

Fritz Sauckel's Labor Mobilization Program (April 20, 1942)

Abstract

To remedy Germany's labor shortage, foreign workers were recruited for German industry and agriculture or drafted into forced labor as early as the start of the war. On March 21, 1942, Hitler appointed Fritz Sauckel Plenipotentiary-General for Labor Mobilization. Sauckel remained in this position until the end of the war and was responsible for the deportation and exploitation of approximately 5 million forced laborers from the occupied territories. In April 1942, Sauckel sent his program of abduction and enslavement – which mainly targeted residents of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union – to Alfred Rosenberg, who had been appointed Reich Minister for the Occupied Eastern Territories in 1941. Two short excerpts of his program are reproduced below. After the war, both Sauckel and Rosenberg were found guilty at the Nuremberg Trials of the Major War Criminals. Both were executed.

Source

[...]

Securing the labor force required for the entire war economy, especially for armaments, requires a uniformly oriented control of the deployment of all available labor, including recruited foreigners and prisoners of war, in accordance with the requirements of the war economy, as well as the mobilization of all unused labor in the Greater German Reich, including the protectorate, in the Generalgouvernement and in the occupied territories.

[...]

All the men must be fed, sheltered and treated in such a way as to exploit them to the highest possible extent at the lowest conceivable degree of expenditure.

[...]

Consequently, I arranged my first measures concerning the food, shelter and treatment of these foreign laborers with the highest competent Reich authorities and with the consent of the Fuehrer and the Reichsmarshal of the Greater German Reich in such a way that a top performance will be demanded and will be obtained.

It must be remembered, though, that even the effort of a machine is conditioned by the amount of fuel, skill and care given to it. How many more conditions must be considered in the case of men, even of low kind and race, than in the case of a machine!

Source of original German text: Sauckels Programm vom 20. April 1942 für den Einsatz ausländischer Arbeiter und Kriegsgefangener in die deutsche Kriegsindustrie; Erklärung seiner Absicht, eine halbe Million gesunder Mädchen gemäss Hitlers Anordnung aus dem Ausland nach Deutschland einzuführen (Beweisstück US-168), in *Der Prozess gegen die Hauptkriegsverbrecher vor dem Internationalen Militärgerichtshof. Nürnberg 14. November 1945 - 1. Oktober 1946*. Volume XXV, Amtlicher Text – Deutsche Ausgabe, Urkunden und anderes

Beweismaterial. Nuremberg 1947. Reprint: Munich, Delphin Verlag, 1989. Document 016-PS, pp. 55-71.

Source of English translation: United States Chief Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality, *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Volume III: Documents 001-PS through 1406-PS. Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1946, Document 016-PS, pp. 46-59.

Recommended Citation: Fritz Sauckel's Labor Mobilization Program (April 20, 1942), published in: German History Intersections, <<https://germanhistory-intersections.org/en/migration/ghis:document-112>> [April 09, 2024].