CHAPTER 8

War Industry Requirements in the Face of Annihilation of the Workforce

The beginning of Operation Barbarossa marked a new era of warfare, which was neither limited to the battlefield nor the armed forces. The German-Soviet war directly affected large parts of the population who were subjected to terror, persecution, population transfer, or mass murder. The whole population, under the control of one or another party, was occupied with a total mobilization of all economic resources, including the adoption of war economy and mobilization of labor resources. Apparently, the German army, while occupying new territories, was also reinforcing its economic resources, which included new factories, more food, raw materials, and more labor forces. Those significant elements needed to be used in appropriate ways in order to bolster the war economy. A surplus of resources could, however, lead to misuse or waste. Therefore, we should carefully analyze any declaration of German authorities and verify if the declarative content corresponded to the conduct in practice.

On April 20, 1942, Fritz Sauckel wrote in his labor mobilization program the following:

The aim of this new, gigantic labor mobilization is to use all the rich and tremendous sources, conquered and secured for us by our fighting Armed Forces under the leadership of Adolf Hitler, for the armament of the Armed Forces and also for the nutrition of the Homeland. The raw materials, as well as the fertility of the conquered territories and their
human labor power, are to be used completely and conscientiously to the profit of Germany and its allies.¹

Despite these words, we have to examine to what extent the resources of the conquered territories were used “completely and conscientiously.” I would argue the opposite: the non-coordinated policy concerning the use of existing human resources led to losing them when they were available. Moreover, even when the shortage of a qualified labor force was clear, the German authorities continued the opera mortale, losing millions of workers who were in their hands, while attracting unreasonable funds to mobilize other, much less qualified labor forces. This contradiction was particularly obvious during the Aktion Reinhardt, when on the one hand, considerable forces were used to complete the mass murder of the Jews, and on the other hand, significant police and military forces were used in order to forcefully mobilize hundreds of thousands of new workers.

BEGINNING OF LABOR SHORTAGES, 1942–1943

Shortage of manpower began to be progressively acute already in 1942. After the attack on Moscow faltered in December 1941, the Eastern Front stagnated. It became increasingly clear that Germany lost its opportunity to conquer the European part of the Soviet Union. At the same time, the Soviet Union was not strong enough to fully repulse the German forces, being not able to stop the German invasion and to keep it in check. The interval between the attacks on Moscow and the defeat at Stalingrad was a time of frequent local offensives followed by withdrawals. Nevertheless, from an economic point of view, this period marked a depletion of reserves and the beginning of constant growth in the need for war material, which meant the necessity to increase war production. Apparently, the battle was not just on the battlefield: in reality, the fight was no less intense in factories and on the manufacturing belt. The result of war was to be decided not by the quality of soldiers and officers but rather by the production potential. This rather simple fact should have been well understood by the leaders of the Third Reich, and actually it was. But we must

¹ Sauckel’s labor mobilization program sent to Rosenberg on 20 April 1942 (016-PS), in IMT, Red Series, vol. 1, 876.
not forget that the regime of Nazi Germany had other priorities as well, which consequentially would lead to the downfall of the Nazi state. In truth, the Nazi regime was able to engage considerable forces in order to realize its plans, which had ideological character and were the raison d’être of Nazism.

The General Government, as an occupied territory, served as a reservoir of manpower for the Reich. This was the first occupied territory, which had a quasi-state organization, but was not annexed to the German Reich and was different in form from the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. The German administration was more ruthless here than in other territories and treated the General Government as a war trophy. Since autumn 1939, there were constant requests from the Reich to provide more and more labor force that was needed in different branches of the economy, mainly in agriculture.

The Polish forced laborers were more preferred in the Reich than the Jews and Soviet POWs. Since the German authorities wanted to get rid of Jews and declare their regions judenfrei, which was for them mainly a propagandistic success devoid of any practical value, bringing in Jewish workers would be a contradiction. On the other hand, Soviet POWs were also considered dangerous from an ideological point of view; therefore, during the first months after the beginning of the German-Soviet war, there was a prohibition against bringing Soviet POWs into the Reich’s territory. However, this ban was lifted as soon as autumn 1941. According to Göring’s statement at a conference at the Air Ministry on November 7, 1941, “The Führer’s point of view as to employment of prisoners of war in war industries has changed basically. So far [we keep] a total of 5 million prisoners of war—employed so far are 2 million.”2 Göring was thinking about POWs in general and not former Soviet soldiers who at that time were dying en masse of starvation in temporary POW camps that lacked elementary facilities and even the most primitive barracks.

One year later, in a secret memorandum issued from Hitler’s headquarters on October 31, 1942, Wilhelm Keitel directed the execution of Hitler’s order to use POWs in the German war economy. “The lack of workers is becoming an increasingly dangerous hindrance for the future the German war and armament industry. The expected relief through discharges from the armed forces is uncertain as to the extent and date; however, its possible extent will by no means correspond to expectations and requirements in view of the great demand.

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2 Göring’s statement at a conference at the Air Ministry on November 7, 1941, where was also discussed the use of POW’s in the armament industry (1206-PS), in IMT, Red Series, vol. 1, 912–13.
The Führer has now ordered that even the working power of the Russian prisoners of war should be utilized to a large extent by large scale assignment for the requirements of the war industry. The prerequisite for production is adequate nourishment. Also very small wages are to be planned for the most modest supply with a few consumers’ goods (Genussmittel) for every day’s life, eventual rewards for production.”

The use of POWs in the armament industry violated Geneva conventions that prohibited the exploitation of POWs in warfare and the war industry. However, the above-mentioned directive did not entirely open the possibility of importing Soviet POWs into the Reich. Therefore, the authorities of the Third Reich used to make exchanges of Soviet POWs for Polish workers. In the minutes of the meeting concerning problems of the labor force on September 20, 1941, it was said: “[. . .] as is clear from the letter of the Ministry of Labor, Marshal Göring wishes to provide a further 100,000 Poles in exchange for 100,000 Russian prisoners of war, which are placed in the General Government. The speaker expressed his view that prisoners cannot be considered a full equivalent in exchange for Poles sent to the Reich.”

Only later, when the shortage of forced laborers became acute, the authorities made the decision to authorize bringing in Soviet POWs and employing them in mining, heavy industry, and the war industry.

