

~~ARTICLE 6~~

~~The police decree will be effective 14 days after its promulgation.
Berlin, 1 September 1941~~

~~For the Reich Minister of the Interior
Heydrich~~

~~Source: Office of the US Chief of Counsel for Prosecution of Axis Criminality,
Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression Vol. V,
(Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1946), pp 541-2 [Doc. 2877-PS]~~

The Einsatzgruppen

Otto Ohlendorf (1907-51) was a well-educated economist who joined the SS in 1936 and advanced to the rank of *Gruppenführer* (the equivalent of general) in 1944. He had joined the Nazi party as a teenager in 1925. In June 1941 he was named chief of one of the four special killing units (*Einsatzgruppen*) whose assigned task it was to execute Jews, partisans, and communist functionaries in the sectors conquered by the Wehrmacht in the Soviet Union. Each killing unit was further subdivided into smaller detachments (*Sonderkommandos*). Between June 1941 and April 1942 the Einsatzgruppen murdered over a half-million people – men, women, and children. Most of the victims were killed by shooting, but in late 1941 mobile gas vans were used as well. Otto Ohlendorf's affidavit of November 1945 closely paralleled his testimony at the Nuremberg Trials in January 1946.

6.6 Affidavit of SS Gruppenführer Otto Ohlendorf

I, Otto Ohlendorf, being first duly sworn, declare:

I was chief of the Security Service (SD), Amt III of the Main Office of the chief of the Security Police and the SD (RSHA), from 1939 to 1945. In June 1941 I was designated by Himmler to lead one of the special commitment groups [*Einsatzgruppen*], which were then being formed, to accompany the German armies in the Russian campaign. I was the chief of the Einsatzgruppe D ... Himmler stated that an important part of our task consisted of the extermination of Jews – women, men, and children – and of communist functionaries. I was informed of the attack on Russia about four weeks in advance.

According to an agreement with the armed forces high command and army high command, the special commitment detachments [*Einsatzkommandos*] within the army group or the army were assigned to certain army corps and divisions. The army designated the areas in which the special commitment detachments had to operate. All operational directives and orders for the carrying out of executions were given through the chief of the SIPO [Security Police] and the SD (RSHA) in Berlin. Regular courier service and radio communications existed between the Einsatzgruppen and the chief of the SIPO and the SD.

The Einsatzgruppen and Einsatzkommandos were commanded by personnel of the Gestapo, the SD, or the criminal police. Additional men were detailed from the regular

police [*Ordnungspolizei*] and the Waffen SS. *Einsatzgruppe D* consisted of approximately 400 to 500 men and had about 170 vehicles at its disposal.

When the German army invaded Russia, I was leader of the *Einsatzgruppe D* in the Southern sector, and in the course of the year, during which I was leader of *Einsatzgruppe D*, it liquidated approximately 90,000 men, women, and children. The majority of those liquidated were Jews, but there were among them some communist functionaries too.

In the implementation of this extermination program the special commitment groups were subdivided into special commitment detachments, and the *Einsatzkommandos* into still smaller units, the so-called Special Purpose Detachments [*Sonderkommandos*] and Unit Detachments [*Teilkommandos*]. Usually, the smaller units were led by a member of the SD, the Gestapo, or the criminal police. The unit selected for this task would enter a village or city and order the prominent Jewish citizens to call together all Jews for the purpose of resettlement. They were requested to hand over their valuables to the leaders of the unit, and shortly before the execution to surrender their outer clothing. The men, women, and children were led to a place of execution which in most cases was located next to a more deeply excavated anti-tank ditch. Then they were shot, kneeling or standing, and the corpses thrown into the ditch. I never permitted the shooting by individuals in group D, but ordered that several of the men would shoot at the same time in order to avoid direct, personal responsibility. The leaders of the unit or especially designated persons, however, had to fire the last bullet at those victims who were not dead immediately. I learned from conversations with other group leaders that some of them demanded that the victims lie down flat on the ground to be shot through the nape of the neck. I did not approve of these methods.

In the spring of 1942 we received gas vehicles from the chief of the Security Police and the SD in Berlin. These vehicles were made available by Amt II of the RSHA. The man who was responsible for the cars of my *Einsatzgruppe* was Becher. We had received orders to use the cars for the killing of women and children. Whenever a unit had collected a sufficient number of victims, a car was sent for their liquidation. We also had these gas vehicles stationed in the neighborhood of the transient camps into which the victims were brought. The victims were told that they would be resettled and had to climb into the vehicles for that purpose. Then the doors were closed and the gas streamed in through the starting of the vehicles. The victims died within 10 to 15 minutes. The cars were then driven to the burial place, where the corpses were taken out and buried ...

[signed] Ohlendorf
5 November 1945

Source: Office of the US Chief of Counsel for Prosecution of Axis Criminality,
Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, Vol. V
(Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1946), pp. 341-2 [Doc. 2620-PS]

Hans Frank's diary

~~Hans Frank (1900-46), a lawyer by training, was the leading Nazi official in the so-called Government General, the portion of Poland not directly annexed to the Reich after its conquest in 1939. Frank ruled the Government General from his headquarters in Krakow in southern Poland. At the time of this speech to his cabinet the decision for the~~