# INTRODUCTION

When Hitler came to power war preparations began to play an increasingly important role in Germany. The army grew in strength with every passing year, and increasingly intensive efforts were made to develop the armaments industry, expand and modernize the network of roads, especially those of strategic importance and build modern fortifications. These as well as some other measures taken by the Nazi authorities increased the demand for manpower, including highly skilled workers, who began to be difficult to find among those looking for work. The problem was not only to employ persons who had not worked before but also to direct those already working — in accordance with their qualifications — to other jobs where they could be employed more usefully or where tasks of military importance greatly increased the demand for manpower. In order to put the labour market in order and thereby ensure the supply of workers to those branches of the economy which were officially recognized to be most in need of labour, the Nazi authorities, by virtue of a decision of May 26, 1935, made work compulsory in Germany and reorganized the entire state apparatus dealing with employment problems. A higher rank was given to the existing labour offices and in 1938 these were subordinated to the Labour Ministry of the Reich (*Reichsarbeitsamtministerium*), which henceforward dealt with all aspects of employment policy and, among other things, worked out long-term plans envisaging the use of foreign labour for German needs, including workers from the countries the Reich might occupy. In the event of war and its successful course the Germans envisaged the employment of foreign labour, a conception which was deeply rooted in the minds of the highest party and state authorities of the Reich. This was stated among others by Hitler himself who on May 23, 1939, spoke of the necessity to make people from non-German territories work in the Reich. From 1938 on also the supreme command of the *Wehrmacht* dealt with the employment of prisoners of war in the German economy. The German authorities did not confine themselves to drawing up plans but consistently put them into effect as soon as an opportunity arose, as for instance in Austria, where soon after the entry of Nazi troops 100,000 persons, including some 10,000 engineers, were forced to work in the Reich.

After the outbreak of the war the guiding idea of the Nazi authorities in meeting the growing demand for labour was to employ the largest possible numbers of foreigners and save the reserves of German labour power. This approach was necessary to make good the shortage of workers resulting from the call-up and the expansion of production for military purposes. The idea could be implemented thanks to the German victories in the first phase of the war, following which the populations in the occupied countries were put at the disposal of the German authorities responsible for employment policy. Without any scruples these authorities worked out a detailed system of recruiting manpower, which



provided for very radical methods in Poland, the USSR and Serbia and much milder methods in the occupied countries of Western Europe and Scandinavia. The Reich also envisaged the importation of foreign workers on the basis of agreements with the satellite countries and some neutral states. The main provisions of this system did not undergo any major changes during the war but the Nazis would increase or soften the terror applied in the recruitment of labour, diversify their propaganda aimed at inducing people to apply voluntarily for work in Germany, and modify the organizational structure of the administrative apparatus dealing with employment problems, depending on the difficulties they encountered in the implementation of production plans due to the shortage of manpower, depending on the situation on the front, the development of guerilla operations and the occasional differences amidst the Nazi elite over certain principles of policy vis-à-vis some of the subjugated nations.

In the first years of the war it was the duty of the president of the Labour Office of the Reich (*Reichsarbeitsamt*), Dr. Syrup, to supply the German economy with the necessary number of workers, and after his death in 1941, this duty was taken over by his successor, Dr. Werner Mansfeld. It was they who carried out the recruitment of local populations in the occupied countries through the intermediary of various offices, including labour offices, under their control. In Western Europe as well as in Denmark and Norway they used the method of voluntary recruitment, the only method of coercion being economic and moral pressure. Methods of physical coercion were applied in Poland and the Soviet Union from the very beginning. The numerous labour offices set up in these two countries had at their disposal police and in some cases also *Wehrmacht* detachments, which took part in mass round-ups and with extreme brutality exacted the execution of the Nazi orders concerning the departure of individual persons for forced labour in the Reich. The first Polish and Soviet workers sent to Germany were victims of forcible recruitment. Though throughout the war the Germans conducted a large-scale propaganda campaign in Poland and the Soviet Union to persuade the people to enlist voluntarily for labour in Germany and did not spare money for the purpose, the campaign did not yield the expected results owing to the determined resistance of the population. In spite of this, the German authorities, for political and economic reasons, did not stop the campaign until the end of the war. The securing of the planned number of workers by means of voluntary recruitment would have been of immediate advantage to the Nazi authorities: it would have stifled world-wide criticism of forcible deportations; eliminated one of the causes of indignation in the occupied countries; created the possibility of entrusting other tasks to large numbers of the police and the *Wehrmacht* released from participation in operations organized by labour offices; it would also have considerably reducted the costs of recruitment. Moreover, the Nazi occupation authorities expected that the people who enlisted voluntarily for labour in the Reich would have a higher labour productivity than those recruited forcibly. But the voluntary enrolment having failed, the German authorities sent millions of Polish and Soviet citizens for forced labour to Germany against their will.

The deportations to Germany of the population from the subjugated countries, the employment of prisoners of war and the recruitment of workers from neutral and allied countries met the Nazi economy's basic needs for labour until the end of 1941. But at the beginning of 1942, when the hopes for a *Blitzkrieg* in the USSR had been dashed and the prospect of a long, hard war necessitated

a considerable expansion of arms production, an acute shortage of manpower began to be felt, especially in some branches of industry and transport. The prognoses worked out by the Germans said that the crisis would become increasingly sharp and could only be alleviated through a more intensive and increased influx of foreign labour. The fact that the supply of workers lagged behind demand was attributed to the inefficiency of the administrative apparatus, which was not adjusted to the complicated tasks of employment policy. It was pointed out that several institutions often dealt with the same problems, causing a waste of time and human energy. The opinion was voiced that in order to improve the situation it was necessary to restructure the executive apparatus dealing with employment problems and make it more centralized. Such a demand was put forward as early as October 28, 1941, by the German Labour Front (*Deutsche Arbeitsfront, DAF*) which demanded the appointment of an Employment Commissioner of the Reich to be entrusted with wide powers. Nobody questioned the usefulness of this post, but a violent dispute developed over who should be appointed. After eliminating successive candidates, Martin Borman submitted to Hitler the candidature of Fritz Sauckel, head of the *NSDAP* regional organization in Thuringia and it was Sauckel who on March 21, 1942, was appointed Plenipotentiary General for the Allocation of Labour (*Generalbevollmächtigte für den Arbeitseinsatz, GBA*). In this way Hitler rejected the proposal to entrust all employment problems to Albert Speer. Speer's defeat in this rivalry was explained by Hitler's unwillingness to concentrate in his hands too many important state functions.

Sauckel's appointment, preceded by Hitler's order of March 19, 1942, concerning the streamlining of employment problems (*Neuordnung des Arbeitseinsatzes*) Was the first decisive step towards the centralization of the German administrative apparatus concerned with labour. Other steps followed: on March 27, 1942, Sauckel was entrusted with the powers previously exercised by the Employment Problems Working Group (*Geschäftsgruppe Arbeitseinsatz*) subordinated to the Four-Year Plan Plenipotentiary; next the entire executive apparatus of the Ministry of Labour wat put at his disposal; by sirtue of a decision of May 7, 1942, only the recruitment centres set up by him had the right to recruit manpower in occupied countries; on April 6, 1942, regional heads of the *NSDAP* were appointed plenipotentiaries for employment problems in the area under their jurisdiction; on August 12, 1942, the Plenipotentiary General for the Allocation of Labour was empowered to use any measures that might be useful in the recruitment campaign in the USSR, the Government General, Bohemia and Moravia and to consider whether the same measures should not be applied in other occupied countries; on September 30, 1942, Hitler gave him the right to take all decisions concerning forcible recruitment of workers and to issue directives in this respect to the military and civil authorities.