Frank and the leadership of the General Government were under constant pressure from the Reich to provide more and more Polish workers. In a Kraków meeting of Frank and the General Plenipotentiary for Labor Deployment Fritz Sauckel on August 18, 1942, the issues of providing additional forced workers from the General Government were raised. During that meeting Hans Frank said:

I am glad that I can officially report to you, Comrade Sauckel, that until today we have handed over 800,000 workers to the Reich. If we also take into account the number of able-bodied Polish prisoners of war found in the Reich, the total number of manpower greatly exceeds the 1.2 million people from the General Government.

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3 A secret memorandum issued from Hitler’s headquarters on October 31, 1942; Keitel directed the execution of Hitler’s order to use POW’s in the German war economy (EC-194), in IMT, Red Series, vol. 1, 912.

4 Conference of September 20, 1941 on delivery of manpower to Germany, at which were present Frank, Frauendorfer, and Boepple, in Frank, Okupacja i ruch oporu, vol. 1, 376–77.

5 Hans Frank’s speech on the occasion of the visit of Fritz Sauckel on further supply of forced workers’ quotas, Kraków, August 18, 1942, in Frank, Okupacja i ruch oporu, vol. 1, 512.
According to Frank’s evaluation, about 400,000 Polish POWs coming from the General Government were in the Reich. In fact, the total number of Polish POWs in German hands could have been closer to 450,000, if not only those from the General Government, but also from all of pre-war Polish territories were counted. Since some of the POWs including Jewish soldiers from the Polish army were released, Frank’s number is probably more accurate. Frank usually liked to assign himself achievements, even if he had no part in them. However, this number of about 1.2 million Polish laborers was not sufficient. Frank went on to say:

Recently you reported a demand for manpower counting 140,000 men. I am pleased to declare to you and make it official that under our agreement yesterday I will deliver to the Reich until the end of October 60% of the working force of this new demand, and the remaining 40%—by the end of the year. […] You may, however, expect in the next year to continue supplying manpower from the General Government because the action will be conducted by the police.6

It should be stressed that already in the summer of 1942, a shortage of manpower was felt in the General Government due to the advanced liquidation of ghettos and deportation of hundred thousands of Jews to death camps. Since the Jews could not be brought into the Reich, they were filling in for the deficiency of laborers in the General Government, especially in industry and handcrafts. They performed many important tasks for their communities, towns, etc., which freed Polish workers to perform other jobs. Nevertheless, substitution of Polish workers was only part of the exploitation mechanism of labor force in the General Government. Jews were also employed in many workshops, enterprises, labor camps, and independent labor detachments that were not connected to the management apparatus of the Polish labor force.

We have to mention yet another aspect of the labor force management in the General Government. After the beginning of Operation Barbarossa in the General Government, intensive development of the war industry took place and any labor surplus that had existed during the period of economic stagnation was drained not only by the export of manpower, but also by industrial development. Moreover, due to intensifying aerial bombardment of German territory, many industrial plants were evacuated to safer areas of the General

6 Ibid., 513.
Therefore, extermination of Jews within the framework of the Aktion Reinhardt created an acute shortage of workers.

Lack of coordination between the extermination of Jews and management of the labor force in all territories occupied by the German Forces created serious difficulties in providing not only a sufficient quantity of workers, but first and foremost, of qualified workers. Frank summed this problem quite clearly:

For the government of the General Government one particular aspect seems to be important. One of your most difficult tasks was, probably—you are likely to confirm this on the base of your experiences from his last trip—to enable the Reich to settle the central planning concerning labor for the war exigencies once and for all. About the area such as the General Government one may say: “You are a reservoir of labor,”—then you can export work force from here, or, “you are part of the industrial component of the total area of the Reich,” then you can build factories here. You cannot do both: export labor and expand the industry of the Reich on the same territory. [...] We have to realize the gigantic investment program of the Reich, including expansion of the rail network. Two-thirds of the general supply for the Eastern Front pass through the General Government.8

These objections were quite reasonable. It was the time when Aktion Reinhardt was conducted, even though that is not mentioned in the above quotes. That should have been the topic of the conversation during the exchange with Sauckel. However, despite his protests, Frank was actually a conformist. Even though he played the role of a courageous leader, he was rather submissive, especially toward people that were above him in the party hierarchy. Thus, despite expressing his displeasure, he was in fact fulfilling the tasks Sauckel imposed upon him. It would be unlikely for Frank to oppose the mass murder of Jews, even if that were against the interests of the territory under his administration.

In the early months of Aktion Reinhardt, Bühler expressed his dissatisfaction with the deportation of the qualified Jewish workforce. At a meeting on May 11, 1942, he said:

New information is released about the alleged deliberate termination of the Jewish ghettos, when the Jews able to work are stopped and

7 BA-MA, RW23-5, Geschichte der Rü In im GG (1. Juli 1940–31. Dezember1941), 115.
8 Frank, Okupacja i ruch oporu, vol. 1, 513–14.
transported further to the east. Jews fit for work are to be placed in large concentration camps, which act as production centers. At the first glance, these plans look alluring, but a closer look shows that the damage resulting from the realization of this plan—because it will involve destruction of existing forms of organization—often outweighs the benefits that one could ever promise after such a move. At this time, in any case, such plan, according to the speaker, will not be beneficial. [. . .] Chances that it will free more Polish laborers for the Reich are minimal. As a result of a survey of 27,000 workers of the military industry, only 42 people voluntarily signed up to work in the Reich. But police coercion is used, then many workers do not come to their work at all in fear of shipment to the Reich. The Reich also recommends conducting raids of population on the streets of major cities. It is expected that as a result of this action, we will manage to get 52,000 workers. All these projects are completely meaningless, and actually had such action been taken, it would certainly endanger supply to the front in a significant way.9

Despite Bühler’s disapproval, the methods he described were widely used after just several months,10 because, as stated above, the authorities of the General Government were not able to mobilize the laborers for the work in the Reich with incentives or by threats. Special publications describing good working and living conditions in the Reich were issued to convince potential laborers from among the Polish population.11 These attempts, however, were not favorably embraced.

