

Occupation Terror in the Soviet Union: Partisans are Hanged to Deter Others (c. 1943)

Abstract

With the attack on the Soviet Union, the Nazi campaign assumed its full scope as a racial-ideological war of annihilation of unprecedented brutality and barbarity. The Wehrmacht and the SS cooperated in the conquest of Eastern European “living space” [*Lebensraum*] and raw materials, in the systematic eradication of racial and political enemies, and in the decimation and enslavement of the Slavic peoples. By the end of the war, an estimated 25-27 million Soviet citizens had died, including many civilians. This photograph shows Soviet partisans who had been hanged to deter others from following a similar path. It was found on a fallen soldier in 1943.

That same year, Heinrich Himmler delivered a notorious three-hour speech to high-ranking SS functionaries in Posen. His hate-filled rant focused particular attention on the German invasion of the Soviet Union and the alleged necessity of exhibiting utter ruthlessness toward the Slavic peoples in the interest of the German *Volk*. One passage, for example, went as follows: “we [i.e. the SS] must be honest, decent, loyal and comradely to members of our own blood and to nobody else. What happens to a Russian, to a Czech does not interest me in the slightest. [. . .] Whether nations live in prosperity or starve to death interests me only in so far as we need them as slaves for our *Kultur*; otherwise, it is of no interest to me.”

Source



Source: Terror of the occupation period – partisans hanged as a deterrent; the photo was found in 1943 with a fallen German soldier. Unknown photographer.

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