Having entrusted Sauckel with such wide powers, Hitler set him the task to considerably increase the influx of foreign workers to the Reich. To ensure the implementation of this task Sauckel, as soon as he assumed the powers of Plenipotentiary General for the Allocation of Labour, set up a new administrative centre called *Europa Amt* which was to watch over the implementation of his orders and state agreements concerning the recruitment of labour throughout the whole of Europe, as the name indicated, that is also in Germany, in neutral and satellite countries. Sauckel also liquidated provincial labour offices (*Landesarbeitsamt*) and on August 1, 1943, set up 40 regional labour offices (*Gauarbeits-*



*amt*), each of which was concerned with an area identical with that of a defence region (*Reichsverteidigungsbezirk*). The aim of the reform was to centralize still further the administrative apparatus subordinated to Sauckel and link it closely with the heads of regional *NSDAP* organizations and the defence commissioners of the Reich in the individual regions. This was to guarantee a more rational use of labour.

The appointment of Sauckel as plenipotentiary general opened up a new period in the employment policy of the Reich, a period marked by increased intensity and ruthlessness in the recruitment of labour especially in the subjugated countries of Eastern Europe, which were still considered by the Nazi authorities to be the largest reservoir of manpower. On May 7, 1942, Sauckel issued an order allowing the use of force in the recruitment of workers in the East European countries, and on August 17, 1942, he recommended that the *Wehrmacht* should give assistance in the recruitment campaign to the employment staffs (*Arbeitseinsatzstäbe*) which he set up in the USSR. Though in his guidelines of May 10, 1942, Sauckel mentioned that voluntary enrolment should be continued in the USSR, this form of recruitment was in his opinion proper for the occupied countries of Western and Northern Europe. As a result of the wide use of force in the recruitment of workers in Poland, the Soviet Union and Serbia and the comparatively liberal approach to this problem in other occupied countries, the overwhelming majority of workers deported to the Reich in 1942 were Polish and Soviet citizens.

The principles of the Nazi employment policy were only modified after the Stalingrad defeat and the subsequent Soviet victories on the eastern front, which resulted in increasingly large losses for the *Wehrmacht*. The Germans tried to make up for these losses by a further mobilization of men, mostly from enterprises working for the economy of the Reich, and it was decided to give the jobs vacated by these men to other, mostly foreign, workers. Moreover, the demand for manpower was increasing in view of the necessity to expand production in certain branches of industry. The Nazi authorities decided to meet this demand by pursuing, as from January 1943, a more radical employment policy through a „total mobilization" of foreign and German labour. Thus the Stalingrad defeat opened a new, final period in the employment policy of the Reich, a period marked by the continuation of ruthless terror in the recruitment of workers in Poland and the USSR, the application of more effective methods in other occupied countries, the use of more energetic measures to secure, on the basis of state agreements, an increased influx of manpower from neutral and satellite countries, and the employment of all possible German reserves on the labour market, which were not yet exhausted.

The intensification of forcible deportations from Poland and the USSR from 1943 on and the extension of this operation, on the basis of a *Wehrmacht* order of July 8, 1944, to include the entire population living in areas marked by large-scale guerrilla activity and cooperating with the guerrilla movement, irrespective of where they lived, did not ensure the Nazi authorities the planned influx of labour. There were three main reasons for this: 1. Many occupied parts of the USSR and Poland also suffered from a lack of manpower, and this hampered the planned economic exploitation of those countries. In this situation the continuation of intensive deportations encountered resistance on the part of local Nazi authorities. 2. As a result of the liberation by the Soviet Army of more and more occupied areas the population under Nazi rule was rapidly decreasing and the Eastern reservoir of manpower available for the Reich was shrinking. 3. The in-

creasingly intensive and effective guerrilla activity made difficult, if not impossible, the deportation of large numbers of people for forced labour.

In view of the fact that the recruitment plans in the East turned out to be unrealistic and that the victorious Soviet offensive portended further difficulties in their implementation, in 1943 the Nazi party and state leaders changed their views as to the methods to be applied in the recruitment of workers in the West, and decided to use force there too in order to reduce the shortage of manpower in the Reich. The Nazis first turned their attention to France and Italy, countries with large populations which offered the Germans the greatest possibilities of finding the workers needed by the Reich. After long discussions, the decision was taken to recruit certain age groups in those two countries for forced labour in Germany; in Italy the recruitment was to embrace people born between 1900 and 1921 and half of the 1926 age group, and in France people born between 1912 and 1921. In order to create a chance of getting an additional number of people for forced labour in the Reich, the orders of February 1, and April 26, 1944 made work compulsory in France for all men between the ages of 16 and 65 and all women between 18 and 45. Though the recruitment campaign was carefully thought out, down to the smallest detail, the Nazi authorities were afraid that the operation might be sabotaged by local officials some of whom were drawn into the campaign. In order to exclude that possibility, the officials hampering in any way the implementation of recruitment orders were threatened with severe reprisals, including the death sentence.

The Nazi fear of sabotage in the recruitment of workers for forced labour in the Reich turned out to be well grounded. What is more, in both countries this sabotage assumed much larger proportions than had been expected by the Nazis. First and foremost large sections of the population resisted the carrying out of the recruitment and this paralyzed the entire campaign. This is proved by the fact that in Italy only 1.8 per cent of those called up reported for work and when a contingent of workers was to be sent from Toulouse, only 5 per cent of the summoned persons turned up. Apart from the resistance of the population, the failure of the recruitment campaign in France was also due to another reason. The German authorities widely exploited France's industrial potential for the production of arms and consumer goods needed by the army and the civilian population in the Reich, All French industrial enterprises producing goods of major importance for the war economy of the Reich were subordinated to Albert Speer (the so-called *Sperrbetriebe, S-Betriebe*), who did not permit any recuitment to be carried out in order to prevent trouble with production. Speer's attitude aroused the indignation of Sauckel in whose opinion Speer was helping the French to dodge the duty of work in Germany. The dispute that arose in this matter between these two dignitaries was solved by Hitler in Speer's favour on January 4, 1944. Sauckel's protest against this decision, lodged on March 17, 1944, was not taken into consideration. Speer convinced the Fuehrer of the justness of this decision by pointing out that Germany should make maximum use of the potential of French industry in order to get the planned amounts of all kinds of weapons and other goods indispensable for the war effort. Speer's victory excluded 1,440,000 French workers form recruitment for work in the Reich.

In 1944, following the failure in the recruitment of these age groups, the Nazi authorities resolved to transfer entire factories, together with their workers, from Italy to the Reich. The plan was not carried out on a large scale owing to the technical difficulties and the resistance of the Italian population.



In spite of the setbacks in the recruitment campaign, the occupation authorities did not start large-scale round-ups in France and Italy, a method used so widely in the occupied countries of Eastern Europe. The reason given for restricting this form of terror in France was the lack of sufficient police forces and adequate administrative apparatus capable of implementing the plan, and in Italy fear of partisan actions and disturbances in industry. The fear of armed revenge in Italy was fully justified, as proved by the fact that in 1944 partisans cut off the supplies of food and electricity to Turin when the Nazi authorities, in reprisal for a strike in Turin industry, decided to use 4,000 soldiers and policemen and deport to the Reich 10 per cent of the workers. Another reason why no mass round-ups were carried out in France were the differences of views among the leading Nazi dignitaries over the use of that form of terror in France.

The efforts of the Nazi authorities to deport large numbers of workers from France and Italy ended in failure. Out of the 500,000 persons that were to be deported from France in the first half of 1944 only 33,000 were actually sent to the Reich and from Italy 19,400 persons were deported in the period from April lst till the end of July 1944.