With increasing difficulties in obtaining the labor force, more and more drastic methods were used to attract forced workers. This happened not only in the General Government, but also in other areas occupied in the east, and above all, in the Reichskommissariate Ukraine and Ostland. To round up people to work, in addition to the gendarmerie and the police, the army was engaged. These brutal methods were used not only for Poles, but also for Ukrainians

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9 Minutes of the 5th meeting of the heads of main departments of the General Government, fragment concerning security and delivery of workers to the Reich, Kraków, May 11, 1942, in Frank, Okupacja i ruch oporu, vol. 1, 459–60.
10 Frank, Okupacja i ruch oporu, vol. 1, 564–65.
11 Fryderyk Didier, ed., Europa pracuje w Niemczech: Sauckel mobilizuje rezerwy produkcyjne (Berlin: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1943).
and Belarusians. The Chairman of the Ukrainian Main Committee in Kraków wrote in a letter to Frank in February 1943:

The wild and ruthless man-hunt as exercised everywhere in towns and country, in streets, squares, stations, even in churches, at night in houses, has badly shaken the feeling of security of the inhabitants. Everybody is exposed to the danger, to be seized anywhere and at any time by members of the police, suddenly and unexpectedly and to be brought into an assembly camp. None of his relatives knows what has happened to him, only months later one or the other gives news of his fate by a postcard.\(^\text{12}\)

These complaints could not change the situation, since the problem of labor forces was discussed in the highest echelons of power in the Reich. The new programs of armament led by Speer were based not only on reorganization of industry, but also on developing production, which was only possible on condition that the required number of workers was provided. Therefore, Speer pressed Sauckel, using the authority of his relationship with Hitler, to get what he wanted. Speer’s statement in the minutes of conferences with Hitler on August 10, 11, and 12 of 1942 reads as follows:

Gauleiter Sauckel promises to make Russian labor available for the fulfillment of the iron and coal program and reports that if required, he can supply a further million Russian laborers for the German armament industry up to and including October 1942. So far, he has already supplied 1 million for industry and 700,000 for agriculture. In this connection the Führer states that the problem of providing labor can be solved in all cases and to any extent; he authorizes Gauleiter Sauckel to take all measures required. He would agree to any necessary compulsion (Zwangsmassnahmen) in the East as well as in the West if this question could not be solved on a voluntary basis.\(^\text{13}\)

However, in 1943 when the shortage of manpower became even more acute, the highest authorities pressured Sauckel and he pushed other regional

\(^{12}\) Chairman of the Ukrainian Main Committee to Frank, Cracow, February 1943 (1526-PS), in IMT, \textit{Red Series}, vol. 1, 881.

\(^{13}\) Speer’s statement in a record of conferences with Hitler on August 10, 11, and 12, 1942 (R-124), in IMT, \textit{Red Series}, vol. 1, 885.
bodies to obtain more and more workers—it did not matter at what price. In a letter of October 5, 1943, Sauckel wrote:

The Führer has worked out new and most urgent plans for the armament which require the quick mobilization of two more million foreign labor forces. The Führer therefore has granted me, for the execution of my decree of March 21, 1942, new powers for my new duties, and has especially authorized me to take whatever measures I think are necessary in the Reich, the Protectorate, the General-Government, as well as in the occupied territories, in order to assure at all costs an orderly mobilization of labor for the German armament industry. The additional required labor forces will have to be drafted for the majority from the recently occupied Eastern Territories, especially from the Reichskommissariat Ukraine. Therefore, the Reichskommissariat Ukraine must furnish: 225,000 labor forces by December 31, 1942 and 225,000 more by May 1, 1943.14

The lack of workers was strongly felt not only in industry but also in agriculture—an essential sphere, which provided food for the country. As more and more German men were recruited to the army, numbers of workers needed to replace them at home significantly grew.

Especially the labor supply for German agriculture and for the most urgent armament production programs ordered by the Führer make the fastest importation of approximately one million women and men from the Eastern Territories within the next four months necessary. Starting March 15 [1943], the daily shipment shall reach 5,000 female and male workers respectively, and at the beginning of April [1943] this number has to be increased to 10,000. This means that most urgent programs shall be implemented, so that the spring tillage and other agricultural tasks are not to suffer, causing detriment of nutrition and bad situation in the armed forces.15

The directives from Hitler were passed to Sauckel and then to Rosenberg. Rosenberg instructed his subordinates to use the most severe measures to recruit the forced labor. A secret report of a conference between the Commissioner

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14 Sauckel to Rosenberg, October 5, 1942 (017-PS), in IMT, Red Series, vol. 1, 882.
15 Sauckel to Rosenberg, March 17, 1943 (019-PS), in IMT, Red Series, vol. 1, 883.
General of Zhitomir and Rosenberg in Winnica on June 17, 1943 stated the following:

But as the Chief Plenipotentiary for the mobilization of labor explained to us the gravity of the situation, we had no other device. I consequently have authorized the commissioners of the areas to apply the severest measures in order to achieve the imposed quota. The deterioration of morale in conjunction with this does not necessitate any further proof. It is nevertheless essential to win the war on this front too. The problem of labor mobilization cannot be handled with gloves.\(^\text{16}\)

The recruitment in the east in no way was “handled with gloves,” but rather with fire and blood. A report from the chief of Main Office III with the High Command in Minsk, dated June 28, 1943, to Ministerialdirektor Riecke, a top official in the Rosenberg Ministry, quite vividly described how recruitment of forced laborers looked in the field:

The recruitment of labor for the Reich, however necessary, had disastrous effects. The recruitment measures in the last months and weeks were absolute manhunts, which have an irreparable political and economic effect. From White Ruthenia, approx. 50,000 people have been obtained for the Reich so far. Another 130,000 are to be obtained. Considering the 2.4 million total population these figures are impossible.\(^\text{17}\)

In the course of the mobilization, whole areas were emptied and villages and fields became deserted, which, undoubtedly, caused damage to the German economy. “Due to the sweeping drives (\textit{Grossaktionen}) of the SS and police in November 1942, about 115,000 hectares of farmland is not used, as the population is not there and the villages have been razed.”\(^\text{18}\) However, this was not a priority, since lack of food in these areas mainly hit the local population—something that did not make any impression on the German authorities.

\(^\text{16}\) Secret report of a conference between the Commissioner General of Zhitomir and Rosenberg, Winniza, June 17, 1943; dated June 30, 1943, and signed by Leyser (265-PS), in \textit{IMT, Red Series}, vol. 1, 890.

\(^\text{17}\) Report from the chief of Main Office III with the High Command in Minsk, dated June 28, 1943, to Ministerialdirektor Riecke, a top official in the Rosenberg Ministry (3000-PS), in \textit{IMT, Red Series}, vol. 1, 726.

\(^\text{18}\) Ibid.
The recruitment in some areas looked like hunting for slaves. “Estates of those who refuse to work are to be burned; their relatives are to be arrested as hostages and to be brought to forced labor camps.”

