**Chapter 1: SS, Economy, Labor**

In August 1944, Heinrich Himmler, Chief of the German Police and Reichsführer of the *Schutzstaffel* (SS), wrote to Oswald Pohl, who was head of the SS-WVHA (SS Main Office for Economy and Administration) and in charge of organizing all concentration camps for the SS, about a recent discovery that “we as people of the twentieth Century can hardly fathom.”[[1]](#footnote-1) Himmler’s letter referred to the discovery of a massive tunnel system underneath Nazi occupied Warsaw, Poland. Five years of war in and around Warsaw led to the discovery of a substantial tunnel system underneath part of the city. An excited Himmler noted that after speaking with the mayor of Vienna, he learned that this Austrian city also had extensive subterranean galleries, some consisting of two or three levels. “I am convinced,” wrote Himmler, “that we have many cities… with such caverns, which can be used, in my opinion, without any further changes as manufacturing facilities.”[[2]](#footnote-2) He then instructed Pohl to investigate other cities including Prague, Wroclaw, Schweid, and Hohentwiel for similar subterranean spaces. Himmler’s excitement over these ready-made underground factory spaces was perhaps understandable considering the widespread destruction of vital factories throughout that year caused by Allied bombing raids. Hundreds of building projects to shelter critical aircraft facilities in large existing tunnels, caves and mines throughout Germany were already underway in 1944, and the prospect of expanding the underground factories with minimal effort was enticing.

The focus of building in Nazi Germany changed during the Third Reich from public works to monumental projects to armaments protection. During that same period the labor force changed from German citizens to a mix of German citizens, foreign laborers and forced and slave laborers. Throughout the Third Reich the purpose of concentration camps also evolved; from centers of punishment and reform to a system of camps with a mixture of purposes ranging from punishment to economic exploitation to systematic genocide, among others. The labor camps and projects at Porta Westfalica stand as examples of armaments production, slave labor, and three purposes of concentration camps: punishment, economic exploitation, and genocide.

By the end of the war, the SS transformed some concentration camps, originally created as rehabilitation camps for political enemies, into systematic killing centers. Inmates who survived the camps found that their role fluctuated over time, between prisoner, laborer and other roles. The responsibility of the SS also changed throughout the Third Reich, from a specialized paramilitary group protecting NSDAP leaders to become one of the most powerful organizations in Germany. Nazi ideology required the SS to exterminate all Jews, and to rehabilitate the asocial and their political enemies. This group of people also made up the labor force the SS hoped to exploit for economic gain.

This chapter provides historical context for the use of slave labor at Porta Westfalica through a general summary of the changing purpose of concentration camps throughout World War II. One cannot separate the overall trajectory of the SS and their use of inmates for labor, but this chapter separates the evolution of the SS as an organization and the use of forced labor in order to provide space for arguing each unique contribution to the existence of concentration camps at Porta Westfalica. Highlighting the changing nature of the SS and the concentration camps sets the context for the establishment of the camps and underground projects at Porta Westfalica and the political and economic atmosphere in which they existed. This chapter also maps out the historiographical discussion surrounding the intent and influence of Nazi ideology on SS leaders and their use of concentration camp inmates as laborers. The history of the SS, biographies of its leaders, collaboration between the SS and businesses, and the SS role in concentration camps and labor have been adequately researched elsewhere.[[3]](#footnote-3) Academic debate on the SS use of inmates for labor is also available.[[4]](#footnote-4) This chapter summarizes this research to show some of the factors that led to the camps and underground projects at Porta Westfalica.

**Changing Role of SS**

Under Heinrich Himmler, the SS gained control of the concentration camp system and became the lethal enforcer of Nazi racial ideology.[[5]](#footnote-5) Himmler also had goals to control much of the German economy, yet most of the SS business ventures were economically unsuccessful. Himmler found that the greatest influence for the SS in the German economy was their control of a large labor pool. The focus placed on this mix between ideology and economic interests fluctuated throughout the war as Himmler balanced practical building schedules and pressure to expel Jews from Germany and exterminate Europe's Jews. Economic and racial endeavors were all a means for Himmler’s greater ends of a new Aryan Germandom. This section summarizes Himmler’s influence and control of the SS, shaping it as an elite embodiment of Nazi ideology and primary enforcer of those doctrines. It also describes Himmler’s efforts to lead the SS to economic and military self-sufficiency through business endeavors and attempts at controlling armaments production. Finally, this section shows how changes in the war and economy led Himmler to concede to practicality over ideology on issues such as building focus, the relationship between concentration camps and factories, and the use of Jews for labor. These factors lead to the creation of satellite camps like those at Porta Westfalica; massive underground factory relocation programs stocked with groups of inmates from multiple nationalities forced into less-than-slave conditions to work for Germany’s desperate attempt to maintain armaments and fuel production for an increasingly hopeless war. The formation of the SS and the conflict with the SA, and their respective histories, exist in the works noted previously.

**The SS Under Himmler**

The course that the SS embarked on from 1925 until the end of the war hangs nearly exclusively on Heinrich Himmler. Influential since the founding of the SS, Himmler’s goals and aspirations directed the actions of the SS and its members, and affected nearly every inhabitant of Europe. In September 1925, Hitler organized a small group of party goons into protection squads (*Schutzstaffeln*, SS) to better protect selected high level NSDAP leaders during meetings and speeches, and to replace the SA (*Sturmabteilung*) as Hitler’s personal guards.[[6]](#footnote-6) The squads were not organized as a paramilitary group to contend with the SA, but served as body guards with the additional roles as examples of strictly adhering to party discipline and actively recruiting members for the party.[[7]](#footnote-7) On January 20, 1929 Hitler appointed Heinrich Himmler as Reichsführer-SS.

Himmler’s first enlargement of power came because of the conflict between the SA and Hitler, which continued from 1924 into the early 1930s. Seeking more political power within the NDSAP party, SA leaders took physical measures and stormed several NSDAP headquarters in Dachau, Hanau, and Berlin in late 1930 and early 1931.[[8]](#footnote-8) Continuous internal disputes and growing unease among German citizens and government officials with the rough and tumble behavior of the SA came to a head in 1934. After winning the election in 1932, Hitler felt that distancing the Nazi party from the SA would soothe the public and government fears, and in June 1934 orchestrated the death of nearly two hundred SA leadership under the pretense of silencing dissident political opponents, an event known as the Night of the Long Knives.[[9]](#footnote-9) The SS was left to fill the void of the SA within the party.

Further power came to Himmler in 1936 when Hitler appointed him chief of German police, and established the Gestapo (*Geheime Staatspolizei*) as a nationwide body with control over all local police with complete authority over custody and confinement within the Reich. This gave Himmler control of the state sponsored concentration camp systems. By 1938, Hitler gave the SS financial control of the entire concentration camp system. Himmler now had absolute command over every aspect of the concentration camps.[[10]](#footnote-10)

Before November 1935, and the Nuremberg Laws put into force at this time, Himmler was not overtly anti-Semitic in public statements.[[11]](#footnote-11) After 1935, Himmler was very outspoken and intensely engaged in enacting Nazi racial ideology. Himmler was emphatic about racial classification and built the SS on this ideology. His plans to build an elite Nordic race, and his focus on and participation with the Germanic occult was often looked at unfavorably by Hitler and other Nazi party leadership.[[12]](#footnote-12) Legal discrimination against and removal of Jews from Germany, first through threatening legal and social maneuvers in attempts to get Jews to immigrate, and then through forcible removal, was only the first step in the Nazi party’s and Himmler’s grand plan for a rebirth of the Aryan nation.

