

## From a Wehrmacht Report on the Extermination of the Jews in the Ukraine

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Armament in the Ukraine

Inspector

Secret

To

The Office of Wi Rue [Industrial Armament Department]

OKW [High Command of the Wehrmacht]

General of the Infantry Thomas

Berlin

...c. The Jewish Question

The settling of the Jewish Question in the Ukraine has been made more difficult because in the cities the Jews constituted a major part of the population. What we have here is therefore, just as in the Government-General, a massive population policy problem. Many cities had more than 50 percent Jews. Only the rich Jews fled before the German troops. The great majority of the Jewish masses remained under the German Administration. The entire situation was complicated by the fact that *these Jews carried out almost all the work in the skilled trades and even provided part of the labor for small- and medium-sized industries*; apart from trade, some of which had become superfluous as a result of the direct or indirect effects of the war. *[Their] elimination was therefore bound to have profound economic consequences*, including even direct effects on the military economy (supplies for troops).

From the outset the attitude of the Jewish population was anxious-willing. They tried to avoid anything that might displease the German Administration. That they hated the German Administration and the Army in their hearts is obvious and not surprising. However, there is no evidence that the Jews, either as a body, or even in any considerable numbers, have taken part in sabotage, etc. Without doubt there have been some terrorists or saboteurs

among them, just as there have been among the Ukrainians. But it cannot be claimed that the Jews as such present any kind of danger for the German Wehrmacht. The troops and the German Administration have been satisfied with the work output of the Jews, who are of course motivated by no emotion except fear.

Immediately following the military operations, the Jewish population remained undisturbed at first. It was only weeks, in some cases months, later that systematic shooting of the Jews was carried out by units of the Order Police specially set up for this purpose. This *Aktion* moved in the main from east to west. It was carried out entirely in public, with the assistance of Ukrainian militia; in many cases, regrettably, also with the voluntary participation of members of the Wehrmacht. These *Aktionen* included aged men, women, and children of all ages, and the manner in which they were carried out was appalling. The gigantic number of executions involved in this *Aktion* is far greater than any similar measure undertaken in the Soviet Union up to now. Altogether about 150,000 to 200,000 Jews may have been executed in this section of the Ukraine belonging to the RK [*Reichskommissariat*]; up to now no consideration was given to the interests of the economy.

To sum up, it could be said that the solution of the Jewish Question as carried out in the Ukraine, evidently motivated by ideological principles, has had the following consequences:

- a) Elimination of some, in part superfluous, eaters in the cities.
- b) Elimination of a part of the population which undoubtedly hated us.
- c) Elimination of urgently needed craftsmen, who were in many cases indispensable for the requirements of the Wehrmacht.
- d) Consequences in connection with foreign propaganda that are obvious.
- e) Adverse effects on troops which in any case have indirect contact with executions.
- f) Brutalizing effects on the units (Order Police) which carry out the executions....

Source: Yitzhak Arad, Yisrael Gutman, Abraham Margalio (Eds.), *Documents on the Holocaust. Selected Sources on the Destruction of the Jews of Germany and Austria, Poland and the Soviet Union*, Yad Vashem, Jerusalem 1981, Document no. 190, pp. 417- 419.