Violent methods were also used in the area of the General Government, which unequivocally led to a violent reaction of the population and the Polish underground. Recruitment of the labor force became a rather dangerous job. According to the documents:

Especially in Poland the situation at the moment is extraordinarily serious. It is well known that vehement battles occurred just because of these actions. The resistance against the administration established by us is very strong. Quite a number of our men have been exposed to increased violence some of them were shot dead, e.g., the Head of the Labor Office of Warsaw who was shot in his office, and yesterday another man again. This is how matters stand presently, and the recruiting itself even if done with the best [efforts] will remain extremely difficult unless police reinforcements are at hand.

The lack of manpower forced the German authorities to search the reserves in every possible area. Already in April 20, 1942, a program was initiated which was outlined as follows in a letter from Pohl to Himmler:

Today I report about the present situation of the concentration camps and about measures I have taken to carry out your order of March 3, 1942.

1. The war has brought about a marked change in the structure of the concentration camps and has changed their duties with regard to the employment of the prisoners. The custody of prisoners for the sole reasons of security, education, or prevention is no longer the main consideration. The mobilization of all prisoners who are able to work for purposes of the war now, and for purposes of construction in the forthcoming peacetime, more and more comes to the foreground.

19 Directive of the Commissioner General in Lusk of September 21, 1942, referring to the extreme urgency of the national conscription (290-PS), in IMT, Red Series, vol. 1, 889.

20 Statement by Timm (Sauekel’s deputy) at the 36th conference of the Central Planning Board (R-124), in IMT, Red Series, vol. 1, 881–82.
2. From this knowledge some necessary measures result with the aim to transform the concentration camps into organizations more suitable for the economic tasks, while formerly they were merely politically interested.\textsuperscript{21}

This document indicated that two processes were taking place: deterioration of conditions of the prisoners and transformation of the concentration camps into economic enterprises.

Yet another reserve of labor forces had been found by Himmler. He ordered on December 17, 1942 that prisoners who would not otherwise have been bound for concentration camps were to be sent there and used as qualified workers.

For reasons of war necessity not to be discussed here further, the Reichsführer SS and Chief of the German police on December 14, 1942 has ordered that until the end of January 1943, at least 35,000 prisoners qualified for work are to be sent to the concentration camps. \textit{[. . .]} \textit{Every single laborer counts!}\textsuperscript{22}

The deterioration of conditions was unlimited, as we can see in a document concerning an agreement between the Minister of Justice Thierack and Reichsführer SS Himmler. The judicial system transferred full power over the prisoners into the hands of the SS. The document reads as follows:

The delivery of anti-social elements from the execution of their sentence to the Reichsführer of SS to be worked to death. \textit{[. . .]} It is agreed that, in consideration of the intended aims of the Government for the clearing up of the Eastern problems, in future Jews, Poles, Gypsies, Russians, and Ukrainians are no longer to be judged by the ordinary courts, so far as punishable offenses are concerned, but are to be dealt with by the Reichsführer of SS.\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{21} Pohl, SS \textit{Obergruppenführer} and General of the Waffen SS (R-129) to Himmler (dated April 30, 1942), in IMT, \textit{Red Series}, vol. 1, 915.
\textsuperscript{22} Himmler’s order, December 17, 1942 (1063-D-PS), in IMT, \textit{Red Series}, vol. 1, 918.
\textsuperscript{23} Memorandum of an agreement between Himmler and the Minister of Justice Thierack, September 18, 1942 (654-PS), in IMT, \textit{Red Series}, vol. 1, 916.
In March 1943, yet another document was published: a secret order by the SS concerning the prohibition of releasing prisoners after serving their sentences.

An agreement was reached stating that, whatever prisoners can be released, they should be put at the disposal of the Commissioner of the Labor Office. When searching (Überholung) villages, resp., when it has become necessary to burn down villages, the whole population will be put at the disposal of the Commissioner by force.24

Despite mass murder of Jews in the course of the Aktion Reinhardt, some Jews sent to Auschwitz were selected and used as forced laborers. In a secret telegram to Himmler evaluating the percentage of Jews able to work out of the transports the following was written:

In the total of 45,000 the physically handicapped and others (old Jews and children) are included. In making a selection for this purpose, at least 10,000 to 15,000 laborers will be available when the Jews arriving at Auschwitz are assigned.25

The percentage, between 22% and 33% of able-bodied workers, was much higher here than during the selection in most ghettos where between 10% and 20% of those able to work were left in special labor detachments.26

At the same time, when trains full of Jews rolled into the death camps, Sauckel required a comparable number of workers from the east. In the record of a telephone conversation of the Chief of the OKW Keitel with the Chief of the Economic Staff East of the German Army, dated March 11, 1943, we find the following information:

The plenipotentiary for the Arbeitseinsatz, Gauleiter Sauckel, points out to me in an urgent teletype that the Arbeitseinsatz in German agriculture

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24 Secret SS order (dated March 19, 1943) (3012-PS), in IMT, Red Series, vol. 1, 889.
25 RSHA to Himmler (telegram marked "Urgent" and "Secret," dated December 16, 1942) (1472-PS), in IMT, Red Series, vol. 1, 989.
26 During the first liquidation action in the Warsaw Ghetto between July 23, 1942 and September 21, 1942, about 300,000 Jews, or about 80% of the ghetto’s population, were deported; during the great deportation from the Częstochowa ghetto, between September 22 and October 8, 1942, about 40,000 (83.3%) Jews were deported and approximately 2,000 (4.2%) were killed on the spot. In the small ghetto only less than 6,000 (12.5%) Jews remained; from the ghetto in Lublin between March 16, 1942 and April 11, 1942 about 30,000 Jews (88.2%) were deported.
as well as all the most urgent armament programs, ordered by the Führer, make the most rapid procurement of approx. 1 million women and men from the newly occupied territories an imperative necessity. For this purpose, Gauleiter Sauckel demands the shipment of 5,000 workers daily beginning March 15 [1943], 10,000 workers male and female beginning April 1 [1943] from the newly occupied territories.27

Sauckel’s Arbeitseinsatz was truly impressive. His action brought additional millions of workers to Germany, not counting the other millions that were already employed in the Reich and many more millions who were employed in the war industry, agriculture, and other branches of industry in the occupied territories. In his report Sauckel wrote:

After one year’s activity as Plenipotentiary for the Deployment of Labor, I can report that 3,638,056 new foreign workers were given to the German war economy from April 1, of last year [1942] to March 31, this year [1943]. [. . .] The 3,638,056 are distributed amongst the following branches of the German war economy: Armament: 1,568,801. . .28