Military conquest of Poland in 1939, gave Himmler the opportunity to begin his “New Order” with the expansion of Germandom. Himmler created the office of Reinforcement of Germandom (*Reichskommisar für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums*, RKF) to spread and expand Germany to the East, and planned “cities, towns, and homesteads, including standardized houses, rationalized workplaces, and the minutia of the settler’s private life.”[[13]](#footnote-13)

One of the first steps to expanding the Greater German Reich was the physical restructuring of Europe based on Nazi racial criteria. The Nuremberg Laws allowed the SS to expel Jews from Germany. The conquest of Poland allowed the SS to expand and grow their territory and resources. The systematic murder of individuals based on racial specifications cleared the way for the new racially based labor structure.[[14]](#footnote-14) Himmler and the Nazis brought the answer to the “Jewish Question” to the open in 1942 with their “Final Solution,” the extermination of European Jews. This was one of seven major steps Himmler took in 1942 to increase power and implement his plans.

According to biographer Peter Longerich, in 1942 Himmler accomplished the following in his plans to expand the new German Reich: 1) expanded the “Final Solution” to include Jews in all of Europe; 2) began this solution by murdering 363,000 Jews in Russia-South claiming the men, women and children were “combatting bandits;” 3) shortened the timeframe for the expansion of Germanization to the occupied territories to twenty years; 4) increased the size of the Waffen-SS by allowing any ethnic German to join; 5) entered into armaments production in order to make the Waffen-SS self-sufficient; 6) made deals with the judicial branch of the government to allow asocials from prisons into the concentration camp system; 7) expanded and enforced reasons to put anyone under Nazi rule into the camp system.[[15]](#footnote-15)

**SS: Elite Example of Ideology**

In the first years of Himmler's reign as Reichsführer-SS, he desired to establish the SS as more than an elite body guard group for NSDAP leadership. He saw the SS as heavily tied to racial ideals, even the beginning of a revival of the Nordic race. To accomplish this goal, he realized the need for the SS to remain strictly loyal to the Nazi movement, and adopt modern scientific and organizational techniques in order to set itself apart from the rival SA.[[16]](#footnote-16)

After Himmler took charge of the SS in 1929, the membership increased dramatically from one thousand members before 1929, to 50,000 in 1933, and membership exploded again to 200,000 by 1934.[[17]](#footnote-17) One reason for this increase in membership was due to the elite status that Himmler gave to the SS. At the time, many German citizens viewed the Luftwaffe and the SS as the two elite, upper-class, educated organizations in Germany.

The German economic crisis meant many white-collar workers were out of work and without hope in Germany. SS membership appealed to such workers as a group with vision, modernity, “political activism, national pride, and the chance to build new institutions.”[[18]](#footnote-18) Many white-collar workers saw the SS as an opportunity for a new social class, a new “aristocracy” of which they could be a part. Himmler set up the SS to contrast with the SA, which they portrayed as the sloven, unorganized, brutish group of men scraping the bottom of the social barrel, who recruited from the lower-middle and working classes.[[19]](#footnote-19)

Himmler also desired the SS to function using modern business practices. To further set the SS apart from the SA, Himmler hired people with business backgrounds and academic degrees. Himmler appointed Oswald Pohl in 1940 to manage all of the SS business enterprises, which up to this time had all suffered from mismanagement and financial losses.[[20]](#footnote-20) Under Pohl, the Deutsche Wirtschaftsbetriebe GmbH (German Businesses Ltd.) set their goal to turn losses to profit and expand in their respective markets.[[21]](#footnote-21) On March 16, 1942 Himmler consolidated the many offices that Pohl was in charge of into the SS Main Economic and Administration Office (*Wirtschafts- und Verwaltungshauptamt*, WVHA).

The WVHA had several offices in charge of different aspects of administering the SS, and all of them touched the concentration camps in some way. In relation to the camps: Group A was in charge of personnel, budgets, payroll, and funds to the camps; Group B supplied food and clothing; Group C dealt with construction projects including the building of new camps; Group D inspected the camps; and Group W comprised the SS economic enterprises such as the DESt, all of which heavily relied on labor from the concentration camps, and in 1943-1944 that meant thirty companies using forty thousand inmates.[[22]](#footnote-22)

This restructuring of the SS, which gave Pohl control of the concentration camps, had two important purposes. First, Pohl could now apply his effective and efficient business practices to the concentration camp system, just as he had previously done with SS business concerns. Theodore Eicke, who was previously in control of the camp system, trained his guards to be punishers and allowed them to kill inmates at will. Pohl, on the other hand, saw the economic value of inmates.[[23]](#footnote-23) All SS leaders agreed, though, that prisoners should suffer and that the SS bureaucracy should manage that punishment.

Second, Pohl now had control of the concentration camp inmates. Growing concern among Nazi leaders about the cost of supporting concentration camp inmates lead to suggestions that inmates supplement the German labor force. Himmler feared that Albert Speer (as Minister for Armaments and War Production) or Fritz Sauckel (General Plenipotentiary for Labor Mobilization) would eat away his power in the Reich as war continued and armaments production did not increase to compensate as labor shortages increased.[[24]](#footnote-24) The same day Himmler created the WVHA, he and Speer made agreements for inmates to supply labor to armaments production. Himmler stipulated that all production was to happen within the camps. In essence, Himmler wanted all factories using camp inmates to relocated to the camps. He later conceded this point, instead allowing the creation of small satellite camps near the places of work.

**SS Becomes Self-Sufficient**

In 1942, Pohl put forth a proposal that would create an SS building program that would make the SS independent from public and private industry as well as state run industries. Under the plan, civil engineering, raw materials production, transportation, building, and management were contained within the SS and run by Kammler. The Pohl report was too limiting for Himmler. They advised slow movement to curtail problems with rapid growth, and contracting with private industry. Himmler wanted rapid growth and for the SS to produce 80% of their own raw materials.[[25]](#footnote-25) While Himmler’s expanded plan, nor even the Kammler/Pohl plan, was fully realized, the trajectory plotted (economic independence for the SS) was the path followed by the SS until its end.

*SS Armaments Production*

Himmler had grand plans for the SS to supply weaponry to the Waffen-SS from SS factories in collaboration with private industry. Himmler stipulated that all collaboration be done with the SS at the helm and the factories within the concentration camps with inmates providing the labor force. In 1943, it was plain to see that SS economic efforts were not contributing to armaments production. DESt was still focused on building materials.[[26]](#footnote-26) That year saw the change of focus from monument building to armaments production.[[27]](#footnote-27)

An exemplar of SS armaments involvement occurred in 1943. Himmler worked his way into the A4 program (later known as the V2, *Vergeltungswaffe* 2), a top secret missile development program, by dismissing the current military officer on doubt of his loyalty due to his connection with Catholic Church. A charge that was later proved unfounded. Himmler was able to appoint his own man in charge of the program, for sake of military and national security. After the British discovered and bombed the research plant at Pennemunde in August 1943, Himmler put Hans Kammler, a rising SS officer and engineer, in charge of relocating the rocket plant to underground facilities near Nordhausen, establishing the Mittelbau concentration camp which supplied labor to create the tunnels and workers for manufacturing rockets.[[28]](#footnote-28)

*SS Business Ventures*

Paul Jaskot argues that the SS tried to become not only economically self-sufficient, but also economically significant, and satisfied this goal by focusing on the building supply chain. They increased control of raw building supplies (stone and brick for example) and as the war progressed, control over the labor force. He further argues that building Nazi architecture, particularly constructing those buildings seen as monuments to the Nazi Regime, was deeply dependent upon the SS supply of raw building materials and labor.[[29]](#footnote-29)