Nor did the forcible deportation of workers from other Western countries yield the expected results. For instance, in Holland the occupation authorities did not agree to the recruitment of fixed age groups, pointing out that it was impossible to make the Dutch police issue the necessary orders in this respect. Instead, they proposed that all the persons who had done military service in 1940 should be deported to the Reich and on May 5, 1943, Hitler agreed to this. But the plan was never fully implemented because many Dutchmen went into hiding. It was only in the final months of the occupation that under Sauckel's pressure the Nazi authorities in Holland carried out a number of round-ups and deported the persons caught to the Reich.

In view of the failure of forcible recruitment in Western Europe the majority of the workers sent to the Reich in the first half of 1944 were again from the East European countries. Out of the 500,000 persons deported to the Reich in that period 75 per cent were from Eastern Europe.

Owing to the poor results of the recruitment campaign in the West European countries and the shrinking from 1943 on of the recruitment base in the East, Sauckel's plan providing for the importation of 4,000,000 workers to the Reich in 1944 was not carried out, only 1,037,000 foreign workers taking up work in the Reich in that year.

Already during the war the contradiction made itself felt between the unsatisfied demand for labour and the reduction of manpower resources through the mass murder of the population in subjugated countries, including prisoners in concentration camps. This contradiction, resulting from the fact that the ruling circles of the Reich considered the biological extermination of the subjugated nations to be more important than Germany's economic needs, was perceived by the leadership of the party but it was underestimated in the first period of the war. The Nazi authorities, excited by the initial military successes, were convinced that the war would soon end in a German victory, which would ensure a sufficient supply of cheap labour for a thousand years, and consequently did not attach much importance to the depletion of this reservoir by the extermination policy pursued in some occupied countries. Apart from the softer treatment from the middle of 1943 of highly skilled workers and certain groups of artisans in con-

centration camps, this policy was not changed even in the final period of the war when the shortage of manpower was very acute.

As stated previously, as soon as the war broke out the Nazi authorities started employing prisoners of war in the economy of the Reich, frequently violating binding norms of international law. As early as the autumn of 1939 some 300,000 Polish prisoners of war were sent to work in agriculture. In the following years the number of prisoners of war employed in the economy of the Reich steadily increased to reach 1,830,000 on May 31, 1944, most of whom were Soviet citizens. The number of prisoners of war working in the Reich was in fact still higher, for some of them were given civilian status and forced to stay in Germany. Prisoners of war made up a large percentage of the French workers forcibly employed in the Reich. The situation of the Italians was very similar. Out of the 600,000 Italian soldiers interned in Germany 500,000 were recognized as civilian workers on the basis of an agreement concluded with Mussolini on August 31, 1944, and forced to work in the Reich. The German authorities also employed Polish officer cadets and Soviet officers taken prisoner.

Owing to this employment policy the exploitation of foreign labour increased with every passing year. On May 31, 1944, there were 5,300,000 slave workers in the Reich, and including prisoners of war as many as 7,130,000. According to some authors the number of slave workers exceeded 8,000,000 in 1944, and together with the prisoners of concentration camps employed in production it amounted to some 9,000,000.

Due to the forcible employment of such large numbers of foreign workers the drop in total employment in the Reich was less rapid than it would have been without the exploitation of foreign labour. The number of employed Germans dropped from 39,100,000 on May 31, 1939, to 28,400,000 on September 30, 1944, i.e., by 27.4 per cent, while the total number of persons employed in that period dropped from 39,400,000 to 35,900,000, i.e., only by 8.9 per cent. The decrease in the number of German workers employed in the German economy was partly made up by German reserves, that is the natural increase and the employment of non-working people, but mainly by the use of foreign workers, the overwhelming majority of whom were brought to Germany by force. Sauckel himself said at a meeting in the Central Planning Office (*Zentrale Planung*) on March 1, 1940, that out of the 5,000,000 foreign workers employed in the Reich less than 200,000, or some 4 per cent, had come voluntarily.

In the first period of the war workers sent forcibly to Germany were usually employed in agriculture. This cannot be explained only and exclusively, as Eichholtz does it, by the fact that industry did not have at that time an adequate organizational apparatus, like the *Reichsnährstand* existing in agriculture, to settle problems connected with the employment of large numbers of foreign workers. The fact was that German agriculture had since the second half of the 19th century employed many seasonal workers whose influx to the Reich was stopped in 1939 when the war broke out. The elimination of this source of manpower and the mobilization led to a shortage especially of unskilled workers, whom industry did not yet need in such large numbers. That is why foreign workers were directed to work in agriculture. However, owing to the very difficult war with the Soviet Union and the enormous losses in men and matériel, Germany had to intensify industrial production and employ more and more foreign workers to fill the gap resulting from the call-up of increasing numbers of Germans to the army. The growing demand for labour, including skilled workers in industry, could not be



met out of German reserves, consistently used by the Nazi authorities in the first period of the war to prevent sabotage. Out of necessity it was decided to make greater use of forced labour in industry and by virtue of Hitler's order of March 21, 1943, this branch of the economy was given priority in the supply of manpower. Following this order, many workers and prisoners of war were transferred from agriculture to industrial enterprises and everything was done to ensure that industry had priority in getting the deported workers. As a result of these measures industry was employing in 1943 several hundred thousand more slave workers and prisoners of war than agriculture. In May 1944, a total of 3,500,000 POWs and slave workers were employed in industry and artisan workshops, or 49.3 per cent of the total foreign labour force exploited in the Reich, while 2,600,000 (36.4 per cent) worked in agriculture.

Though the demand for workers, steadily increasing from the second year of the war, was not met, the German authorities never made full use of their own reserves of manpower until the moment of final defeat. This applies particularly to the employment of women. Throughout the whole war the only occupation of some 5 million German women was to run their households and after the conclusion of the French campaign the labour offices even released some women from the previously imposed duty of work. Owing to this liberalism the employment of women was in some years lower than before the war. For instance, in 1942 the number of women employed in the Reich was 147,000 less than in 1939 and 300,000 less than in 1925. Until the end of 1942 the Nazi authorities did not issue any rigorous orders concerning women's work and confined themselves to individual conversations and public appeals calling on women to take up work. But these measures did not bring the expected results, as is proved by the following examples: in Dresden out of the 1,250 women summoned for such a conversation only 600 turned up, and a mere 120 agreed to take up work. In Halle out of the 120 women 40 came for the conversation and only 20 signed a pledge to start work. In Dortmund out of 233 childless women only 17 agreed to work part time. It was only after the Stalingrad defeat, when the manpower situation began to look extremely unfavourable, that Sauckel issued an order on January 27, 1943, introducing, among other things, registration of women between the ages of 17 and 45 with a view to fulfilling defence duties for the Reich. The only exception were women having a child of pre-school age or two children up to the age of 14. This problem was raised again in the order of June 10, 1944. Goebbels threatened women with compulsory work in his well known speech made in the Sports Palace on February 18, 1943. A further step aimed at increasing the number of working women was Hitler's consent on July 29, 1944, to the employment of women up to the age of 50. As a result of these measures and some other decisions taken by the Nazi authorities, the employment of German women rose by 500,000 from May 31, 1942 to September 30, 1944. This number indicates that some of the measures announced by the Nazi authorities partly remained a dead letter and that they were not consistently observed until the end of the war, for more than 1,500,000 German women still did not work in spite of the fact that they had the duty to do so. The main reason for this state of affairs was the programmatic principles of the *NSDAP* which assigned to women the role of vestals of the home. For a long time Hitler himself could not reconcile himself to the thought that the „long-legged" German women should be working together with women whom he considered to be of inferior races. It was only the war situation that forced him partly to revise his attitude but he still refrained from enforcing the duty of work

on German women. Also many Nazi dignitaries at lower echelons did not enforce the so-called mobilization programmes with respect to women, not wishing to lose popularity among broad sections of the population; in this way they protected their own wives, daughters, relatives and friends from the necessity of starting work. Moreover, industry preferred to employ cheap foreign labour, especially male workers, rather than German women.