At the same time, the very close number of Jews were executed in the gas chambers of the death camps. However, there were still more Jews to be exterminated and, on the other hand, many more forced laborers were needed for the German economy. In a memorandum of a conference with Hitler which took place on January 4, 1944, concerning allocation of labor, the following request was registered: “The Plenipotentiary for Employment of Labor shall procure at least 4 million new workers from occupied territories.”29

**EMPLOYMENT OF THE JEWS BY THE WEHRMACHT**

Jews constituted an important part of the labor force exploited by the Wehrmacht in the General Government. Those workers were essential for various reasons. They were relatively cheap, available, and qualified. Therefore, it was not easy, perhaps even impossible, to substitute them. The beginning of the

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27 Chief of the OKW Keitel with the chief of the Economic Staff East of the German Army (telephone conversation; dated March 11, 1943) (3012-PS), in IMT, Red Series, vol. 1, 930.
28 Sauckel’s to Hitler, April 15, 1943 (letter containing a report on one year of Sauckel’s activities) (407-VI-PS), in IMT, Red Series, vol. 1, 909.
29 Memorandum of conference with Hitler (4 January 1944; concerning allocation of labor) (1292-PS), in IMT, Red Series, vol. 1, 927.
Aktion Reinhardt initiated a new era; when two very important factors began to act in two opposite directions. On the one hand, the SS and police started to realize the program of total extermination of the Jews in Europe; on the other hand, the German Army needed qualified workers in order to maintain a high level of war production. Of course, we would be mistaken, if we thought that the Wehrmacht was interested in protecting the Jews. Instead, they were solely concerned about winning the war. We should not forget the fate of millions of Soviet POWs who died of hunger in autumn and winter of 1941 and 1942. They died because this supposedly served the German victory. The dead Soviet POWs could not fight their captors and tons of food, which they otherwise would have consumed, were left for the German army.

However, in 1942, Jews were needed for the war production. Therefore, the Wehrmacht in the General Government became preoccupied with them. The following are a number of quotations confirming the importance of the Jews for the Wehrmacht. “In Kraków, there are 11,000 Jews, who were employed as laborers by the Wehrmacht, Inspection of Armaments and various government departments and companies.”30 Also in Galicia there was an attempt to leave Jewish workers in the military industry:

The Jewish laborers remained in the W-Betriebe for the last quarter of the year, following an agreement of the Rüstungs-Inspekteur (armament inspector) of the General Government with the Higher SS and Police Leaders in the General Government. From other strategic enterprises the Jewish laborers were inconsiderately withdrawn and returned only partially on intervention of the Rüstungskommando. The company Schwarz & Co., manufacturing clothes for the Wehrmacht exclusively and employing 2,000 Jewish laborers, was taken over by the SS and the Jews were taken to the forced labor camp. The production was merged with the Deutsche Ausrüstungswerkstätten and will retain the current volume of output. The former managers were arrested for severe irregularities.31

Thousands of Jews were also working for the Wehrmacht in Warsaw:

Jews are employed in a high percentage. In the ghetto 110 factories are located, which employ 77,000 people, of whom 22,000 work in the arms

30 Frank, Okupacja i ruch oporu, vol. 1, 487.
31 BA-MA, RW23-14, Rüstungskommando Lemberg, Kriegstagebuch für die Zeit vom 1. April bis 30. Juni 1943, 7–8.
factories. All private production remaining in the ghetto is rearranged into tasks of the importance for the war. Of these 30,000 Jews [not working in the ghetto], a significant number is currently employed outside the ghetto, employment rate will increase, but it would be absolutely necessary to better feed the work force.\footnote{Meeting of the GG government, Kraków, July 13, 1942, in Frank, \textit{Okupacja i ruch oporu}, vol. 1, 496.}

Yet another document characterized the development of production for the Wehrmacht in Warsaw in the following manner:

Contrary to previous views on the matter, so far one has been able to activate the ghetto from an economic point of view that, so far, it was not necessary for state subsidies. In the ghetto work about 25,000 Jews in plants of the importance of war, while 3,000 Jews from the ghetto are employed outside of the ghetto. The second biggest fur company, covering the lion’s share of the Wehrmacht demand for these products, has its plants in the ghetto. Monthly turnover between the ghetto and the Aryan quarter now stands at 6 million, to be added to the turnover, which cannot be exactly evaluated and are estimated at 2–3 million. From this turnover the ghetto inhabitants live somehow. The speaker hopes that Warsaw will soon be freed from the ballast of Jews unfit for work.\footnote{Frank, \textit{Okupacja i ruch oporu}, vol. 1, 479.}

The last words of this quotation perfectly present the attitude toward the Jews, who were needed only as labor. Similar reference had been made to them in the Radom District: “In Radom and Częstochowa Jewish workers . . . in arms factories have to be preserved. Of course, we need to leave the immediate family of such workers, while all others will be displaced.”\footnote{Ibid., 484–85.} In this case, only the workers employed in arms factories and their families were eligible to remain and thus temporarily avoid deportation to extermination camps. The situation in Galicia was similar: “The Jewish question is no longer a problem. The Jewish labor still used in the armaments factories and in the Karpathen Öl A.G. must, however, remain in any case, because their replacement by local workers at this time seems impossible.”\footnote{BA-MA, RW23-14, Rüstungskommando Lemberg, Bericht des Dienststellenleiters zu Ziffer 2c des Kriegsstahebuches, Lemberg, den 1. Juli 1943, 10.}
BEGINNING OF PERMANENT FACTORY LABOR CAMPS

With the liquidation of the ghettos and the creation of small ghettos, many Jews were looking for a way to save themselves. Many firms were also looking for means to save Jewish workers. As stated by Frauendorfer:

… the resettlement of Jews, representing a major proportion of the population, would cause far-reaching consequences […] The country in terms of labor force is exhausted […] therefore, at this moment it depends only on the job of Jews; this is the point of view that is also shared by the Inspector of Armaments for the General Government, Generalleutnant Schindler.36

Frauendorfer stressed that due to a lack of Polish specialists, the Jews were irreplaceable. He did not fail to point out that, “Jews are, in fact, not to be excluded from the actions conducted by the SS, but during the war, we have to use their work.”37 In order to preserve the Jewish workers, it was necessary to protect them by removing them from the jurisdiction of the SS. For this purpose, the Jews had to be put into enclaves where they would be safe. Those enclaves could only be labor camps. Therefore, discussions between the bodies interested in Jewish labor were held on this topic. According to the minutes of one of those meetings,