SS involvement with economic and business enterprises began early after Himmler came to power. The first SS business was a printing press, the Nordland Verlag, to disseminate the ideas of the SS in books and writings.[[30]](#footnote-30) In 1936, Himmler established the Allah Porcelain Manufacture GmbH, and in 1937 the FF Bauer GmbH, a photography studio. As did most of the SS business ventures, these companies were financially unsuccessful. Himmler wanted the SS to be the example of the “right” kind of Nazi business, presenting Nazi culture, even if it meant an unprofitable business model. A later business, the Textile and Leather Utilization GmbH (Textil- und Lederverwertung GmbH, or TexLed) was much more successful because of competent and knowledgeable administrators. TexLed leaders chose machinery that required little skill, and were thereby used by the women prisoners they requested to run the machinery.[[31]](#footnote-31)

The biggest SS business enterprise came about due to Himmler’s awareness of the construction needs due to Hitler’s desire to rebuild Berlin. Speer's massive monument building plans increased both SS venture into industry and use of concentration camp inmates as laborers. Speer requested large numbers of bricks, granite and stone, a labor intensive process to produce. There were not enough factories to produce the bricks (existing German brick industry could only provide 18 percent of requested bricks), nor enough laborers to create them. Himmler and Speer collaborated on finding a solution to the need for bricks and laborers. In April 1938, Himmler created the German Earth and Stone Works (*Deutsche Erde- und Steinwerk*, DESt) as the first large-scale SS enterprise to fulfill the monumental need for bricks. DESt was a business catastrophe from the beginning as inept managers and administrators proved incapable of production and profit. Installing machines that required skilled and technical workers but relying on unskilled concentration camp prisoners. Choosing inferior and impractical machines for brick making, rather than practical and less technically advanced machines.[[32]](#footnote-32) The SS set up large concentration camps near new brickyard and quarries including the brickyard at Oranienburg, near Sachsenhausen, Flossenburg, and a nearby granite pit near Mauthausen.[[33]](#footnote-33) DESt enterprises, especially those dealing with the quarries as at Mauthausen, set the pattern for the exploitive use of concentration camp inmates for the use of German industry.

**SS Adaptation**

Himmler led the SS through numerous changes and alterations during his reign as Reichsführer-SS; from an elite group of body guards to controlling the labor and resources running the German armaments production, controlling the German police force, and managing the largest arrangement of concentration camps and genocide in recent German history. Himmler’s flexibility allowed the SS to change priority and focus based on fluctuating circumstances caused by internal power struggles within the Nazi party and unexpected continuation of war.

*Building and Concentration Camp Focus*

In April 1942, Pohl wrote to commandants of the concentration camps, that the goal of the camps was no longer security, re-education and prevention, but would now serve the SS economic interests. As part of the “Final Solution” inmates were now involved in a combination of mass murder through mass production. Those not able to work were killed out of practicality and ideology, while those who could provide labor would die through exhaustive work.[[34]](#footnote-34) Pohl made changes to the camps in 1942, including instituting 72 hour work weeks, making Sunday a half-day work day, 11 hour work days, and ordering that no more than 10 percent of the inmates work inside the camp. As a result, there were more inmate deaths in 1942 than previous years, 75,545 from July to November 1942, but only 9,015 by execution. Deaths occurred more because of increased work coupled with less nutrition, not because of deliberate plans to kill through means of exhaustive and exploitative work.[[35]](#footnote-35)

After the unexpected increase in inmate deaths, Pohl instigated, at least on paper if not in practice, improvements for camp inmates and included an enticement system to encourage a higher quality of work. In an October 1943 letter to camp commandants, Pohl called for improvement in the quality of life for inmates. “We must attend to the prisoners’ well-being, not out of a false sense of sentimentality, but because we need them with their arms and legs, for they must help the German people to achieve a great victory. I have made it our top priority that we will allow no more than ten percent of all inmates to be unfit for work due to illness.”[[36]](#footnote-36) Pohl then outlined requirements for the use of better nutrition, more useful clothing, natural remedies for the sick, avoid unnecessary exertions, performance bonuses for inmates, winter clothing, allowing inmates to stuff clothing with newspaper, and 7-8 hours undisturbed sleep. In reality, these changes led to more suffering as the camp commandant’s goal was to report less illness. The sick were not allowed into the infirmary, were not given rest and treatment, and so the sick were worked until they died. Inmate enticements were to include improved camp conditions, extra food, camp money, tobacco and visits to the camp brothel. These incentives also backfired, leading to a decline in morality among the inmates.[[37]](#footnote-37)

*Inmates and Factories*

One of the major adaptations to Himmler’s plan was the concession to let camp inmates go to the factories, rather than have the factories inside the concentration camps. The precedent for such an arrangement is found in the IG Farben factory near Auschwtiz. In January 1941, IG Farben setup a plant near Auschwitz for producing synthetic rubber using Auschwitz camp inmates as workers. On February 26, 1941 Himmler ordered 'evacuation' of Jewish population in Auschwitz to fill the need for workers.

There were many reasons subsequent integration efforts did not come to fruition, the main reason being practicality; it was cost and time prohibitive to relocate so many factories to established concentration camps. Other prohibitors included machinery that was hard to find, productivity in the camps was lacking because inmates were unable to work as needed, and because industry leaders wanted to maintain control of production. In September 1942, Pohl made agreements with Speer to ship prisoners to factory sites, instead of relocating factories in the existing camps. Hitler approved this plan later in the month. The SS then made plans to set up hundreds of satellite camps near factories with camp inmates as workers.[[38]](#footnote-38) By 1944, when plans were set into action to relocate factories to bomb proof underground locations, the precedent was already set for creating small, satellite camps near factory locations.

*Jews for Labor*

Himmler’s plans for utilizing concentration camp inmates for labor went through various phases, as is discussed in the next section. The main point to focus on here is that Himmler’s labor plans changed with the circumstances. Initially, the Final Solution called for all Jews to immigrate from Germany. Labor shortages in 1941 were to be covered by Soviet POWs and foreign workers. When Soviet POWs were no longer available due to massive deaths from malnutrition and inhumane living conditions in the camps, Himmler turned to Jews in the Polish camps for the needed labor supply.[[39]](#footnote-39)

By 1944, labor shortages were so dire that Nazi officials were ready to rescind one of their core pillars of the Final Solution. They requested 700,000 Hungarian Jews be pulled from the camps and brought to Germany for labor in armaments production. Much less were actually used.[[40]](#footnote-40) With labor shortages at such extreme levels, when all efforts were focused on underground factory relocation in 1944, any and all Europeans were conscripted into the labor force. Thus we see at Porta Westfalica Soviet POWs working next to French asocial and Danish political prisoners led by German criminals.

