Soviet Union after the war for some military training, he met two Russians who had fought with the Slovenian partisans. Having previously worn a Wehrmacht uniform, both were sentenced to six to eight years of hard labour after returning home (Fajdiga, 1975, 694). Service in the partisan units could be an extenuating circumstance that might result in a lighter punishment for Soviet soldiers who were captured, ended up in German POW camps and perhaps even served the enemy. Those who stayed and continued to fight for the Third Reich until the end could expect either the Gulag or execution when they were sent back to the Soviet Union according to the terms of the Yalta and Tehran Conferences.

While most Soviet-manned units in German service managed to reach Austria, some stayed or made it to Northern Italy. Several ten thousand strong each, they surrendered to British and American forces. While most were handed over to the Soviet military, others were luckier and managed to return to Yugoslavia or remain under British control. Thus, former Red Army troops in the *Waräger* Regiment went back home, while White émigrés were eventually released and

allowed to settle in Western Europe or the American hemisphere (Hoffmann, 2003, 81; Timofeev, 2014, 52). A similar fate befell the members of the 14th Waffen-SS division. Some were captured or turned over to Yugoslavia, but most were sent to Allied POW camp in Rimini, Italy, and after some time allowed to settle in the United Kingdom.²⁸

The Cossacks suffered most. Almost all, around 40,000, including their families and their German officers, were turned over to the Soviets (Koller, 2013; Landwehr, 1983, 32). Civilians were sentenced to eight years in the camps, and the Cossacks soldiers to 25–50 years. As for Pannwitz and majority of the senior Cossack commanders, they were executed in 1947 (Landwehr, 1983, 32; Tolstoy, 1979, 220 sq.).

CONCLUSION

During World War II, several thousand Soviet citizens and White émigrés fought under German command against Slovenian partisans and most of them remained in the Third Reich's service until the end of the war. Their units belonged to different military and security (police) organizations, including the German Army (*Heer*), the SD, the Waffen-SS, and ROA/VS KONR. Some of these units had German commanders and staff, while others were commanded by foreign officers, a lot of them coming from the ranks of the Russian White Émigré community. These Soviet-manned formations were critical to the German occupational regime in Slovenia, because they provided necessary manpower to fight the Slovenian partisans, allowing more trustworthy German troops to be pulled from Slovenia and sent to the front against Western Allies and especially against the Soviet Red Army. At different times, these collaborationist units represented the main German counterinsurgency force in the territory of the OZAK.

But they were not completely trusted by their German superiors, and their wartime successes were not plentiful. A lot of their counterinsurgency actions turned into looting, pillaging, and killing of the civilian population. Another problem with these troops was a high percentage of desertion to the partisan side, in Italy, Slovenia and Croatia. Several hundred - perhaps even over a thousand - Russians and other Soviet nationals are estimated to have joined the Slovenian partisans to fight against the Germans and their own compatriots, still in German service. Considered effective and dedicated soldiers, they tried to redeem themselves for their past actions - serving in the German military forces. Not only did they engage in combat, but some also carried out sabotage, intelligence gathering and propaganda work

28 ARS-1931, 390, interrogation report of Helmut Roggenkamp, 27. 8. 1948; TNA HO 213/1851, Refugee Screening Commission: Report on Ukrainians in Sep Camp No. 374 Italy, 21. 2. 1947; Fajdiga, 1944, 627–631; Logusz, 1997, 357–362; Marolt, 1993, 406–408; Stojanovič, 2006, 38; Žnidarič, 2009, 750.

and thus contributing to the victory of the Allied side (including partisans) in World War II. Some individuals distinguished themselves in combat and were awarded even the title of “Hero of Soviet Union”.

But majority of Soviet collaborators stayed in German service until the end of World War II, when they attempted to surrender to Western Allies (in Italy or Austria) in order to avoid being captured by the Soviet Red Army or Yugoslav partisans. While a lot of Soviet collaborators managed to reach and surrender to the British or American forces, the majority of them (Soviet citizens) were turned over to the Red Army and repatriated to the Soviet Union. Their ultimate faith was spending several years of a prolonged hard labour in the Gulag system (for lower ranking personnel) or execution (for higher ranking personnel). A fortunate few (non-Soviet citizens) stayed in the captivity of the Western Allies and after their release, they moved to different countries in Europe and Americas.

Much like during the Russian Civil War, former compatriots or even brothers-in-arms occasionally confronted each other on the battlefield. But now they were all abroad, in foreign uniforms, fighting far away from their homeland for other countries. We do not know how many Soviet citizens died in Slovenia, whether as internees, POWs, soldiers in German service or partisans. Their stories and fates deserve more attention and research.

PRISPEVEK K VLOGI (NEKDANJIH) RDEČEARMISKIH VOJNIH
UJETNIKOV IN BELIH EMIGRANTOV V SLOVENIJI MED NEMŠKO
OKUPACIJO, 1943–1945*Klemen KOCJANČIČ*

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POVZETEK

Članek predstavlja vlogo sovjetskih vojnih ujetnikov in ruskih »belogardistov«, ki so se borili v Sloveniji med drugo svetovno vojno. Največjo skupino so predstavljali vojaki Rdeče armade, ki so v vojnem ujetništvu prestopili na nemško stran in vstopili v njihove oborožene sile. Njim so se pridružili tudi pripadniki bele emigracije, ki so živeli v Kraljevini Jugoslaviji in sosednjih državah ter bili sovražni komunizmu. Medtem ko so oni služili tretjemu rajhu, so se drugi migranti in sovjetski državljani v Sloveniji pridružili lokalnim komunističnim partizanom v boju proti okupatorjem, pri čemer je večina od njih predhodno služila v nemških vojaških formacijah. Na podlagi arhivskega gradiva in literature, avtor predstavi pregled takih enot in njihovega vpliva na bojevanje na tem področju. Argumentira, da so kolaboracionisti predstavljali poglobitno podporo svojim novim gospodarjem z nadzorom prebivalstva in bojem proti partizanom, tudi svojim sodržavljanom. Manjšina, sestavljajoč iz migrantov in sovjetskih državljanov, ki so se uprli okupaciji, je prav tako imela vpliv, zahvaljujoč svojemu vojaškemu znanju in sovražnosti proti silam osi.

Ključne besede: druga svetovna vojna, Slovenija, Sovjetska zveza, bela emigracija, kontrarevolucija, Wehrmacht, Waffen-SS, partizani, Rdeča armada

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