There were also reserves of labour in the domestic service category. Up to February 16, 1943, households with children in Nazi Germany did not have the duty of registering servants in labour offices. After that date every family had to get permission to employ domestic help, but the labour offices continued to show quite a large dose of liberalism in these matters. This is borne out by the fact that as late as 1944, 1,301,000 women were employed as servants, that is only 250,000 less than in 1939. In Great Britain employment in that category fell during the war from 1,200,000 to 500,000, that is by 700,000.

Throughout the war the Nazi authorities tolerated the fact that quite a large number of people below the age of 45 worked shorter hours. On March 31, 1943, the number of these persons amounted to 539,199. Germany also produced considerable quantities of consumer goods unnecessary in times of war (e.g., hair tonics), mass production of which was given up by some other belligerent countries, and in spite of reductions the administrative apparatus in Germany was very extensive. These examples show that the Reich still had many unexhausted reserves of labour.

There were many reasons for this state of affairs; the above mentioned fear of a loss of popularity, the occasional deficiencies in the functioning of the administrative apparatus, the differences of opinions on certain matters among the leading Nazi dignitaries, but the most important reason was that Germany could make use of large numbers of workers forcibly recruited in the subjugated countries, who were a very cheap labour force and were exploited to the maximum. It was at the expense of foreign workers that the German population was ensured a comparatively high standard of living considering the war. As a result, deportations for forced labour met with the approval of a large part of the German population, especially of hundreds of thousands of factory owners, who derived additional, frequently very high, material benefits from the employment of foreign workers.

How many people were deported for forced labour to Germany from the occupied Polish territories? It is impossible to give a precise reply to this question on the basis of the source materials that have come down to us. We only have incomplete data at our disposal and even these are only approximate. These data concern the deportation of people from the Government General and the Białystok region; there are no figures for the territories „incorporated" into the Reich. We also have statistical tables of persons employed in the Reich in various periods and these are divided into groups stating how many came from the „incorporated" territories and how many from the Government General including the Białystok region. But these figures only show how many workers were employed in Germany on a certain day and tell us nothing about the changes that were occurring. We do not know how many persons returned to their homes because they were unable to work, how many workers died of various causes during their stay in the Reich, how many were sent to concentration camps or were imprisoned. The fact that we do not know these details makes it much more difficult to determine the number of deported persons. In spite of this we will try to fix the scope of deportations for forced labour to the Reich. Up to July 7, 1944, 1,214,000 persons were deported for forced labour to Germany from the Government General and the Białystok region and an additional 67,000 persons were sent during the Warsaw Rising. Thus the total number of people deported from these territories was 1,281,000. As far as the inhabitants of the „incorporated" territories were concerned (without the Białystok region), 609,309 persons of Polish nationality were employed in the Reich on September 30, 1944, according to official data. To this we must add the persons who returned to the „incorporated" territories before that date owing to incurable illness or disability. For instance, in the „Warta Region" alone there were 9,729 such persons in 1942, and 5,389 in 1943. If we assume that only 9,000 people returned each year in 1940 and 1941, that is slightly less than in 1942, and that 5,000 came back in 1944, this would mean that some 38,000 persons returned to the „Warta Region". Slave workers also returned to other parts of the „incorporated" territories (sometimes because their parents were recognized as German nationals); moreover, many died, some of them in air raids; quite a large number were sent to concentration camps and to prisons and these do not figure in any statistical tables. We shall probably be making no mistake if we assume that these constituted 10 per cent of the labour force employed in September 1944. We shall therefore add 60,000 to the number of workers from the „incorporated" territories employed in the Reich on September 30, 1944. This means that some 670,000 Poles were sent for forced labour to the Reich from the „incorporated" territories, including the persons who were evicted from their homes and sent to Germany by the Central Resettlement Office (*Umwandererzentralstelle*). In addition to Poles, the Nazi authorities also deported from the „incorporated" territories 36,000 persons whom they described as belonging to other nationalities, that is neither Polish nor German. This description should not deceive us; the Nazi administration included in this category Kashubians and Mazurians from the vicinity of Suwałki and Działdowo, for in accordance with their policy these were to become separate nations. So a total of some 700,000 people were sent for forced labour to Germany from the „incorporated" territories.

The Germans also employed in the Reich some 300,000 former Polish prisoners of war whom were given civilian worker status and forced to stay in the Reich. In this way they also became slave workers.

TABLE 1

The number of people deported for forced labour from Poland (in her 1938 frontiers) and of Polish prisoners of war employed in the Reich

| Deported for forced labour | Number of slave workers in thousands |
|---|---|
| From the Government General and the Białystok region (up to July 7, 1944) | 1,214 |
| During and after the Warsaw Rising | 67 |
| Poles from the "incorporated" territories | 670 |
| Persons of "other nationalities" from the "incorporated" territories | 36 |
| From beyond the Bug River | 500 |
| Former Polish POWs forcibly given the status of civilian workers | 300 |
| From the "Warta Region" to France | 23.5 |
| Total number of civilian workers | 2,810.5 |
| Employed prisoners of war | 31 |
| Total number of civilian workers and POWs | 2,841.5 |

The number of people deported from beyond the Bug River is the most difficult to ascertain. Some publications have set it at between 500,000 and 518,000. Historians have considered these figures to be too high but they have not given their own estimates. The question arises whether the figure of 500,000 published by the War Reparations Office is really too high. Unfortunately we know neither the basis for this figure nor the way in which it was ascertained. As is known, these territories were inhabited by nearly 6,000,000 people before the outbreak of the war. Leaving out the Jews, who were either murdered by the Germans or had left these territories before the *Wehrmacht* marched in, more than 5,000,000 people mostly of Byelorussian, Ukrainian and Polish nationalities came under Nazi occupation. With but a few exceptions the Germans unleashed against these people ruthless terror which was also applied in the recruitment of labour for work in the Reich. Round-ups, deportations of entire age groups and other brutal methods of recruitment were an everyday occurrence in these territories. In view of the intensive deportations from those areas 10 per cent of the population could have easily been sent to Germany, i.e. about 500,000 people. This percentage was exceeded in the „Warta Region" and in the Government General. Figures available for Wilno indicate that the rate in the territories beyond the Bug was probably the same. From May 1 to July 3, 1942, alone, some 22,000 persons, almost all of them Poles, were sent for forced labour to the Reich from this largest town in the territories beyond the Bug, and in September and October 1943 as many as 8,740. These two figures, which do not cover the whole period of the occupation, show that more than 30,000 persons were deported from Wilno, i.e. more than 10 per cent of its pre-war population. In the light of these facts we shall be making no mistake in accepting as correct the data of the War Reparations Office concerning the territories beyond the Bug River. The same figure was quoted by J. Buehler during his trial.

So far we have left out the persons sent for forced labour to occupied France from the „Warta Region". According to official figures their number amounted to 23,512. Their treatment there did not differ much from the living conditions of their compatriots in occupied territories „incorporated" into the Reich, e.g., in Sudetenland or in Austria. Consequently, we shall regard deportations to these territories as deportations for forced labour.

Another category which on the whole does not enter into our considerations were Polish prisoners of war who even though they did not accept the status of civilian worker were sent to various jobs. In January 1942, their number amounted to 31,430 and it fell to 28,366 in 1944.

