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*pp 3-5. Foreign workers. Speer v. Sauckel.
on whether to exploit the French labor force in France
or in Germany.*

SPEER ON MANPOWER

(Excerpts from Interrogation of Reichminister
Albert Speer by USSBS at Flensburg, 15-22 May)

- Q. In regard to the questions about division and allocation of labor: What were the exact duties of Sauckel in this connection?
- Sp. Here it was the same battle, as in other countries, as for example in England; the Minister of production could not cooperate with the Minister of Labor in his affairs.
I had the opinion that labor input belonged to me, and also even the question of manpower supply, while Sauckel represented the standpoint that not only manpower supply was his business, but also the question of how manpower should be brought to the place of work.
- Q. Who determined the total number of foreign workers that were necessary?
- Sp. The request came from us, agriculture, forestry, etc. We saw on the basis of the requirements of industry that we needed so and so much manpower altogether. My goal was to get control of labor input. Sauckel succeeded because of his powers to remain independent. He also did not usually bow to Central Planning. That was at the time, however, more a question of power politics, rather than an objective one, since Sauckel, as a Gauleader, was at the top with Borman. Thus the thing was not settled on a purely rational basis.
- Q. Was the allocation of workers provided by Sauckel taken up by your officials, and if so, who handled that?
- Sp. Yes, in the first period until the middle of 1944 by Colonel Von Nicolai, the Armament Inspector in Salzburg, and from then on by Schmelter, and also quarrels always arose on the question of allocation. The figures were never in agreement.
- Q. Were you, thus, dependent on raw material?
- Sp. No, that is in another connection. We calculated the manpower that we had to apply in the factories, while Sauckel credited us with the amount of labor which had been referred to us from the labor office. But referral from the labor office by no means meant that the people appeared at the shop. In conclusion to this, I might say that the question of labor input was the only completely unsolved problem of administration in the house which I had built.
- Q. Was the allocation of industrial labor handled on the
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same basis as the allocation of raw - and basic - materials? For example, for periods?

Sp. We did not get manpower requirements periodically but more according to the importance of various specialized programs. That is, there came from the above the request, for example, to increase the tank (Panzer) program, then it was attempted to direct additional manpower into the tank program, while for other production the requirements were satisfied by normal diversions from the Labor Offices. The firms always made their requests to the Labor Offices, which collected them for the Regional Labor Offices (Landesarbeitsämter) and finally gave them to Sauckel. Special priorities were designated which were given out by us together with Sauckel and which instructed the Labor Offices to fill that demand ahead of all other requirements.

Red letters went from us to Sauckel and from him to the Labor Offices. He had to be called in. These red letters were stamped when the requirements were met. That was only control that I had. All other allocations were quantitatively uncontrolled by me. It was estimated that the number of the so-called red letters did not exceed approximately 10 - 20% of the total manpower affected.

Q. Are you informed as to where the reports of the Labor Offices are to be found?

Sp. Min. Dir. Timm, who was the next in line to Sauckel, and who is a very sensible man, must be in the area (Flensburg).

Q. Did you have a certain number of workers who were used for removal of bomb damage?

Sp. One can only estimate that, because this manpower was used partly for the removal of bomb damage and partly for new construction at the same place. We had, however, in the chemical industry alone at the end between 250 - 300,000 workers for the removal of bomb damage and have estimated that altogether one million workers were employed in removing bomb damage.

Q. Could you estimate for us when the manpower situation was critical - at what period in the war?

Sp. It was always critical until about January 1945 when the air attacks began to create unemployment. Before

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that there was a continual demand for workers because of the problems and the air attacks. That was also true because continual drafts for the armed forces were made which could only be replaced by new workers, and the rising young "classes" automatically went to the Wehrmacht and no longer to the factories, while the old classes vanished through death, sickness, etc. There were thus two things to equalize: a lost class (Jahrgang) of about 600-700,000 and the draft together marking about one (1) million. One million workers had to be replaced in order to maintain the same relative position.

- Q. To what extent did the foreign workers contribute to the solution of this question, and when did the solution reach the critical stage?
- Sp. The good times were at the beginning of the occupation of Russian territories, in which the workers could just about meet our needs. At that time it was the Russian workers whom we had to allocate. After that, about the middle of 1943 I would guess, the numbers that Sauckel could deliver to the general economy became much smaller because many fewer workers came from Russia, particularly the Ukraine, than before and the partisan activity there increased at the same time. Then Sauckel set up programs in order to bring workers in greater quantities to Germany out of the other occupied territories, mainly from France, Holland, Belgium and also Italy. In Russia, I had no particular interest outside of the Donetz region that was covered to a certain extent by Sauckel. With regard to labor, however, I still had great interest here and we were continually coming into conflict.
- Q. What percent of the total workers, foreign as well as domestic, were women, and what were the quality relationships?
- Sp. We can only say that with regard to Russian workers, the women have worked at least as well as the men - sometimes better. From the West, we had none or very few women. Our German women were, and that was a point that I always attacked strongly, employed to a lesser extent than in the First World War. Sauckel, after workers no longer came from Russia set up programs to bring other workers out of the western regions. In opposition to him, I submitted a plan for evacuation production to the west based upon the following considerations:

The military commanders as well as I were of the conviction that we lacked the power of execution to bring the
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workers to Germany and that through it the Maquis areas in the western regions would grow as quickly as the partisan areas in Russia. At that time I took the position with Bichelonne, the French Minister of production who has died, that the so-called consumer goods should be evacuated from Germany to France, for example, shoes, merchandise, textiles, etc., and in Germany these whole industries should practically be stopped in order to convert the entire labour force to armaments and at that time in France I started about 600,000 people in the production process. Thereby, two things were attained. The French workers remained on the spot with their own food which was also important for Backi. The results were better and on the other hand it was possible in this way to increase the number of German workers in armaments. I said at that time to Bichelonne - he was in Berlin at a conference - that I would take care of it that no manpower would come to Germany and we then instituted the concept "Speer Firms", that is, all firms which were working for me could no longer have workers taken by Sauckel and since practically the entire French industry worked for me after the agreement with Bichelonne, it was to be expected that all French workers out of fear of Sauckel would go into the factories in France.

Q. To what extent did the plan materialize?

Sp. There followed continued long disputes between Sauckel and me that went to the Fuehrer for decision and we opposed each other there with our different opinions. Sauckel wanted the workers which he needed for my needs and also for agriculture to be brought out of the occupied territories to Germany. I found it more rational to obtain these workers in my way. At that time the memorandum on total war appeared which is known to you, in order to better utilize the workers in their own countries - the actual solution of this question was, however, never reached. About these things Laval also is informed. I gave Bichelonne my word to act in this way and he built his production on this basis. It was, therefore, impossible for me to retreat. In addition there was in every French "Speer-Firm" a poster which bore my signature, which said, that these factories were protected. Due to the fact that I had to post this in the factories one can see how great the quarrel was.

Q. Did these plans conform with the general plans to evacuate all heavy industry from France and to make it into a kind of granary for Germany?

Sp. You have been incorrectly informed. At the same time that Bichelonne consented that I take over these industries in France, I agreed with Bichelonne that he direct the entire production completely independently and that he could

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allocate all resources as I did in Germany. At that time the French industry which had been led by Roechling was given back to Bichelonne about in the fall of 1943 - in Meurthe and Moselle.

- Q. The question now comes up that you were able to triple the production of day fighters from September 1943 to September 1944, and that even in 1944 when production fell out due to the air attacks. We agree with you when you say that you did not need any more capacity. It must have been necessary to increase the number of workers?
- Sp. Naturally there were many. I understood the previous question to refer to skilled workers. To rebuild the destroyed factories and to extend partial evacuations we had to use many workers. Practically the whole Building Trade was at the disposal. I imagine we used about 300 - 400,000 workers for that purpose.
- Q. Was that mostly the OT?
- Sp. You cannot differentiate there. In the Reich the building trade was the OT and therefore the building firms.
- Q. Was the use of these 400,000 men noticeable in the whole economy, besides the necessary machines and materials?
- Sp. Yes, that was the case. From March 1944 on construction had to be totally switched over to repairing air raid damages of the air armament only. Even materials. At the same time there were great needs of concrete to proceed with the construction of bomb proof relocation places.
- Q. The labor question for example - did it have an effect on the whole economy and what was the effect of the labor use which was transferred to evacuation work as a factor of the complete economy?
- Sp. The subterranean evacuations were mostly handled by miners from the Ruhr and Saar mines which at that time did not have to produce so much coal because of the transportation question, so that we had really no losses in that respect. The others came from the building trade and doubtless the advantage of a subterranean evacuation considered over a long period of time was very great as the workers used constantly for the removal of air raid damages would then be freed of that task, as soon as the evacuations could be carried out. That was a single use which would have had effect had it been successful.
- Q. When there was an evacuation, let us say, from southern Germany to Silesia, did you only transport the skilled workers or also a great number of unskilled workers too.

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That would have been a migration of some extent, or did you take the workers from the new location?

Sp. One of the main difficulties was the lodging of the workers principally because all districts to which we had to evacuate had been filled with evacuees from the bombed areas. That was the reason we tried to move the specialists only and leave the other workers at their old location. That was the usual procedure. If there was space we tried to put up all the workers because they were already trained.

Q. Did you ever have overproduction in the airplane industry so that it was possible to draw workers from that overproduction and send them to a place where you might have increased production with an extra night shift?

Sp. I would have liked to have done that. I could not afford to do that because of my differences with Sauckel. I would never have gotten back the workers because they had to go through the Labor Offices. If I would have said to one Regional Labor Office that the workers are free here and can be temporarily loaned out somewhere else, I would have never got them back from the Labor Office. That was particularly bad in the Ruhr area as there, for example, specialists were freed in a bombed out forging plant and could have been used in another still operating. It was never possible to direct that with a free hand, but even these workers had to be transferred by the Labor Office and would have been lost to the bombed firm. That is the reason why Krupp, for example, never reported those workers which were free temporarily.

Another thing - the Labor Offices were tied down to Gau boundary lines and any transfer from gaus had to be approved by Sauckel. If one could have carried out such transfers without any trouble it would have been possible to save about another 10% of all workers, maybe even more, which the industry never reported as available because they were afraid that by doing so they would lose them for good.