

Einsatzgruppe B in Eastern Belarus

Einsatzgruppe B followed Army Group Center as it advanced into Soviet territory, starting from Warsaw and fanning out across Belarus toward Minsk and Smolensk. It conducted mass killings of Jews in the area controlled by Army Group Center (Rear) as well as in areas closer to the front. Beginning in August 1941, Einsatzgruppe B was headquartered in Smolensk. In the fall of 1941, it operated largely west of the city in eastern Belarus. The following document is a report compiled at headquarters in Berlin detailing the actions of Einsatzgruppe B in the first week of October 1941.¹

The Chief of the Security Police and Security Service

Berlin, October 25, 1941
50 copies (36th Copy)

Operational Situation Report USSR No. 124

Einsatzgruppe B

Location: Smolensk

Actions against Functionaries, Agents, Saboteurs, and Jews

...In Mogilev, the Jews also tried to sabotage their removal into the ghetto by fleeing en masse. Einsatzkommando 8, with the help of the Order Police, blocked the roads leading out of town and liquidated 113 Jews.

In the vicinity of Shklov, about 50 km north of Mogilev, acts of sabotage were constantly committed, chiefly the destruction of the German Army's telephone communication lines. An inquiry showed that Jews of Shidov [probably Shklov] had taken part in these acts of sabotage; thus 627 Jews were liquidated. In a further action, another 812 male and female persons were given 'special treatment,' all of them racially and mentally inferior elements....

In Borisov, another 83 persons were shot individually during the time of this report. They were seditious Jews, former NKGB agents, and Communist functionaries.

Two large-scale actions were carried out by the platoon in Krupka and Sholopaniche: 912 Jews were liquidated in the former, and 822 in the latter. The Krupka district can now be considered free of Jews. The complete liquidation of all Jews in the two villages was deemed necessary in order to deprive the numerous partisans and parachutists in these parts of any assistance which the Jews in particular had given most persistently.

In Bobruisk, during the time under report, a platoon of Einsatzgruppe 8 executed 418 persons. Among them were rebellious Jews and persons who had shielded former Red Army soldiers or who had acted as spies for the partisans. Some of those executed had committed anti-German agitation, conducting whisper campaigns and distributing leaflets....

On October 8, 1941, the complete liquidation of the Jews in the Vitebsk ghetto began owing to the imminent danger of epidemics. The number of Jews who came under 'special treatment' amounted to about 3,000....

¹ Yitzhak Arad, Shmuel Krakowski, and Shmuel Spector, eds., *The Einsatzgruppen Reports: Selections from the Dispatches of the Nazi Death Squads' Campaign Against the Jews in Occupied Territories of the Soviet Union July 1941–January 1943*, trans. Stella Schossberger (New York: Holocaust Library, 1989), 204–206.