Altogether some 2,180,000 inhabitants of Poland, within her 1938 frontiers, were forced to work in the Reich during the Second World War. Not all of them stayed in the Reich throughout the whole war, some spent only several weeks or months there. Some were saved from a longer period of forced labour by severe illness, the ordeal of others was interrupted by premature death. That is why there was quite a big difference in various years between the total number of persons sent for forced labour and the actual employment of slave workers. In the final phase of the war this difference amounted to nearly several hundred thousand persons.

The percentage of people deported to the Reich from various regions of the country differed. It was 12.3 for the „Warta Region", 7.4 for the Government General until June 1943, and 10,3 up to the end of 1944, together with the Białystok region. It was the lowest in Silesia and Pomerania, where Poles were entered



TABLE 2

Rate of Deportations for Forced Labour to the Reich from the Government General and the Białystok Region

| Period | Number of persons deported |
|---|---|
| 1. 9. 1939 - 31. 12. 1939 | 39,675 |
| 1. 1. 1940 - 30. 6. 1940 | 272,238 |
| 1. 7. 1940 - 31. 12. 1940 | 29,724 |
| 1. 1. 1941 - 30. 6. 1941 | 97,921 |
| 1. 7. 1941 - 31. 12. 1941 | 125,577 |
| 1. 1. 1942 - 30. 6. 1942 | 164,727 |
| 1. 7. 1942 - 31. 12. 1942 | 234,232 |
| 1. 1. 1943 - 30. 6. 1943 | 129,745 |
| 1. 7. 1943 - 30. 12. 1943 | 45,823 |
| 1. 1. 1944 - 30. 6. 1944 | 52,446 |
| | 1,192,108 |

on the German nationality list, which automatically released them from work in the Reich. Deportations of that group of the population were an exception and concerned only families of deserters from the *Wehrmacht*. Moreover, the big demand for manpower in the industry of Silesia acted as a curb on deportations. That is why only some 3.5 per cent of the Polish population inhabiting Silesia and Pomerania on the eve of the war were sent for forced labour to the Reich. There were also comparatively great differences in the percentages of deported persons between the various regions of the Government General. As far as this problem is concerned, we have detailed data for 1943. Up to June 1943, 8.83 per cent of the population had been deported from the Radom region, 8.70 per cent from the Cracow region, 7.27 per cent from Galicia, 6.22 per cent from the Warsaw region and 5.41 per cent from the Lublin region. The disproportions between the various districts and towns were still greater. The highest percentages were recorded in the Sanok district (19.19), Przemyśl district (12.41), Rzeszów district (10.97), and the lowest in the Lublin district (3.18) and the Radom district (2.62). If we analyse these figurs in detail we come to the conclusion that the largest numbers of people were deported from regions having many „dwarf farms" and a traditional surplus of manpower, while the lowest number was sent from districts inhabited by mixed populations, Polish and Ukrainian. The Ukrainians in the Lublin district were partly exempt from deportation to the Reich.

The deportations for forced labour varied in intensity in the successive years of the war. The largest number of persons, both from the Government General and the „incorporated" territories, was deported in 1942 when in view of the heavy fighting on the Eastern front the Nazis drafted ever new age groups and intensified production for war purposes. They tried to meet the resulting increasing demand for manpower by deportations, especially from Polish and Soviet territories. From the beginning of 1943 on there was a considerable drop in the number of deported people owing to the exhaustion of manpower resources and the increased activity of the guerrilla movement. It we examine each six-month period separately, the largest number of persons were deported between January 1 and June 30, 1940, due to the fact that from among all the countries occupied by that time Poland had the largest population and consequently offered big possibilities for the exploitation of labour. In the second half of 1940 Germany's victory in the

West and the employment of many French POWs in the German economy considerably reduced the rate of deportations from the Polish territories, but it increased again when the Germans started their final preparations for aggression against the Soviet Union, i.e., at the beginning of 1941. In the first months of the war the rate of deportations was higher in the „incorporated" territories and from the middle of 1940 it was higher in the Government General. The change was due to the nationality policy pursued in Silesia and Pomerania and the employment of a relatively large number of Poles in the economy of the „incorporated" territories.

Among the Poles who worked in Germany during World War II those who went there voluntarily constituted only a small percentage. Some of them volunteered because of difficult material conditions or because they wanted to join members of their families deported earlier. Several thousand inhabitants of Polish territories volunteered for work in neighbouring German districts to avoid deportation to the centre of the Reich, far from their homes. Some people were sent to the Reich by the Resistance Movement to carry on clandestine activity, including intelligence work or — in case of priests — religious activity. There were only sporadic cases of young people volunteering for work in the Reich for the sake of adventure, more frequent were the cases when young people registered voluntarily not to be entered on the German nationality list. Some people went to the Reich to cover up their tracks and escape imprisonment others went for humanitarian reasons to give moral support to the Polish youth in Germany. Altogether about 50,000 people went to the Reich voluntarily, i.e., several per cent of the total number of deported persons. That is why representatives of the Government General repeatedly stated that voluntary recruitment had failed and that the Poles were employed in the Reich against their will. The character of the recruitment of the Poles was correctly described by the Regional Labour Office in Magdeburg which called the workers there *Zwangsarbeiter*.

In spite of efforts the occupation authorities failed to supply the Reich with the quota of labour fixed for the Polish territories. A detailed analysis shows that

TABLE 3

Number of Deported Workers from the "Incorporated" Territories, the Białystok Region and the Government General, working in the Reich

| Date | Number of workers | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | From the Government General and the Białystok region | | From the "incorporated" territories | Total |
| | | of which Ukrainians | | |
| 31. 1. 1941 | . | . | . | 798,101 |
| 25. 4. 1941 | . | . | . | 872,672 |
| 25. 9. 1941 | . | . | . | 1,007,561 |
| 20. 1. 1942 | . | . | . | 1,032,196 |
| 20. 5. 1942 | 775,283 | 155,342 | 419,636 | 1,194,919 |
| 10. 10. 1942 | 896,849 | 194,559 | 443,473 | 1,340,322 |
| 20. 11. 1942 | 895,916 | . | 448,776 | 1,344,692 |
| 31. 12. 1942 | 918,117 | 207,265 | 453,928 | 1,372,045 |
| 31. 12. 1943 | 1,054,527 | 228,826 | 522,695 | 1,577,232 |
| 31. 3. 1944 | 1,028,287 | . | 554,849 | 1,583,136 |
| 30. 6. 1944 | 1,032,752 | . | 592,471 | 1,625,223 |
| 30. 9. 1944 | 1,053,027 | 235,192 | 609,309 | 1,662,336 |



not in a single year from 1940 to 1944 did the authorities of the Government General supply the required number of workers. In the „incorporated" territories too the number of deported persons was from 1940 on smaller than the requirements sent in by the central authorities of the Reich. For instance, the plan for 1940 provided for the deportation of some 2,000,000 persons from the Polish territories, of whom 1,000,000 were to be from the Government General. Actually some 40,000 workers were deported in that year, i.e., 20 per cent of the planned figure. In subsequent years the proportions were more favourable for the Germans owing to increased terror but the supply remained far below the demand of the central authorities, which often exerted pressure on the Governor General, Hans Frank, to increase deportations. In spite of his efforts Frank was unable to carry out the orders. He tried to explain this by pointing to the helplessness of the labour offices and the lack of an adequate number of police for carrying out large-scale recruitment. But the reasons why the fixed contingents of labour were never supplied were more complex than those presented by the Nazi dignitaries. They embraced a number of factors, such as the development in the Polish territories of branches of industry important for the war economy, transport difficulties connected with the aggression against the Soviet Union, the Nazi policy of exterminating the Polish population, and also the generally hostile attitude of the Polish people to the recruitment, an attitude which was part of the struggle against the Nazis.