[O]n the basis of an agreement with Schindler on the transfer to the arms industry of the Jews, it was completely and clearly explained that he [Frauendorfer] can fully satisfy the wishes of [Schindler]. For this purpose, thousands of Jewish laborers would be put at the disposal of [the armament industry], placed in camps which will be erected near the munitions factories; the SS would take care of them, provide food, and if necessary provide units [of guards]; Reichsführer SS, Reich Minister Speer and the plenipotentiary for employment, Gauleiter Sauckel, attach great importance to the hiring of able-bodied Jews.38

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36 Statement of the head of the Main Department Labor of the General Government, Frauendorfer, on a need for further employment of the Jews in the interests of the German economy (Kraków, June 22, 1942), in Eisenbach and Rutkowski, Eksterminacja Żydów, 240.
37 Eisenbach and Rutkowski, Eksterminacja Żydów, 240.
38 Ibid.
Frauendorfer’s statement announced the creation of permanent labor camps near factories; however, this had, undoubtedly, provoked a strong reaction from the SS. The SS was not interested in the civil administration meddling in matters falling within their competence. Overall, the SS treated the civilian administration dismissively. It was felt that the civil administration was unable to efficiently carry out any decision, and all its actions were chaotic and corrupt. For example, Katzmann wrote in his report on the action in the Galicia District:

> It became increasingly apparent that the civil administration was not in a position to move the Jewish problem to an even reasonably satisfactory solution. Because repeated attempts of the city administration of Lwów, for instance, to move the Jews into a Jewish quarter, failed, this question, too was solved by the SS and Police Leader and his organizations.39

In another place, Katzmann wrote:

> As the administration was not in the position to overcome this chaos, and proved weak, the whole issue of Jewish labor was simply taken over by the SS and Police Leader. The existing Jewish Labor Offices, which were staffed by hundreds of Jews, were dissolved. All work certificates issued by firms and official employers were declared invalid, and the cards given to Jews by the Labor Offices revalidated by the Police.40

Just three days later, Frauendorfer issued another circular to the departments of labor and employment offices in the districts. He wrote in it about the need to communicate with local police commanders on matters relating to the forced labor of Jews, because “ . . . the employment of Jews affects the interests of the police.”41 Therefore, it was necessary to employ Jews only after consultation with the police. “I order therefore with immediate effect that the Jews

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39 From the final report by Katzmann, commander of the SS and police in the district of Galicia, on “The Solution of the Jewish problem” in Galicia (L-18), in Arad and Gutman, *Documents on the Holocaust*, 336–37.

40 Ibid., 338.

41 Circular of the Head of the Main Department Labor of the General Government, Frauendorfer, to the all Departments Labor and Employment Offices in the districts on the need to communicate with local police commanders in matters of Jewish forced labor (Kraków, June 25, 1942), in Eisenbach and Rutkowski, *Eksterminacja Żydów*, 240.
are allowed to be hired only after consultation with the police.” Frauendorfer banned the labor offices from taking any action to combat labor shortages in various districts. We do not know which precise interests of the police were violated by hiring Jews. There is no doubt that the actions of the labor offices interfered with Aktion Reinhardt, since they allowed Jews to find employment.

From the onset of Aktion Reinhardt, the Jews formally passed into the hands of the police and SS and became their property, as will be revealed later in our discussion. The labor offices lost their powers, which had been introduced with the agreement of July 4, 1940 between Frank and Krüger. Therefore, Frauendorfer was not sure whether labor of Jews under the SS would be used at all: “... it is expected that in the future the police will be dealing with exploitation of the Jewish labor force to some extent, especially in the armaments industry.” Frauendorfer ordered that the labor offices no longer be intermediaries in matters of employment of the Jews. However, in cases of requests from the police, the labor offices could, as we remember, provide assistance in these matters.

The conflict between the SS and the Wehrmacht was inevitable, and as the statements above show, the SS had the task of implementing the “Final Solution,” while the Wehrmacht was designed to ensure victory at the front. This was essentially contradictory, because the SS did not bear any responsibility for the fate of the war, despite the fact that they created the Waffen-SS troops. The SS was not an organization capable of engaging in economic activity, although some established enterprises, such as DAW and OSTI, were controlled by the SS. However, these companies were founded on the use of virtually free Jewish slave labor, which was very cheap, so that even poorly organized, poorly managed, and unprofitable companies could be lucrative. The SS, only because of the division of powers in Jewish affairs in Germany and in order to maintain the same model of organization in the occupied countries, had been granted full authority over the Jews and the possibility to freely exploit or use them as slaves, whom they could “lend” to other institutions.

During World War II, the Wehrmacht was not merely the German army whose task was to wage war. Through a network of inspectorates in the occupied territories, the Wehrmacht also had to take care of and control the level of production for the war effort, in order to provide enough materials to conduct the war. Despite such an enormous task, the Wehrmacht encountered a

42 Ibid.
43 Ibid.
derogatory attitude on the part of the SS, which had the functions of the police and dealt with the criminal activity behind the front line. While the Wehrmacht fought at the front against the enemy, the SS was engaged in murdering defenseless women, children, the sick, and the elderly. In this context we may read Katzmann’s statement:

The Wehrmacht authorities in particular aided the Jewish parasites by issuing special certificates without proper control. ... There were cases where Jews were caught with from 10 to 20 such certificates. When Jews were arrested in the course of further checks, most of the employers felt obliged to attempt to intervene in favor of the Jews. This was often done in a manner that can only be described as deeply shameful.44

Katzmann’s words were contrary to what he had said earlier about the Jews: “Owing to the peculiarity that almost 90 percent of the artisans in Galicia consisted of Jews, the problem, to be solved could only be carried out gradually, as an immediate removal of the Jews would not have been in the interest of the war economy.”45

Further in the report, Katzmann wrote about acquisition of control over the Jewish workers by enclosing them in a labor camp that remained under the control of the SS. In this case as well, Katzmann did not hesitate to express his derogatory attitude toward the Wehrmacht:

The Higher SS and Police Leader gave further instructions to accelerate the total evacuation of the Jews, further considerable work was necessary in order to catch those Jews who were for the time being, to be left in the armaments factories. These remaining Jews were declared labor prisoners of the Higher SS and Police Leader and held either in the factories themselves or in camps erected for this purpose. For Lwów itself, a large camp was erected on the outskirts, which holds 8,000 Jewish labor prisoners at the present time. The agreement made with the Wehrmacht concerning employment and treatment of the labor prisoners was set down in writing.46

