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Interrogation of: SPEER, Albert
By: Major John J. McVigan, Jr., 10 October 1945, a.m.

Persons and organizations implicated, and subjects

1. SPEER
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      (2) France (p. 3)
      (3) Belgium (p. 3)
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2. SAUCKEL
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      (1) His methods in making quotas (p. 6)
      (2) Inspected factories re manpower (p. 7)
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3. OKW
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4. SS
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5. OT Organization
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6. TOUT Organization
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7. SCHLEIDTER
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8. POLICE
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9. GOERING
   a. Authority over military commanders regarding labor (p. 3)
Albert Speer, 10 October 1955

Speer states he does not know how Struckel's quotas for conscription of foreign labor in the several countries were filled. Struckel dealt directly in these questions with his representatives, Hildebrandt in the West and Letsch in the East; Struckel best to give information (p.1)

He says that Struckel had an agreement with LjBel for transport of labor to Germany; but he does not know exactly how it was done in the East. Struckel had Peukert there (p.1). Speer states that Struckel concentrated more on France for his labor, less on Belgium and Holland. In France, Struckel had a representative who formerly was subordinate to Stennergell, the military commander. Speer states that the question of competence in the various occupied areas was very complicated, but believes that he and Struckel respectively are responsible for what happened there in their special field of work, although they had no right to command the military commanders. To his knowledge, only Goering, as Plenipotentiary General for the Four-Year Plan, had such a right. Speer adds that there was in France some quiet sabotage against Struckel's activities on the part of the military commander, through his men, Michel. Their opinion was that Struckel's activities caused unrest in the country (p.3)

Struckel always had to reproach the military commanders on direct orders from Hitler, to enforce fulfillment of his quotas. Speer, trying to reconstruct Struckel's letter to the president of the labor office in the winter of 1942, containing the program of labor allocations for 1943, thinks that the letter (which Struckel had called a manifesto - outlined labor quotas of the different countries, as well as the measures required to obtain them. This manifesto caused great concern among administrative departments in occupied areas because it was feared production would suffer (p.3-4). Struckel's task was to see that his labor allocations were complied with. Objections by the military commanders would have been futile. Speer does not believe that even a fraction of these quotas were fulfilled.

There were two periods in the "Arbeitseinsatz", the first covers the time until Spring 1943. Owing to Germany's tremendous prestige abroad until that time, manpower came to Germany voluntarily in very large numbers. After Stalingrad, things changed and workers had to be brought to Germany by some executive power, such as the police. (p.3) Speer thinks that Hildebrandt, as well as Schmelder (Speer's representative in "Arbeitseinsatz") may be able to give information about Struckel's methods in making these quotas (p.6).

Speer describes complicated question of competence. His view was that the manpower was subordinate to him from the moment it came into the factory, etc. But Struckel thought it his task to inspect the different factories to see whether manpower was used properly, etc. To oppose this, Speer set up an "Arbeitseinsatz" in every plant. This served also as defense against interference by the D.F.F (Labor Front) (p.7)
The ‘Arbeitseinsatz’men were concerned merely with the individual’s productivity, not which question of welfare or warga. ‘Welfare question remained the concern of the DIF and of the union supervisors (p.8). Thinks it was the task of the Betriebsfuehrer to provide quarters and food, under supervision of the DIF. Speer the dual position of the Betriebsfuehrer was but one formal one; in practice it was the task of the Betriebsfuehrer to look after the welfare of the workmen, and that he could use political pressure on the Betriebsfuehrer. (p.8-9)

Describes the task of the ornament inspectors whom he inherited from the OKW in the spring of 1942. They were not as efficient as had been expected. (p.10-11) There was a supervisory position over the ‘Arbeitseinsatz’. Speer describes organization of the ornament department. Schmeldter was in charge of ‘Arbeitseinsatz’, Hunzucker in charge of ‘Arbeitsordnung’ (p.19)

Is not sure but believes that the living quarters for the workers were provided by the factory. Foreign and German workers were not segregated but working together; separate foreign and supervisors would have been a luxury. Feels sure that their living quarters were separated. Thinks that Schmeldter could give exact information on policy used in quartering workers from the West. Schmeldter is in Oberursel. (p.13)

Use of concentration camp labor did not fit in with the general labor problem at all, because SS would not permit interference with conditions of living quarters (p.13). Denies that the SS engaged in an ornament program of their own; his ambition was to have a coordinated, unified organization, and therefore he could not tolerate an SS individual camps industry, as desired by Himmler in 1933 who wanted to produce rams in the concentration camps. 'All machine tools were occupied anyway, and he could not have spared the necessary technical personnel for transfer to concentration camps. Thus, Speer suggested that workers of the concentration camps should work in his plants, and that the SS in payment should receive one-fifth of their hourly production, translated into Franks products. Speer draws attention to the Fuehrer's protocol, submitted by him to the interrogation, which confirms his statement. Hitler agreed to this solution. Schmeldter will be able to give details of the SS conditions, supervision by SS men in camps as well as in plants where inmates of concentration camps worked. (p.14-15) Factories were generally subordinate to Speer, not to SS, with some exceptions, i.e., the construction of underground storage and plants which was carried out by the SS. 'As soon as such a plant to operate, it was part of the ordinary industry. (p.16)

Speer claims that, in the interest of ornament production, he wanted to keep the Jewish manpower. In Spring of 1942, many Jews were employed in Berlin but that the Gauleiter and the Political posts opposed the employment of Jews in industry, wanted to evictute them from the city as soon as possible. The Betriebsfuehrer who employed Jews had great difficulty keeping them, for Jews were always politically suspect and restless.
On his initiative, Bormann released a circular instruction to Gauleiters that no Betriebsfuhrer who employed Jews was to suffer any disadvantages. Speer published a poster showing this Bormann circular in all factories, and this caused much annoyance. (p.17)

Speer cannot remember clearly whether a meeting was held between himself and Himmler's representatives and Seuckel's people concerning the program for evacuation of the Jews. Calls this problem difficult because the Jews were mostly workers in electrical industry: Siemens, AEG, and others, in Berlin. Claims his consent was necessary, not for political reasons, but because he had to maintain high production level. Feels certain that he has prolonged the stay of the Jews by his activity, but that he could not alter the course of events in the long run. (p.17-18)

Believes that the decision to move the Jews out of industry was later made by Goebbels, as Gauleiter of Berlin. Colonel von Nikolai, whose last position was that of armament inspector in Stuttgart, should be able to supply further details. He was in charge of the Arbeitsinspektion. (p.18)

Had similar difficulties with Mutschmann, Gauleiter of Saxony (18).

Organization Todt had no executive power to request manpower from foreign countries; describes the methods used by which O.T. obtained personnel in occupied countries (19). Within Germany, the situation was the same as in the general economy: the labor offices arranged for allocation of workers. But Schmeltzer, formerly working in the Arbeitsinspektion of the O.T., can give details (19-20) also with regard to obtaining workers in France, for the Atlantic Wall. Believes methods varied in Belgium, Holland, and occupied eastern areas.

Speer wishes to correct his statement made yesterday, that he was only in charge of requesting manpower for army needs. Says this was incorrect, for he received the armament department from the OKW, etc. (20). Says he cannot reconstruct exactly in his mind how it was that PW's were working in arms production. He believes that Strelz had transferred the PW's from labor departments to the plants. Thinks Schmeltzer knows all the details (21). Does not believe there was an over-all program for the use of prisoners of war (21).