This attitude took various forms, from failure to heed the summons of the German occupiers up to all kinds of armed action. A large percentage of the Polish people did not pay any attention to the labour offices' demands concerning departure for the Reich. Failure to report for deportation when summoned by labour offices was a phenomenon which varied in intensity throughout all Polish territories until the last moments of the war. It was always widespread when *Wehrmacht* started a new aggression because some people thought this would lead to the intensification of Allied operations and an early conclusion of the war. This was the reason why many people did not report for forced labour during the campaigns in Denmark and Norway, while the day after the aggression against the Soviet Union not a single person reported to the labour offices in the Lublin district.

Many of the Poles who dodged labour recruitment changed their places of domicile to cover up their tracks, some stayed with their relatives or friends, others hid in uncut grain or in the woods, some joined guerrilla detachments. But the Germans managed to arrest quite a large number of those who lived in hiding and deported them to Germany at once or after a prison term. Some of the others, though continually hunted, managed to escape deportation.

In order to escape forced labour the Poles also ran away from transit camps and transports, bribed German officials, forged documents, etc.

These forms of resistance to forcible recruitment were widespread in the Polish territories, the Polish people realizing the necessity of self-defence against the exterminating measures applied by the Nazi authorities. The attitude of the Polish people was also due, to a large extent, to the activity of the underground movement, including its propaganda campaign. The underground organizations, especially the Polish Workers' Party and the People's Guard published many leaflets calling upon the people not to go to the Reich and even giving instructions how to escape deportation. The „Wawer" small-scale sabotage organization spread slogans to acquaint the population with the consequences of deportation

TABLE 4

Distribution of Slave Workers from the Government General, the Białystok Region and the "Incorporated" Territories in Germany and Occupied Countries

| Name of state (province, region) | Number of workers on | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 23. 4. 1941 | 25. 11. 1941 | 31. 12. 1943 | 30. 9. 1944 |
| Germany | 811,069 | 934,851 | 1 431,347[a]) | 1 499,690[a]) |
| in which: | | | | |
| Bavaria | 57,420 | 69,670 | 68,690 | 71,711 |
| Brandenburg | 99,285 | 109,096 | 162,415 | 162,391 |
| Lower Silesia | 59,035 | 79,894 | 116,831 | 132,496 |
| Gdańsk, West Prussia[b]) | 21,948 | 33,847 | 39,948 | 32,274 |
| Upper Silesia[c]) | 27,501 | 28,875 | 72,034 | 74,222 |
| Rhineland[d]) | 27,544 | 29,793 | 50,217 | 54,356 |
| Pomerania | 86,233 | 92,764 | 118,094 | 116,105 |
| East Prussia | 52,879 | 67,818 | 130,625 | 144,511 |
| Saxony | 32,597 | 35,402 | 50,711 | 54,218 |
| Westphalia | 36,572 | 39,670 | 90,477 | 91,590 |
| Other regions of the Old Reich (Altreich) | 310,055 | 348,022 | | |
| Alsace and Lorraine | 3,344 | 3,685 | 531,305 | 565,816 |
| Sudetenland | 17,331 | 25,081 | 45,975 | 49,286 |
| Austria together with the part of Slovenia „incorporated" into it | 40,928 | 43,944 | 99,910 | 112,971 |
| "Warta Region"[e]) | — | — | — | 569 |
| Total | 872,672 | 1 007,561 | 1 577,232 | 1 662,336 |

[a]) including Alsace and Lorraine
[b]) the part that belonged to Germany prior to 1. 9. 1939
[c]) the part that belonged to Germany prior to 1. 9. 1939
[d]) from 1943 on together with Luxembourg
[e]) workers deported to the "Warta Region" from the Government General in 1944

to the Reich. According to the estimates of the Nazi authorities in the Government General this propaganda was very effective.

In its activity aimed at reducing the deportations the Polish Resistance did not confine itself to propaganda among the Polish population but also attacked the Nazi occupation apparatus. The „Wawer" organization broke and destroyed windows in labour and recruiting offices in Warsaw. In retaliation against round-ups the People's Guard, following the directives of the Polish Workers' Party, carried out several bomb attacks in cinemas. Not all of them were a success. Guerrilla detachments also raided recruitment commissions, attacked about a dozen labour offices, demolishing their premises and destroying personal files, stopped trains and released the deportees. There were even cases where the German officials who showed extreme ill will and terrorized the Poles were killed. In 1943, by virtue of a legal decision of Underground Poland's court the death sentence was carried out on Kurt Hoffman, head of the labour office in Warsaw. The same punishment was meted out a little later to officials of that office, Hugo Dietz and Fritz Geist, and in 1944 to Willy Luebert. Several Poles who were extremely eager to help the Germans in the recruitment campaign were also killed.

The measures taken by the Resistance helped to reduce the scope of deportations and were an important reason why the occupation authorities were unable



to recruit the planned number of workers. This was stated among others on May 26, 1943, by the head of the labour office for the Radom region, who said that „owing to the influence of the Polish underground no recruitment is possible". Only an active struggle against the occupation administrative apparatus could reduce the scope of deportations, for every attempt to start negotiations on this problem with the Nazi authorities was doomed to failure, and even if discussions were held they ended in a fiasco. This is proved by Janusz Radziwiłł's conversation with Herman Goering in the course of which the Germans promised to cease the deportations of young people up to the age of 18. The Germans allowed this information to be made known in Polish circles in Warsaw but they never kept their promise, just as they broke many others. The decrease in deportations and the resulting reduction in its effects, which were so harmful for the further development of the Polish nation, was first and foremost due to the attitude of the Polish people and their patriotic struggle against Nazism.

The Poles deported for forced labour were employed in various branches of the economy. The largest number, about 60 per cent of the total, worked throughout the entire war in agriculture, forestry, horticulture and fishing; some 25 - 33 per cent worked in industry and transport, depending on the season; the rest (0.4 - 1.9 per cent) were employed in other branches of the economy and in private households as servants.

Until the second half of 1941, workers from the Polish territories were the largest group among all foreign workers in the Reich, accounting in some periods for over 60 per cent of all the foreigners employed in Germany. It was only after the aggression against the USSR and the mass deportation of Soviet people that the percentage of Poles among the total number of slave workers began to decrease dropping to 29 per cent in September 1944. At that time Soviet people forced to work in Germany accounted for 38.7 per cent of the total. From the end of 1941 on the Poles were the second largest group among slave workers, after Soviet citizens. In September 1944, Soviet and Polish citizens made up more than two-thirds (67.7 per cent) of the total number of workers deported for forced labour. In fact, this percentage was still higher, for no statistics included former Polish prisoners of war or all the Soviet citizens deported to Germany. But even these incomplete figures show that the largest number of workers deported to Germany came from the Soviet Union and Poland. That was the labour force that got the worst treatment and was exploited in the most inhuman way.

This fact was confirmed, among others, by the Nazi labour law, which was expanded after the outbreak of the war to include a large number of decisions concerning Poles. These decisions foresaw discriminatory measures against Polish and Soviet citizens compared not only to the local German population but also to foreign workers from other countries, including those from some occupied states. The legal norms applied to the Poles were based on Nazi ideology, which divided people into better and worse races, into supermen (*Übermenschen*) and undermen (*Untermenschen*). The Poles were classified as belonging to the latter group and were regarded as a nation with a low cultural level, inferior talents and low labour productivity. Hitler even said that the Poles should not be regarded as Europeans but as Asians and consequently should be ruled by means of a whip. The attitude of the leading ideologists and the Fuehrer himself found its reflection in all the directives issued from 1940 on concerning the situation of the Poles employed in Germany. The main idea of these directives was to get the highest possible labour productivity from the Poles while keeping the employers'

outlays on the lowest possible level. In order to ensure this a special system was created, based on terror and ruthlessness in economic exploitation. In this system the Poles were helpless objects of inhuman exploitation and were obliged strictly to obey all the regulations concerning them, most of which dealt with working conditions.