44 From the final report by Katzmann, commander of the SS and police in the district of Galicia, on “The Solution of the Jewish problem” in Galicia (L-18), in Arad and Gutman, Documents on the Holocaust, 338.
45 Ibid., 336–37.
46 Ibid., 339.
ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES IN THE SYSTEM OF SS LABOR CAMPS

The SS only appeared to be a homogeneous organization representing common interests. In actuality, it was split, and different interests of its factions constantly clashed. One of the reasons for these clashes was the use of Jewish labor. Even in the General Government, which was a relatively small area, constant friction existed between forces allied to Himmler, HSSPF, and SSPF, who were the controllers of their area. Especially outstanding was Globocnik, the SSPF in the Lublin District, who for years had been associated with Himmler through ties of friendship. Globocnik constantly fell into trouble and was repeatedly saved by Himmler. He had a great opportunity to repay a debt of gratitude to Himmler, when he was assigned the commander of Aktion Reinhardt. It was Himmler’s friendship and the task of extermination of millions of Jews in death camps that allowed Globocnik, despite his formal subordination to Krüger and Frank, to avoid the official system successfully and to communicate directly with Himmler. Krüger and Frank, in turn, also dependent on Himmler, had to accept this state of affairs. The same was true of other districts, where the SSPFs often had great power and competed with the governors of the districts. In particular, much power was in the hands of Katzmann, who, like Globocnik, degraded the civilian administration.

Until September 1943, the SSPFs of the districts had Jewish labor camps under their control, but at the beginning of September 1943, an important change concerning subordination of labor camps took place. In Berlin, on September 7, 1943, a conference in the Economic and Administrative Main Office [WVHA] was held in which SS-Obergruppenführer Pohl, the SS-Gruppenführer Globocnik, SS-Brigadeführer Glücks, SS-Brigadeführer Lörner, SS-Obersturmbannführer Schellin, SS-Obersturmbannführer Maurer, SS-Sturmbannführer Florstedt, and SS-Obersturmführer Dr. Horn were present. It was the last conference of this type attended by Globocnik, who had just completed Aktion Reinhardt in the autumn of 1943 and was to be transferred to Yugoslavia, where he would combat the partisans. At the conference on September 7, it was decided by the Main Economic and Administrative Office to take over ten labor camps for Jews, which until then had been under the jurisdiction of SSPF in the Lublin District. These camps were to be subjugated directly to SS-Sturmbannführer Florstedt, who was to ensure their safety.
and efficient management. Important, however, was the second point in Pohl’s notes from this conference:

With the acquisition of [the camps] by the Main Economic and Administrative Office of the SS (Group D), inmates [Insassen] of these labor camps have become prisoners in the concentration camp [Konzentrationslager-Häftlinge]. Allocation of prisoners to workshops that are active or will be established in the future by OSTI in these camps shall be paid and the payment received will be transferred to the Treasury.  

From this quotation we may assume that after this conference an-SS owned company had to pay for prisoners’ labor. This change meant that the OSTI Company suddenly became unprofitable and underwent liquidation. Although at the beginning of the document only the Lublin District was listed, the order would apply to the entire area of the General Government.

All the labor camps in the Lublin District, numbering about 10, shall together with other labor camps in the General Government be taken over by the Main Economic and Administrative Department of the SS. SS-Sturmbannführer Florstedt will oversee the acquisition of these camps by the Group D at the Main Economic and Administrative Department of the SS.  

From now on, all SS labor camps became de facto concentration camps and all the Jews working in them were henceforth prisoners of concentration camps. The document stated: “We should strive to dissolve small camps and those whose production is not significant for the fate of war, or has no decisive meaning for the victory.”

One of the most important documents illustrating the attempt to maintain the Jewish workers in the war industry was the memorandum written

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47 Official note of Oswald Pohl on the takeover of Jewish labor camps in the General Government by the Main Economic and Administrative Office of the SS (WVHA), subordinate until then to commanders of the SS and the police, the Central Office of Economic and Administrative SS (Berlin, September 7, 1943), in Eisenbach and Rutkowski, Eksterminacja Żydów, 255–56.

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid.
on September 18, 1942 by General von Gienanth to the General Staff of the Wehrmacht in reaction to the removal of Jews from industrial production.\(^50\) Although this document is called a memorandum, this was in fact a letter of protest. In the beginning, von Gienanth recalls the earlier directive, according to which, “the Polish and Ukrainian workers were to be replaced by Jewish workers, in order to release the former for work in the Reich.”\(^51\) However, seeing the growing demand for forced labor in the Reich and the reluctance of Poles to leave to work in the Reich, which made the application of police methods necessary, von Gienanth stated with a bit of irony: “...if the Commissioner General for Labor is prepared to relinquish the 140,000 Poles who were assigned for work in the Reich, and if the police is successful in rounding them up. Previous experience gives cause for doubt in this respect.”\(^52\)

In order to employ Jews in war production factories, “... the enterprises concerned will set up camps for the Jews.”\(^53\) However, von Gienanth also advised that “... for the full exploitation of Jewish labor for the war effort, purely Jewish enterprises and Jewish sections of enterprises will be established.”\(^54\)

General von Gienanth also explained why the work of Jews was so important in war production:

According to the figures supplied by the Government [General's] Central Labor Office, manpower in industry totals a little over a million, of which 300,000 are Jews. The latest include roughly 100,000 skilled workers. In the enterprises working for the Wehrmacht, the proportion of Jews among the skilled workers varies from 25% to 100%; it is 100% in the textile factories producing winter clothing. In other enterprises—for instance the important motor manufacturing works which produce the “Fuhrmann” and “Pleskau” models—the key men, who do the wheelwork, are mainly Jews. With few exceptions all the upholsterers are Jews. A total of 22,700 workers are employed at the present time on reconditioning uniforms in private firms, and, of these, 22,000 (97%) are Jews. Of these, 16,000 are skilled textile and leather workers. A purely Jewish enterprise with 168 workers

\(^{50}\) Memorandum by General von Gienanth to the General Staff of the Wehrmacht in reaction to the removal of the Jews from industrial production (September 18, 1942), YVA, O/4-4-2; Arad and Gutman, Documents on the Holocaust, 287–89.