**Changes in Concentration Camps and Labor Force**

Weimar Germany was fraught with economic catastrophes, not the least of which was mass unemployment.[[41]](#footnote-41) Hitler made good on his promise to improve German economy and unemployment decreased significantly after the NSDAP won the government. Rather than remaining stable, though, labor demands rose and fell throughout the existence of the Third Reich. As German men entered the military to prepare for war, they left an unmanageable number of unfilled jobs in agricultural and industrial sectors. Two options arose as the answer to so many vacant vocational positions: employ more women, and employ foreigners. Both options were unsatisfactory according to Nazi ideology. The role of women in Nazi Germany was clear, they were to remain at home as the focal point of the family and German society and to be the bearer of a plenteous Aryan population.[[42]](#footnote-42) Ideology called for a foreign-free Germany, especially those of an inferior race, so employing these people was problematic. Nazi leaders allowed a combination of concessions to answer to the problem. Germany used women in small proportions and brought in hundreds of thousands of foreign workers (both male and female) to fill the labor shortages.[[43]](#footnote-43)

Defeat in the Soviet Union precipitated increased labor shortages for Germany. The Wehrmacht called up most of the able bodied men to fight in the new two front war. Unprepared for such a course of events, Germany was left with increased labor shortages. Instead of the war ending as planned and the economy returning to normal production, war with the Soviet Union pulled the German economy into total war. Soldiers did not return home and beat swords into plowshares; instead even more men went to the front and they beat even more plows into swords. In order to keep, and send more, men to the battle fields, Germany again altered policy on labor usage and began to use more German women, millions of foreign workers, and in the end concentration camp inmates. Much to the benefit of Himmler’s economic plans, Germany’s struggling war economy also provided a means for the SS to integrate more closely with the war industries.[[44]](#footnote-44)

Literature about labor in Germany tends to use at least three different terms for the types of labor found during the Third Reich, but applications of the terms are often inconsistent and confusing.[[45]](#footnote-45) This dissertation utilizes the organization described by Mark Spoerer and Jochen Fleischhacker to classify workers in Nazi Germany.[[46]](#footnote-46) The authors readily agree that these organizations are restrictive and cannot readily describe all unique situations of workers in Germany at the time, but these definitions do make it easier to grasp the myriad types of laborers analyzed in these types of studies. A grasp of the characterizations of laborers is also important in determining how the SS may have applied the ideology of *Vernichtung durch Arbeit* to the situation at Porta Westfalica.

Under this organization, there are five groups of laborers within three categories defined by four criteria. The five labor classifications come from two main groups, German citizens and foreign workers. Foreign workers are further subdivided into four classifications: privileged, forced, slave, and less-than-slave. Within these groups there existed three categories of workers: citizens, POWs, and inmates. Spoerer and Fleischhacker describe four criteria that distinguish workers from each other: 1) was a worker able to end employment in the short term (summarized by the term *exit*); 2) could a worker enforce legal standards on their work/life conditions (*standards*); 3) did a worker's voice have any influence in matters of work/life conditions (*voice*); 4) was the probability of surviving their “employment” similar to a normal native worker (*survival*). German citizens generally had all four criteria available to them. To a much lesser degree, some foreign laborers had a privileged status that allowed them to terminate employment (in the form of running away or requesting transfers), voice concern about issues in employment and have honest hope for survival. Most foreign laborers found themselves forced into labor, sometimes even after volunteering to work in Germany, and found themselves with no way to end employment and no legal base for support, but did have some voice in the matter and could hope for survival. Slaves were those who had no rights, but at least did not need to fear being exterminated. The authors use Benjamin Ferencz's definition of “less-than-slaves” as those who had no escape from labor, no standards to fall back on, no voice for improvement, and could not even hope for survival. See Table 1 for a classification of nationalities and their labor status, based on a chart by Spoerer and Fleischhacker.[[47]](#footnote-47) The SS treated these individuals as machinery, rather than humans that performed labor.

In many cases, authors use the terms *forced labor* and *slave labor* interchangeably to refer to any person who was not a civilian worker. These terms broadly include conscripted Jews forced to work in armaments factories, as well as concentration camp inmates, whether Jewish or not. To add to the confusion, some foreign laborers could become a forced or slave worker if caught trying to escape, failing to fulfill work quotas, engaging in relationships with Germans, or a myriad of other rules strictly placed on foreign workers. To avoid being too wordy, this dissertation will utilize the terms inmates and laborers, but may also use slave and forced labor when talking about the inmates used in Porta Westfalica. It must be remembered, though, that all inmates at Porta Westfalica were deemed expendable and had no hope for surviving their experience in the camp. For many, this was their last stop.

This section looks at the changes in labor issues in Germany during three periods: before the war (1933-1938), the early war years (1939-1941), and the final war years (1942-1945).

Table 1Classification of Laborers in Nazi Germany

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1. Privileged: exit and voice | 2. Forced: no exit, but voice | 3. Slave: no exit, no voice | 4. Less-than-slave |
| **Civilian Laborers** |  |  |  |  |
| Croats | X |  |  |  |
| Italians | X (until Sept. 1943) |  | X (after Sept. 1943) |  |
| Slovaks | X |  |  |  |
| Balts |  | X |  |  |
| Belgians |  | X |  |  |
| Czechs |  | X |  |  |
| Dutch |  | X |  |  |
| French |  | X |  |  |
| Serbs |  | X |  |  |
| Poles |  |  | X |  |
| USSR citizens |  |  | X |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **POWs** |  |  |  |  |
| French |  | X |  |  |
| Serbs |  | X |  |  |
| UK/US citizens |  | X |  |  |
| Italian |  |  | X |  |
| Poles |  |  | X (non-Jews) | X (Jews) |
| USSR citizens |  |  |  | X |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Inmates** |  |  |  |  |
| CC inmates |  |  |  | X |
| Working Jews |  |  |  | X |
| WEC inmates |  |  |  | X |

**Pre-War, 1932-1938**

Responsibility for concentration camps and the number of inmates in the camps fluctuated during the first two years of NSDAP’s control of German government. From 1932-33, the local jurisdictions ran the concentration camps, with oversight coming from the SA (*Sturmabteilung*). German states had legal responsibility and provided the funding for most of the camps within their borders; the SA provided guards. Local judiciaries and national government did not always align in purpose, though. The state judiciary investigated deaths of inmates in the camps, but prosecution of SA guards was often blocked by Hitler himself.[[48]](#footnote-48) After the Nazi party seized firm control of the government, there was a decline in inmate totals as prisons closed down and released prisoners, leaving only a few hundred prisoners left in a few camps. Official propaganda claimed that there was no more need for them.[[49]](#footnote-49) After 1934, Hitler gave complete control of the camps to Himmler and his SS, both in terms of management and surveillance. Himmler subsequently overtook funding and organizational responsibility from the local police and judicial systems. During this time, the SS used camp prisoners for labor, but only sporadically as punishment and not officially or for profit of SS businesses until later in 1934.[[50]](#footnote-50)

The early purpose of the camps was to confine political enemies and criminals with the goal to re-educate and re-introduce prisoners into civilian life; death and secrecy were not main goals. In 1933, of the 4,821 men who passed through Dachau, only twenty-five were killed.[[51]](#footnote-51) In contrast, in January 1945, SS concentration camps held over 714,000 prisoners, and had killed over 1.7 million people throughout the war.[[52]](#footnote-52) Before the war, knowledge of the camps was internationally known, and even part of Nazi propaganda. Family members could visit inmates, and released inmates often told their story to journalists.[[53]](#footnote-53) NSDAP propaganda spread the news that they ran the camps in orderly fashion and treated prisoners humanely, although reality was much different. In these early days of concentration camps, prisoners were rarely used as labor because the government wanted to keep the work in the hands of needy Germans. Political and racial enemies, mostly communists and Jews, were the most likely to receive work as punishment.[[54]](#footnote-54) In general, the total number of prisoners used for industrial labor was far less than German civilians, but in certain industries (for example aircraft manufacture and chemical production) and by the underground facilities, the number of forced laborers exceeded the number of civilian laborers.[[55]](#footnote-55)