One of the basic legal norms among the discriminatory measures was the regulation depriving the Poles of the right to conclude work agreements, to try to change working conditions or to go to work elsewhere. In accordance with the regulations in force, no work agreements were concluded with the Poles in the Reich; they were simply officially directed to work for employers who had sent in well founded applications for labour. The Poles, with the exception of the small percentage of people who volunteered for work in the Reich, could not choose the place of work. Neither did they have the right to determine the duration of work, for that was fixed by the Nazi authorities, or to give notice. The Poles were pawns in the hands of the Nazi authorities, which could transfer them from one employer to another at will.

The principle of maximum exploitation of Polish workers, fixed by the Nazi leaders, also concerned the working hours. In the light of the state authorities' directives, usually confidential, the Poles' working hours were to be regulated by the employers themselves, according to need. This provision created wide possibilities for large-scale legal use of one of the most trying forms of exploitation. As a rule all employers made use of this right. In this respect the Poles' situation was the worst on small and medium-sized farms and in households, where they were forced to work from early in the morning until late at night and not infrequently also on Sundays and other free days. As far as agriculture was concerned, only big landed estates offered some more free time — especially in winter. This was due to the necessity of coordinating the Poles' working hours with the working hours of the Germans doing the same work. In industry and transport too the employers, if they wished to ensure good work organization, had to employ the Poles only during the hours foreseen for the Germans and other foreign workers not subjected to discrimination. That is why in the first months of the war there was an 8-hour working day in many factories; it was later successively prolonged first to nine hours, next to ten and in 1943 some armaments industry plants even had a 12-hour working day. This was introduced on August 11, 1944, and was binding in the entire armaments industry. In 1944, this norm was also used in other branches of production. Moreover, in addition to the normal working hours the Poles were often forced to perform other functions not directly connected with production.

Neither did the Poles enjoy equal rights with the Germans as regards leaves. By virtue of a decision issued by the Minister of Labour of the Reich on March 31, 1941, the Poles' claims to a holiday and home leave were temporarily suspended. At the same time the Poles were denied the right to get an equivalent in money for their leave. This decision was explained by the needs of the war economy and the excessive use of transport facilities. Later on two exceptions from this rule were introduced. By virtue of an unpublished decision of the Minister of Labour of September 10, 1941, the Poles could get a short leave in special circumstances, such as the death or severe illness of next of kin and also their own or their children's wedding. By virtue of a decision of November 1, 1941, the group of Poles entitled to ask for a leave was extended to include good workers but only if the Germans were certain they would come back to



the Reich after their rest. The decisions taken in the years 1942 - 1944 made the leave dependent on the same conditions. The final decision granting or refusing a leave rested with the labour offices. In view of the difficulties put up by the Nazi authorities even these modest possibilities for getting a leave were only partly used in practice. This was admitted in 1943 by Hans Frank, who stated that the majority of the persons who had been working in Germany for four years had not had a holiday in Poland. Though their number cannot be ascertained precisely, the majority of the Poles were never given a holiday during their work in the Reich, though some of them spent more than five years doing forced labour.

As far as safety at work was concerned, Polish workers were also discriminated against. On the whole, the German employers did not ensure them safe and hygienic working conditions that would protect them against loss of life or health, and employers were not held responsible for accidents at work even if these happened through their fault.

The German labour law binding during World War II did not foresee any facilities for the Polish women and juveniles employed in the Reich. From 1943 on even with respect to maternity leaves the Polish women were in a much worse situation than German women and women of some other nationalities. A Polish woman was granted at the most an eight-week maternity leave during which she was actually released from all work only for eight days, while during the rest of that period she had to help in a household or do some cottage work. Nor were Polish women given proper conditions for looking after their babies. They could only have two unpaid half-hour breaks during the working day to feed their babies. Young Polish workers had the same working conditions, the same working hours and did the same work as adults but they received lower wages foreseen for juveniles. The Nazi authorities perfidiously recognized the age limit as far as the wages to be paid by German employers to juveniles were concerned but ignored it in questions concerning working hours, holidays, labour productivity, etc.

The Poles were also deeply hurt by the scornful, contemptuous and even inhuman way in which they were treated by many employers and supervisory staffs in large factories. The very fact that the Nazi authorities decreed that the Poles should not be regarded as staff members (*Betriebsgemeinschaft*) of the factory in which they were employed created a climate conducive to ruthlessness, not excluding the use of flogging, which was sanctioned by the Nazi authorities. Corporal punishment was meted to Poles throughout the whole period of the war.

The discrimination against Polish workers was also reflected in the wages policy pursued by the Nazi authorities. Considerable sums were deducted from their wages for various reasons, e.g., the social compensation tax introduced specially for Poles (*Sozialausgleichabgabe*); moreover, Poles were included in lower wage groups, did not get full extra pay for overtime and holiday work and had to pay higher taxes; as a result in agriculture Polish workers received from 40 per cent to 65 per cent of the wages paid to the Germans for the same job and in other branches of the economy up to 70 per cent. In fact this difference was even greater, for the Poles received neither family allowances, nor allowances paid in connection with weddings and funerals nor extras given for public holidays, nor old age benefits, etc. Owing to all these restrictions the net wages of Polish workers were extremely low. The Poles were unable to put by any significant sums of money to help their families at home. This was stated among others by representatives of the Government General authorities. The German Labour Minister

said that due to low wages many Poles could not afford the fare home on holidays. The maintenance of these low wages enjoyed the full support of the overwhelming majority of the employers for egoistic, class reasons. The employers' attitude was backed by the party and state authorities of the Reich, which in all their dealings with Poles were guided by the principles of fascist ideology and the racial theory they proclaimed. This found its expression in many normative acts and statements made by leading Nazi dignitaries, including Hitler himself. The Fuehrer said that the lowest German worker and the lowest German peasant should „economically be always at least 10 per cent above every Pole" and that „even if a Pole works 14 hours a day he should be earning less than a German worker". These statements throw full light on the principles of the wages policy applied by the Nazi authorities to deported Poles, a policy which was detrimental to the Poles and brought big profits to the economy of the Third Reich.

The Nazi idea of the racial inferiority of Polish workers was the main reason why the Poles were given worse treatment than Germans and some other foreigners with regard to food, clothing and other goods, and why they were not assured adequate housing conditions and medical care. The overwhelming majority of the Poles deported for forced labour suffered severe hunger throughout the war, the value of their food rarely exceeding 1,500 calories a day. Moreover, Polish workers had no right to buy fruit, vegetables, milk, eggs, sweets, coffee, tea and many other rationed goods sold to the German population. The Nazi authorities knew that the Poles were suffering hunger; the employers were also aware of this fact, for they saw the drop in the Poles' labour productivity, the emaciation of many persons, the increase in the incidence of diseases and body swelling. Polish workers complained to their employers and supervisory staff about the hunger and sometimes even went so far as to arbitrarily terminate their work and run away from their work place. Now and again some official would say that the food rations of the Polish workers were very low, that they would be inadequate even for a child, but no effective steps were taken to remedy this situation.