\(^{51}\) Ibid.

\(^{52}\) Ibid.

\(^{53}\) Ibid.

\(^{54}\) Ibid.
produces metal parts for harnesses. The entire production of harnesses in the Government-General, the Ukraine and, in part, in the Reich depends on this enterprise.\textsuperscript{55}

As we see from this quotation, the Jews were extremely important in war production, not only because of their number, but also because of their qualifications. It is significant to note that in some industries, especially those with 100\% Jewish workers, sudden evacuation of the Jews could result in the total closure of production. In addition, such closure could result in lack of parts and components needed to manufacture other products, which would also affect other areas.

There was also a high percentage of skilled workers among the Jews whose sudden substitution was not possible because there were no reserves of skilled workers and training new workers would take a very long time. Von Gienanth confirmed this in his memorandum:

\begin{quote}
Fully skilled labor would first have to be trained. The training of labor drawn mainly from agriculture requires several months to a year, and more in the case of particularly highly qualified workers and craftsmen. Whether the solution to this especially complex problem, on which the continued productivity of the Government General for the war economy depends primarily, can be speeded up by the release of skilled workers from the Reich is beyond my competence to judge. […] Unless work of military importance is to suffer, Jews cannot be released until replacements have been trained, and then only step by step.\textsuperscript{56}
\end{quote}

Training new workers, however, was very difficult and costly under war conditions. In some cases of highly skilled specialists, it was simply impossible. This was probably why, in the end, compromises in the struggle over the Jewish labor force were made by both sides, and some Jewish workers were left in armament factories.

The German Army, however, struggling with the SS over Jewish workers never used the argument that they wanted to save the Jews, but rather the opposite. Keeping Jewish workers in armament factories was to be only temporary. The Wehrmacht argument was consistent with the policy of elimination of

\textsuperscript{55} Arad and Gutman, \textit{Documents on the Holocaust}, 287–89.  
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid.
the Jews and it seemed that was, in fact, true. We cannot say that there were no individual cases of saving the Jews gratuitously or in exchange of money; nevertheless, this was not representative of the Wehrmacht as a whole. In his memorandum, von Gienanth expressed his view clearly, exclusively employing practical arguments:

The general policy will be to eliminate the Jews from work as quickly as possible without harming work of military importance. […] A great variety of Wehrmacht offices have placed military orders of the highest priority, particularly for winter needs, in the Government-General, without the knowledge of the Armaments Department or the Military Commander of the Government-General. The evacuation of the Jews makes it impossible for these orders to be completed in time. It will take some time to register systematically all the enterprises involved. […] It is requested that the evacuation of Jews employed in industrial enterprises may be postponed until this has been done.57

In any case, von Gienanth argued that the evacuation of the Jews, if necessary, should be coordinated with the Wehrmacht. Otherwise: “the evacuation of the Jews without advance notice to most sections of the Wehrmacht has caused great difficulties in the replacement of labor and delay in correct production for military purposes.”58

In response to von Gienanth’s memorandum, Himmler sent a letter on October 9, 1942, where he listed the steps taken in order to preserve the level of production and insisted that the Jewish workers should be closed in concentration camps. However, Himmler warned that employment of Jews was in order to save them and not because it was necessary:

I have given orders that all so-called armament workers who are actually employed solely in tailoring, furrier, and shoe-making workshops be collected in concentration camps on the spot, i.e., in Warsaw and Lublin, under the direction of SS-Obergruppenführer Krüger and SS-Obergruppenführer Pohl. The Wehrmacht will send its orders to us, and we guarantee the continuous delivery of the items of clothing required. I have issued instructions, however, that ruthless steps are taken against all those who consider they

57 Ibid.
58 Ibid.
should oppose this move in the alleged interest of armaments needs, but who in reality only seek to support the Jews and their own businesses.⁵⁹

Continuing, Himmler argued that the process of removal of Jewish workers would persist, but gradually taper off:

Jews in real war industries, i.e., armament workshops, vehicle workshops, etc., are to be withdrawn step by step. At the first stage they are to be concentrated in separate halls in the factories. In the second stage in this procedure the work teams in these separate halls will be combined, by means of transformation into closed enterprises wherever this is possible, so that we will then have simply a few closed concentration-camp industries in the Government-General. [. . .] Our endeavor will then be to replace this Jewish labor force with Poles and to consolidate most of these Jewish concentration camp enterprises into a small number [. . .] in the eastern part of the Government General, if possible. But there too, in accordance with the wish of the Führer, the Jews are some day to disappear.⁶⁰

The pressure from Himmler towards complete annihilation of Jews found unexpected opposition from Frank. Although he also advocated “sending the Jews to the East,” on December 9, 1942, Frank said during a conference:

Not unimportant labor reserves have been taken from us when we lost our old trustworthy Jews [altbewährten Judenschaften]. It is clear that the labor situation is made more difficult when, in the middle of the war effort, the order is given to prepare all Jews for annihilation. The responsibility for this order does not lie with the offices of the Generalgouvernement. The directive for the annihilation of the Jews comes from higher sources [emphasis mine—W.M.]. We can only deal with the consequences of this situation, and we can tell the agencies of the Reich that the taking away of the Jews has led to tremendous difficulties in the labor field. Just the other day I could prove to Staatssekretär Ganzenmüller, who complained that a large construction project in the Generalgouvernement had come to a standstill, that it would not have happened if the many thousands of Jews who were employed there

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⁵⁹ Himmler’s response to the memorandum from General von Gienanth (October 9, 1942) (NO-1611), in Arad and Gutman, Documents on the Holocaust, 289–90.
⁶⁰ Ibid.
had not been taken away. Now the order provides that the armament Jews also are to be taken away. I hope that this order if not already voided, then revoked, because if it is not changed, the situation will be even worse.\footnote{Frank’s remarks at the General Government conference (December 9, 1942), in Hans Frank’s Diary (PS-2233); Hilberg, The Destruction of the European Jews, 529.}

The words of Himmler left no doubts: “The Jews were some day to disappear.”\footnote{Arad and Gutman, Documents on the Holocaust, 289–90.} The only question was when and at what rate. This truly was a question of survival. Nobody knew when the war was to end, but surviving one more day, and then another, was most essential. The race had begun and the question was who would reach their goal faster—the SS with its mechanism of total murder or the Jews with their ability to survive. Those two processes were progressing in parallel. However, only useful and physically able Jews were to survive, since what counted was their work, and their utility to the victory of the Reich—not their lives as such.