Throughout the rest of the 1930s, the purpose of the camps remained relatively the same: imprison political enemies, asocial citizens and criminals. Numbers of inmates were low during this time, compared to the hundreds of thousands interned a decade later. The November Pogrom against Jews in 1938, doubled the number of camp inmates to 50,000, but only for a short time. A year later only 1500 Jews remained in concentration camps, and these were only the asocial, political prisoners, and criminals.[[56]](#footnote-56) During the late 1930s the labor situation had also reversed. Whereas during the early 1930s there was a surplus of out of work Germans, during 1936-38 there was a labor shortage and Nazi and SS leadership considered making prisoners earn their keep.[[57]](#footnote-57)

Before 1942 Jewish laborers followed a parallel but separate path towards labor than inmates in concentration camps. Jews were not used as forced laborers until after the November 1938 Pogroms. Nazi policy was to expel Jews from Germany, and the Nazis hoped the Pogroms would influence Jews to relocate outside of Germany. The annexation of Austria in 1938 confounded this Nazi policy as 200,000 more Jews were now within Nazi borders. After losing jobs, property and savings to the Pogroms, Jews were for the most part financially unable to afford the costs of leaving Germany, and neighboring countries were unwilling to accept them. In December 1938, the Reich Institute for Labor Placement and Unemployment Insurance handled the issue of unemployed Jews, forcing them into contracts and placing them in segregated working brigades where they received minimal pay for local menial labor tasks: snow removal, garbage disposal, local and regional construction. As the Nazis geared up for war in 1939, they found it uneconomical to continue their policy of expelling Jews from Germany. In a change of policy, Nazis now allowed Jews to perform menial jobs and limited industrial work. By the summer of 1939 there were 20,000 forced Jewish laborers working in Germany. After spring 1940, the labor offices recruited all male and female German Jews to work, primarily in the armaments industries. By 1941 they employed 50,000 Jews. Most Jewish forced laborers were under the control of the Reich labor administration, which operated separately from the SS and the concentration camp system.[[58]](#footnote-58)

**Early War Years, 1939-1941**

Camps in the early war years saw changes resulting from two specific consequences of the war. First, with armaments production and military inscription, the German labor force was quickly strained and found lacking. Second, war with the Soviet Union meant a huge increase in the number of prisoners of war kept in POW camps.

Defeat on the eastern front in 1941 not only caused a reorganization in German military strategy, but also of armament production, which now needed to accommodate a long-term war. With this change, the Nazi leadership gave the SS a larger part in the production of armaments, under a newly created SS Main Economic and Administrative Office (*SS-Wirtschafts- und Verwaltungshauptampt,* WVHA), due to their control over a seemingly abundant source of labor. Practical implementation of prisoners in factories did not occur until late 1942, with help from a decree from Hitler (with encouragement from Speer) which provided concentration camp inmates as loanable labor to private enterprises.[[59]](#footnote-59) Focus for the SS changed from providing a labor force to produce materials for architectural projects to providing a labor force that could produce materials for armaments production.[[60]](#footnote-60)

Before defeat in Soviet Russia, the Wehrmacht had captured over 3 million Soviet POWs, and Himmler had hoped to feed these into the concentration camp system as an “unlimited” supply of labor. In September 1941, the General Staff agreed to send 350,000 Soviet POWs to SS camps, which Himmler was to split evenly between Auschwitz and Lublin, ordering the expansion of the camps to accommodate them. Most of these prisoners never made it to the camps. Malnutrition and mistreatment in the POW camps left most of the prisoners dead by the end of the year.

This large increase of malnourished POWs put a strain on the resources and capacity of the camps. Disease and unsanitary conditions were running rampant. To deal with this situation the SS began exterminating Soviet POWs en masse. This systematic killing was separate and without thought to a wholesale extermination of Jews. The SS developed and refined their methods of mass murder in the Soviet POW camps during 1940-41, gassing becoming the most used method for mass murder.[[61]](#footnote-61) These methods and processes of mass murder were then later used with devastation as the modus operandi for the solution to the Nazi question about what to do with the Jews.

Himmler replaced the expected Soviet POWs with 150,000 male and female Jews.[[62]](#footnote-62) Redirecting Jews into the labor force was not meant to undermine the “Final Solution to the Jewish Question,” which did not begin until 1942. The SS intended to kill more than they would need for labor.[[63]](#footnote-63) During this early war period, plans for concentration camps changed and evolved from serving as Jewish reservations to centers for immediate extermination. By the end of 1942, concentration camps now had a dual purpose: persecution and elimination of those opposed to fascism and extermination of the Jews, and the preparation of exploitable concentration camp prisoners for the purpose of armaments production.

**Final War Years, 1942-1945**

During the last three years of the war, the SS focused the concentration camp system on two seemingly contradictory goals: the increase of prisoners for use as labor in armaments production, and the systematic and methodical annihilation of a major portion of those prisoners, the Jews in Europe. Himmler found the solution to the contradictory goals of Final Solution and production needs in the construction of hundreds of smaller satellite camps, located near businesses and factories. The SS would supply these camps with inmates who would work for these businesses, often under grueling circumstances, with little in the way of nutrition, which lead to suffering and death. Himmler established a few select camps as large centers of mass execution, and created hundreds of smaller camps where inmates were literally worked to death.

In competition for labor with Himmler’s concentration camp inmates, were the workers brought to Germany by Fritz Sauckel, General Plenipotentiary for the Employment of Labor. During first eight months of 1942, Sauckel brought in 2.7 million workers, 1.37 million were Soviet forced laborers, 417,000 were prisoners of war, 291,000 were Polish nationals, and 168,000 were French.[[64]](#footnote-64)

The influx of Soviet forced workers in 1941 through 1942, in the form of conscripted civilians and POWs, temporarily satiated the labor needs in Germany, and kept the SS from using camp inmates in armaments production. As armaments production ramped up, though, even the great numbers of POW and forced workers from the Soviet were not enough to keep up with demand. Hitler decided on Sept. 22, 1942, after suggestions by Speer, to utilize camp inmates for labor on loan. Businesses in need of workers, could apply to the SS and receive the requested number at the price of six Reich marks (RM) per skilled inmate, and four RM for women and general laborers.[[65]](#footnote-65) As a result, the WVHA sought to increase their number of prisoners to meet the new demand for camp inmates as laborers, which is seen in the nearly annual doubling of inmate numbers from 1942 until 1945. In September 1942, the camps held 110,000 inmates; 203,000 in April 1943, 524,268 in August 1944, and in January 1945 over 700,000 inmates were in SS concentration camps. The death rate seemed to decline in the camps from 1942 to 1943, but this is due to the large increase of inmates, not the total number of deaths.[[66]](#footnote-66)

A Large increase of inmates for labor did not mean a decrease in genocide. The shift to a long term war did little to change the policy of Jewish extermination until 1944. As the labor pool of foreign workers dried up in 1944, the National Socialist leadership began to rethink the economic value of European Jews. After conquering Hungary in 1944, instead of sending all Jews to extermination, the SS culled some 108,000 of the 458,000 Hungarian Jews sent to Auschwitz for labor in the SS armament production facilities.[[67]](#footnote-67) The remaining Jews were sent to the gas chambers immediately upon arrival in Auschwitz.