Nor did the Nazi authorities show any concern to supply the Polish workers employed in the Reich with the necessary clothing and footwear. They gave each worker a clothing card with 75 points for two years, which in practice sufficed to buy only minor articles of clothing. The card was far from enough even to buy overalls. During the last years of the war, owing to mounting difficulties on the market, the Nazi authorities decided to burden the Polish population with the duty of supplying clothing for the deported Polish workers. With this end in view frequent appeals were issued calling on the Polish population in the Government General to send parcels with clothing to their relatives and friends in the Reich. Naturally, the families of the deported persons did what they could to supply their relatives with the necessary clothing and the Chief Protection Council also did its best to help the deported workers, but the Polish people were incapable of doing much in this respect as they themselves received very small textile and footwear rations, inadequate to meet their own needs. Moreover, hundreds of thousands of Poles were robbed of their clothes during evictions and many had all their movable property destroyed during the pacification operations. Consequently, in spite of devotion and self-denial, the clothing sent to the Reich was the proverbial drop in the ocean compared with the needs. That is why Polish workers in the Reich wore rags, as was officially stated by the *Gestapo*, and their shoes were patched up with wire or rags; they had neither warm underwear nor leather footwear, nor other necessary apparel.



The fact that Poles were regarded as racially inferior people had repercussions on their housing situation. The official attitude in this matter was formulated by the Nazi authorities as early as 1940. The decision was taken then to separate the Poles from the Germans and place them in barracks, if possible. In practice this meant that Polish farm workers could not occupy a room in the flat in which the owner lived. Only a very small part of the German peasants ensured relatively good housing conditions to the Poles they employed; the majority housed them in crammed, usually unheated and badly lit rooms, primitively and inadequately furnished. Some Polish workers lived in attics or in the basement. Not infrequently Polish workers were placed in farm buildings together with animals. The dismal living conditions offered to Poles in many peasant farms were not the result of some real necessity but of the deliberate attempt to humiliate them, to stress their racial inferiority; they were the result of national hatred and sometimes of meanness, of a reluctance to spend even the smallest amount of money on repairing or purchasing a few pieces of furniture.

Almost all the Poles employed outside agriculture lived in joint large quarters, such as barracks, dance halls, fire stations or on ships withdrawn from exploitation. In view of their original function these quarters were not suitable for living, not having an adequate number of bathrooms, laundry rooms, cookers, heating facilities, etc. The living conditions of the Poles crammed into these quarters were aggravated still further by various insects.

Excessive, exhaustive work, the suspension of holidays, bad living conditions, hunger, lack of clothes, nostalgia, terror and concern over the fate of their families, had an adverse effect on the health of Polish workers. Many of them fell seriously ill only a few months after their arrival in the Reich. Many others, owing to superficial medical check-ups in the Government General, were deported to the Reich in spite of poor health, which quickly deteriorated in the conditions in which they were forced to live. That is why the sick rate among Polish workers sent for forced labour to the Reich was high throughout the war years. For instance, during the winter of 1940/1941, 25,000 Poles employed in agriculture, i.e., 7 per cent of the total number of Poles working in that branch of the economy at the time, were sent back home owing to illness. Polish workers were admitted to hospitals only in exceptional cases and many of them had no possibility of purchasing the necessary medicines. Owing to poor medical attention and the lack of prophylactic measures, the mortality rate among Polish workers was high.

The methods of dealing with Polish workers, devised by the Nazi authorities in 1940 and frequently modified during the war years, considerably restricted their personal liberty. The Poles in the Reich had to wear the letter "P" sewn onto their outer garments. They were forbidden to do many things, e.g., to leave the place of domicile without an official pass, to enter restaurants, cafés, bars and other public places, to take part in cultural events, to travel on fast and express trains and, on slow trains, to travel in first or second class compartments; in some localities they were not allowed to spend their free time in neighbouring woods; they were forbidden to use telephones for private purposes and to contract marriages. There were also restrictions concerning religious life. Throughout the war the Nazi authorities violated the secrecy of correspondence. All these as well as other restrictions of personal liberty were in force throughout the whole period of the war. There is nothing to confirm the opinion that the Nazi authorities withdrew or alleviated certain restrictions in the last months of the war.

Moreover, by virtue of certain regulations the deported Polish workers were subordinated to the Nazi police, which gradually assumed jurisdiction over them. At least some tens of thousands of workers and their children fell victim to the ruthless terror applied by the *Gestapo* and other police units.

The methods used by the Nazi authorities were actively resisted by deported Polish workers in various ways, from escapes to Poland, through deliberate go-slow tactics and sabotage to the conspiratorial work of political organizations. In these organizations, which often cooperated with German Communists, the greatest activeness was shown by Soviet and Polish citizens.

According to the calculations made in 1947 by the War Reparations Office of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers, 137,021 persons died as a result of the above-mentioned difficult living conditions, extermination methods and the hostilities; to this number we must add the tens of thousands of murdered babies born by Polish women sent for forced labour to the Reich. Tens of thousands of persons returned from Germany afflicted by various injuries and diseases, tuberculosis, mental disturbances, heart ailments, rheumatism, rachitic deformations, loss of teeth and other dental trouble. To a great extent these diseases were the reason for the premature death of many of the former deported workers. The deportations for forced labour also led to a considerable drop in the natural increase of the Polish population and made it impossible for many persons to continue work in their trade or profession and to raise the level of the qualifications they had previously acquired. This applied in particular to the intelligentsia and all white-collar workers; during the final stage of the war only several hundred of them were employed in offices and even these were entrusted only with the simplest functions. Not much better was the situation of blue-collar workers who as a rule were directed to perform uncomplicated work requiring great physical strenght and were unable to acquire a higher level of technical knowledge; owing to restrictions on their movements in factories the Poles were unable to observe the technological processes and the work of machines. Only a part of agricultural and industrial workers deported to Germany had an opportunity of getting acquainted with advanced methods of land cultivation and modern technical equipment in non-agricultural enterprises, but only a small percentage of them made full use of these opportunities. The difficult living conditions, the constant danger to which their life was exposed and worry about their families in Poland did not stimulate interest in or study of technical achievements.

The deportations for forced labour brought irreparable losses to Polish children and youth who were not allowed to continue their education in the Reich; as a result of a several-year break in education some of them forgot how to write and read and lapsed back into illiteracy.

To all this we must add the moral losses suffered by Polish workers, and these, naturally, cannot be measured.

The deportations for forced labour, which inflicted heavy biological, material and moral losses on the Polish nation, were a violation of Article 52 of the Hague Convention of 1907. After the war they were recognized by the International Military Tribunal as a crime, one of the many crimes committed by Nazi Germany on the populations in occupied countries.

The plight of Polish workers was reflected in various official documents of the Nazi administration, organizations and social institutions, including the *NSDAP*, industrial firms and also in the correspondence sent by the Germans to the authorities. The majority of these documents were lost in the course of the hostilities,



some of them were deliberately destroyed before the entry of Allied forces in order to obliterate all traces of activity incompatible with international law. The few sets of documents that escaped destruction make up some tens of thousands of fascicles. These contain information on the plight of Polish workers deported for forced labour during World War II. The documents published in the present volume have been selected from these scattered materials. In choosing the material for print only identical documents concerning the same matter have been left out, e.g., out of the thousands of identical filled out forms only one has been included in the volume. The selected archival documents have been supplemented by the most important regulations usually published in confidential publications. The materials selected in this way give quite a detailed picture of the plight of Polish workers deported for forced labour. These documents which, with only a few exceptions, are the product of the Nazi administration and German institutions speak for themselves and need no comment.

Most of the documents included in this volume have been published in full; only if they concern various questions not linked with the subject dealt with has it been decided to publish only that part which illustrates the plight of Polish workers. Each document has been provided with information explaining the name of the archives from which the text has been taken, the place where it is deposited, and a short characteristic of the text.

All the documents containing only and exclusively information on the plight of deported workers have been arranged in chronological order (according to the date of issue). In view of the variety of detailed information contained in the individual documents it would have been impossible to arrange them according to subject-matter without breaking them into parts.