This time period also saw a rise in collaboration between industry and the Nazi government. Businesses were actively involved at every level with the Nazi government.[[68]](#footnote-68) A major concern for industry leaders going into the war was the need to balance the desire to supply the required needs for armament, thereby increasing profits, but also keep from increasing capital beyond post-war needs, which would saddle them with useless machines and loss of invested money.[[69]](#footnote-69) As mid- and long-term market options increasingly blew up after 1942, German business owners found a greater need to produce for the war economy, and eventually looked to the government for help in protecting their depleting assets. German businesses actively and anxiously sought government protection and were eventually willing to overlook the use of forced and slave laborers who relocated machinery, produced their goods, and built their tunnels and bunkers, as long as it saved their machinery. In a study of slave labor usage in thirty-three cases of industries employing slave labor, Spoerer found that the SS forced only one, the Akkumluatorenfabirk AG Stöcken a battery factory for U-boats, to use slave labor. Twenty-two factories, state and private corporations, employed slave labor after direct request and deals engaged in by the managers. In most cases, the businesses requested concentration camp laborers, they were not forced upon them by the SS.[[70]](#footnote-70)

Industry used forced labor for various reasons. Economic concerns may not have been the driving force for many businesses, as some studies show that it cost less to use German labor than pay the SS for forced or slave laborers. Contributing factors to the use of slave laborer were political, social, and the basic fact that these were the only laborers available. Businesses often used slave labor to show support of the regime, to show a social allegiance to the war cause, and, practically, to reach their production goals.[[71]](#footnote-71) Historian of German labor, Ulrich Herbert, notes that every single business that utilized slave labor did so of their own volition. Only those companies that asked for workers, received workers.[[72]](#footnote-72)

The effort to increase military production grew inversely proportional to the available labor force. The Reich labor office brought in foreign laborers to fill the staggering labor needs. By the summer of 1940, Germany employed 310,000 Polish workers, nearly 90% of them in agricultural positions, and had classified another 390,000 Polish prisoners of war as civil workers in Germany.[[73]](#footnote-73)

Slave labor, those from concentration camps, remained relatively low throughout 1943. Only 30,000 of 200,000 inmates worked at satellite camps. Industry managers still wanted foreign labor instead of prisoners, a situation that did not change until the fall of 1943.[[74]](#footnote-74) During the summer of 1944, a peak of 7.6 million foreigners worked in Germany, mostly from the Soviet Union and Poland.[[75]](#footnote-75) The increase in foreign workers led to more of them being arrested and sent to concentration camps.

The air industry was a large supporter of forced and slave labor. Himmler sent a report to Göring in February 1944 showing that the use of forced laborers had already proved a great asset to the airplane manufacturing industry.[[76]](#footnote-76) In the report, Himmler noted how he assigned Pohl to work with the *Reichsluffahrtministerium* (Reich Air Ministry, RLM) in the planning and implementation of concentration camp prisoners. By the time of the letter, two thousand inmates were already manufacturing nine hundred nose cones and fire shields, as well as 120,000 various other parts for the Jäger Me 109. In Oranienburg, six thousand inmates accounted for 60% of the workforce of the Heinkel-Werken plant which built the He 177. The inmates worked perfectly there, claimed Himmler, so he planned increasing the number to eight thousand.

Female inmates were also used for aircraft production. A production plant in Neubrandenburg used twenty-five hundred female inmates at mechanical workstations to produce bombing equipment and rudder machinery. Completely composed of women inmates, the plant produced 30,500 pieces in the month of January. The project worked so well that Himmler proposed an increase of fifteen hundred inmates. The work produced by these inmates, declared Himmler, was excellent (*ausgezeichnet*). Himmler concluded the letter with the outlook that the implementation of underground production facilities would require an additional one hundred thousand inmates, plans for which were already underway.

Throughout the letter, Himmler emphasized the role of the SS in implementing the Reich’s plan to use concentration camp prisoners for labor, specifically in the airplane manufacturing industry. Thirty-six thousand prisoners were already in use for Luftwaffe purposes, wrote Himmler, and he expected the number to increase to ninety thousand.

A January 1944 report from Pohl to Himmler shows the total number of inmates for January 1944 to be 35,839, spread throughout 45 factories. Heinkel-Werke’s Oranienburg plant had the largest number of inmates at 5,939, with BMW’s München-Allach plant with the second largest group of inmates at 3,434, and the smallest factories assigned 15-20 inmates, as at Bev. F. Hochfrequenzforschung. The report noted plans for a further 59,946 inmates, with an additional five factory locations. Pohl recorded a total 8,733,495 hours worked by inmates for the month of January 1944.[[77]](#footnote-77)

The number of camps rose dramatically during 1944 to match the mounting demand for laborers. March of that year began with twenty main camps and one hundred sixty-five satellite camps, by the end of the year there were fewer main camps, but satellite camps grew to number over five hundred fifty, with over 714,000 inmates in the concentration camp system.[[78]](#footnote-78) This shows a restructuring of the concentration camp system as the SS sought to fulfill their new role to disperse factories important to war production, but likewise disperse their new labor force to meet the demand for armaments production.

Numbers of forced and slave laborers during the war are staggering. Herbert reports that the Nazis used nine to ten million foreign civilian workers and prisoners of war in Germany at any given time, with a peak usage of 7.6 million during the summer of 1944.[[79]](#footnote-79) An accurate number of concentration camp inmates as laborers is impossible to calculate, but Herbert calculates that Germany used roughly 2.5 million between 1939 and 1945, and of these, a conservative estimate of 836,000 to 995,000 of these people died. Others calculate the total number of foreign, forced and slave laborers in Germany at 13.5 million, which includes prisoners of war and civilians forced to work in public and private industry, as well as inmates from concentration camps.[[80]](#footnote-80)

Changes in concentration camps were directly influenced by the number of laborers available for German war production, and changes in Nazi policy. When German laborers were plentiful, as they were before 1938, the number of inmates in camps were low. As Germany engaged in a long-term war, German laborers became scarce and the Nazi government filled the shortage with foreign, forced and slave laborers. Himmler’s economical goals also shaped the role of the concentration camps. Originally conceived to house political, asocial and criminal German citizens until re-educated, concentration camps became centers for holding and exterminating Jews. To meet increased shortages in labor, concentration camps also became labor rental centers. Himmler set up satellite camps to meet local demand and supplied labor to special building projects, such as the underground relocation of Allied targeted factories. These changes in purpose for concentration camps and the use of labor types came not from an underlying principle or ideological standpoint, but were reactionary changes to losses on the battlefield and the demand for labor to keep up armaments production. Porta Westfalica existed as an example of the new policy of protecting vital armaments and fuel factories and supplying the needed labor with inmates from locally constructed concentration camps.

**Conclusion**

Himmler’s desire for a pure Aryan German Reich influenced the course of the SS. Business ventures were attempts at keeping the Waffen-SS self-sustained and separate from the German Wehrmacht. Himmler used modern management techniques and employed SS officers with academic degrees to entice Germans from the upper classes into the SS. Appealing to the upper-classes built the SS reputation as an elite organization founded upon the principles and ideology of Nazi racial classification. The SS was to be the example in business, military and society. Control of the concentration camps was part and parcel with the SS ideology of the economy functioning on a racial structure. The SS, as pure Aryan and highest race, were at the top of the economic hierarchy. They were the overseers, the leaders. Those of other nations and races were the workers. Jews were on the lowest level, and were not much more than machinery. Like disposable batteries, the SS used and discarded inmates when they were out of energy. Business enterprises and control of the concentration camps were merely the current implementation of Himmler’s desire to put racial economic ideology into practice.

Himmler made constant changes to the implementation of his ideology due to practical, unalterable circumstances. Defeat in Soviet Russia meant a shift in building focus from cultural expansion to armaments production. Loss of Soviet POWs meant using more foreign workers. In order to maintain control of the labor supply, and thereby some foot hold in the economy, Himmler positioned the Jews as a viable labor source, rather than exterminating them outright.

In the end the Himmler and the SS learned to control armaments production, the largest section of the German economy during the war, by controlling the labor force. This enabled them to position SS officers as project managers and officials in charge of armaments projects. They effectively controlled the resources, the labor and the management of Germany’s armaments production. Himmler and the SS found economic security, if not self-sufficiency, despite seemingly diametrically opposed priorities; production from inmate labor, and extermination through labor.

1. Heinrich Himmler, “38/111/44g Letter from Himmler to Pohl,” August 31, 1944, T175, Roll 50, National Archives Microfilm Publication. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. An incomplete sampling of such works include Martin Allen and Mazal Holocaust Collection, *Himmler’s Secret War: The Covert Peace Negotiations of Heinrich Himmler* (New York: Carrol & Graf Publishers, 2006), Michael Thad Allen, “The Banality of Evil Reconsidered: SS Mid-Level Managers of Extermination through Work,” *Central European History* 30, no. 2 (1997): 253–294, Michael Thad Allen, *The Business of Genocide: The SS, Slave Labor, and the Concentration Camps* (Chapel Hill, N.C: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), Richard Bessel and Mazal Holocaust Collection, *Political Violence and the Rise of Nazism: The Storm Troopers in Eastern Germany, 1925-1934* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), George Browder, *Foundations of the Nazi Police State : The Formation of Sipo and SD* (Lexington Ky.: University Press of Kentucky, 1990), George C Browder and Mazal Holocaust Collection, *Hitler’s Enforcers: The Gestapo and the SS Security Service in the Nazi Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), Bruce Campbell and Mazal Holocaust Collection, *The SA Generals and the Rise of Nazism* (Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky, 1998), Robert Conroy, *Himmler’s War* (Riverdale, NY; New York: Baen Books ; Distributed by Simon & Schuster, 2011), Conan Fischer, *Stormtroopers A Social, Economic and Ideological Analysis 1929-35.* (London: Routledge, 2014), accessed June 24, 2016, http://public.eblib.com/choice/PublicFullRecord.aspx?p=1779198, Max Gallo and Mazal Holocaust Collection, *The Night of Long Knives*, 1972, Enno Georg, *Die Wirtschaftlichen Unternehmungen Der SS* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1963)., G Graber, *History of the SS* (New York: D. McKay, 1978), Heinrich Himmler et al., *The Private Heinrich Himmler: Letters of a Mass Murderer*, 2016, Katrin Himmler and Mike Mitchell, *The Himmler Brothers: A German Family History* (London: Macmillan, 2007), Heinz Höhne and Mazal Holocaust Collection, *The Order of the Death’s Head; the Story of Hitler’s S.S.* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1970), Germany) Institut für Zeitgeschichte (Munich and Helmut Krausnick, *Anatomy of the SS State* (New York: Walker, 1968), Paul Jaskot, *The Architecture of Oppression: The SS, Forced Labor and the Nazi Monumental Building Economy* (London; New York: Routledge, 2000), Robert Koehl, *The SS : A History, 1919-45* (Stroud: Tempus, 2000), Robert Lewis Koehl, *The Black Corps: The Structure and Power Struggles of the Nazi SS* (Madison, Wis: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), Helmut Langerbein, *Hitler’s Death Squads: The Logic of Mass Murder* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2004), Hans-Friedrich Lenz, *“Sagen Sie, Herr Pfarrer, wie kommen Sie zur SS?”: Berichte eines Pfarrers der Bekennenden Kirche über seine Erlebnisse im Kirchenkampf und als SS-Oberscharführer im Konzentrationslager Hersbruck* (Giessen: Brunnen Verlag, 1982), Peter Longerich, Jeremy Noakes, and Lesley Sharpe, *Heinrich Himmler* (Oxford [England]; New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), Kurt Georg Wilhelm Ludecke and Bob Carruthers, *I Knew Hitler: The Lost Testimony by a Survivor from the Night of the Long Knives*, 2013, Robin Lumsden, *Himmler’s Black Order: A History of the SS, 1923-45* (Stroud: Sutton, 1997), Paul R Maracin, *The Night of the Long Knives: Forty-Eight Hours That Changed the History of the World* (Guilford, Conn.: Lyons Press, 2004), Michael D Miller and Andreas Schulz, *Leaders of the Storm Troops*, 2015, Wilfred von Oven and Eleanor Hancock, *Hitler’s storm troopers: a history of the SA : the memoirs of Wilfred von Oven* (Barnsley: Frontline, 2010), Peter Padfield, *Himmler: Reichsführer-SS* (New York: Holt, 1990), Heather Anne Pringle, *The Master Plan: Himmler’s Scholars and the Holocaust* (New York: Hyperion, 2006), Eric G Reiche, *The Development of the SA in Nürnberg, 1922-1934* (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), Gerald Reitlinger, *The SS, Alibi of a Nation, 1922-1945* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1981), Richard Rhodes, *Masters of Death: The SS-Einsatzgruppen and the Invention of the Holocaust* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 2002), Albert Speer, *The slave state: Heinrich Himmler’s masterplan for SS supremacy* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1981), Nikolaus Wachsmann, *KL: A History of the Nazi Concentration Camps*, 2015, Adrian Weale, *Army of Evil: A History of the SS* (New York: NAL Caliber, 2010), Richard Worth, *Heinrich Himmler: Murderous Architect of the Holocaust* (Berkeley Heights, NJ: Enslow Pub., 2005), Herbert F Ziegler and Mazal Holocaust Collection, *Nazi Germany’s New Aristocracy: The SS Leadership, 1925-1939* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. A similarly incomplete, and somewhat overlapping, list of works include: Allen, *The Business of Genocide*; Marc Bartuschka, *Unter Zurückstellung aller möglichen Bedenken : Die NS-Betriebsgruppe “Reichsmarschall Hermann Göring”; (REIMAHG) und der Zwangsarbeitereinsatz 1944/1945* (Göttingen, Niedersachs: Wallstein, 2011), Reinhold Billstein et al., *Working for the Enemy: Ford, General Motors, and Forced Labor in Germany During the Second World War* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2000), Christopher R Browning and Mazal Holocaust Collection, *Remembering Survival: Inside a Nazi Slave-Labor Camp* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2010), Marc Buggeln, *Slave Labor in Nazi Concentration Camps*, trans. Paul Cohen (Oxford University Press, 2015), Jane Caplan, Nikolaus Wachsmann, and Mazal Holocaust Collection, *Concentration Camps in Nazi Germany: The New Histories* (London; New York, NY: Routledge, 2010), Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, *Forced and Slave Labor in Nazi-Dominated Europe: Symposium Presentations* (Washington, D.C: Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2004), Georg, *Die Wirtschaftlichen Unternehmungen Der SS*, Wolf Gruner, *Jewish Forced Labor Under the Nazis: Economic Needs and Racial Aims, 1938-1944*, trans. Kathleen Dell’Orto (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), Hamburger Stiftung zur Förderung von Wissenschaft und Kultur (Germany), ed., *Deutsche Wirtschaft: Zwangsarbeit von KZ-Häftlingen für Industrie und Behörden : Symposium “Wirtschaft und Konzentrationslager”* (Hamburg: VSA-Verlag, 1991), Ulrich Herbert, “Labour and Extermination: Economic Interest and the Primacy of Weltanschauung in National Socialism,” *Past & Present*, no. 138 (1993): 144–195, Ulrich Herbert, *Hitler’s Foreign Workers: Enforced Foreign Labor in Germany under the Third Reich* (Cambridge; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1997), Ulrich Herbert, “Forced Laborers in the Third Reich: An Overview,” *International Labor and Working-Class History*, no. 58 (Fall 2000): 192–218, Ulrich Herbert, *Geschichte der Ausländerpolitik in Deutschland: Saisonarbeiter, Zwangsarbeiter, Gastarbeiter, Flüchtlinge* (München: Beck, 2001), Jaskot, *The Architecture of Oppression*, Hermann Kaienburg, *Vernichtung durch Arbeit: der Fall Neuengamme : die Wirtschaftsbestrebungen der SS und ihre Auswirkungen auf die Existenzbedingungen der KZ-Gefangenen* (Bonn: J.H.W. Dietz, 1990), Alexander von Plato, Almut Leh, and Christoph Thonfeld, *Hitler’s Slaves: Life Stories of Forced Labourers in Nazi-Occupied Europe* (Berghahn Books, 2010), Jan Erik Schulte, *Zwangsarbeit Und Vernichtung: Das Wirtschaftsimperium Der SS: Oswald Pohl Und Das SS-Wirtschafts-Verwaltungshauptamt 1933-1945* (Paderborn: F. Schöningh, 2001), Mark Spoerer and Jochen Fleischhacker, “Forced Laborers in Nazi Germany: Categories, Numbers, and Survivors,” *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 33, no. 2 (2002): 169–204, Mark Spoerer, *Zwangsarbeit unter dem Hakenkreuz: ausländische Zivilarbeiter, Kriegsgefangene und Häftlinge im Deutschen Reich und im besetzten Europa 1939-1945* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2001), Wachsmann, *KL*, Jens-Christian Wagner, *Produktion Des Todes: Das KZ Mittelbau-Dora* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2001). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Much has been written about Himmler and other SS and Nazi leaders. See here for a small sampling. Allen and Mazal Holocaust Collection, *Himmler’s Secret War*, Conroy, *Himmler’s War*, Himmler et al., *The Private Heinrich Himmler*, Himmler and Mitchell, *The Himmler Brothers*, Longerich, Noakes, and Sharpe, *Heinrich Himmler*, Padfield, *Himmler*, Pringle, *The Master Plan*, Speer, *The slave state*, Worth, *Heinrich Himmler*, Ziegler and Mazal Holocaust Collection, *Nazi Germany’s New Aristocracy*. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. For the history of the SA see the following: Campbell and Mazal Holocaust Collection, *The SA Generals and the Rise of Nazism*, Gallo and Mazal Holocaust Collection, *The Night of Long Knives*, Oven and Hancock, *Hitler’s storm troopers*, Reiche, *The Development of the SA in Nürnberg, 1922-1934*. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Longerich, Noakes, and Sharpe, *Heinrich Himmler*, 110–112. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Ibid., 117–118. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Wachsmann, *KL*, 84–86. See also Gallo and Mazal Holocaust Collection, *The Night of Long Knives*, Ludecke and Carruthers, *I Knew Hitler*, Maracin, *The Night of the Long Knives*. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Wachsmann, *KL*, 94. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Longerich, Noakes, and Sharpe, *Heinrich Himmler*, 215. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Ibid., 516. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Allen, *The Business of Genocide*, 98, see also Schulte, *Zwangsarbeit Und Vernichtung*, 139–141. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Longerich, Noakes, and Sharpe, *Heinrich Himmler*, 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Ibid., 638. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Ibid., 139, and Allen, *The Business of Genocide*, 62. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Allen, *The Business of Genocide*, 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Longerich, Noakes, and Sharpe, *Heinrich Himmler*, 121. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. The most complete biography of Pohl exists in Schulte, *Zwangsarbeit Und Vernichtung*, 32–45. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Longerich, Noakes, and Sharpe, *Heinrich Himmler*, 485. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Schulte, *Zwangsarbeit Und Vernichtung*, 201–202, Wachsmann, *KL*, 394. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Allen, *The Business of Genocide*, 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Buggeln, *Slave Labor in Nazi Concentration Camps*, 16, Wachsmann, *KL*, 393. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Allen, *The Business of Genocide*, 153–154. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Wachsmann, *KL*, 404–405. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Jaskot, *The Architecture of Oppression*, 32. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Longerich, Noakes, and Sharpe, *Heinrich Himmler*, 688. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Jaskot, *The Architecture of Oppression*. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Schulte, *Zwangsarbeit Und Vernichtung*, 93. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Allen, *The Business of Genocide*, 33, 60, 75. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Ibid., 58–59, see also Jaskot, *The Architecture of Oppression*, Schulte, *Zwangsarbeit Und Vernichtung*, and Wachsmann, *KL*. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Buggeln, *Slave Labor in Nazi Concentration Camps*, 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Longerich, Noakes, and Sharpe, *Heinrich Himmler*, 559. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Buggeln, *Slave Labor in Nazi Concentration Camps*, 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. As quoted in Ibid., 37. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Ibid., 28. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Longerich, Noakes, and Sharpe, *Heinrich Himmler*, 634. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Allen, *The Business of Genocide*, 150, Longerich, Noakes, and Sharpe, *Heinrich Himmler*, 557–559. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Buggeln, *Slave Labor in Nazi Concentration Camps*, 46. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. See Eric D Weitz, *Weimar Germany: Promise and Tragedy* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2007). [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. For more on women in the Third Reich see in part Renate Bridenthal, Atina Grossmann, and Marion A Kaplan, *When Biology Became Destiny: Women in Weimar and Nazi Germany* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1984), Claudia Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, the Family , and Nazi Politics*, 1st ed. (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1987), Jill Stephenson, “Women’s Labor Service in Nazi Germany,” *Central European History* 15, no. 3 (1982): 241–265, Jill Stephenson, *Women in Nazi Germany* (Harlow; New York: Longman, 2001), Matthew Stibbe, *Women in the Third Reich* (London: Arnold, 2003). [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Nazi ideology did not care about working women from “lesser” racial classes. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Allen, *The Business of Genocide*, 165. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Herbert classifies four different worker types, but calls them all forced laborers, see Herbert, “Forced Laborers in the Third Reich,” 192. See Marc Buggeln, “Were Concentration Camp Prisoners Slaves?: The Possibilities and Limits of Comparative History and Global Historical Perspectives,” *Int. Rev. Soc. His. International Review of Social History* 53, no. 01 (2008) and Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, *Forced and Slave Labor in Nazi-Dominated Europe* for an argument that forced laborers were slaves. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Spoerer and Fleischhacker, “Forced Laborers in Nazi Germany,” 173–175. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Ibid., 175. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Wachsmann, *KL*, 93. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Ibid., 87. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Ibid., 161. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Ibid., 60. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Ibid., 627–628. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Ibid., 64–71. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Allen, *The Business of Genocide*, 43, Buggeln, *Slave Labor in Nazi Concentration Camps*, 13, Jaskot, *The Architecture of Oppression*, 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Herbert, “Forced Laborers in the Third Reich,” 205. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Wachsmann, *KL*, 186. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Allen, *The Business of Genocide*, 57. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Gruner, *Jewish Forced Labor Under the Nazis*, 30. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Herbert, “Forced Laborers in the Third Reich,” 200. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Jaskot, *The Architecture of Oppression*, 33. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Wachsmann, *KL*, 288. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Allen, *The Business of Genocide*, 150, Wachsmann, *KL*, 295. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Allen, *The Business of Genocide*, 151. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Buggeln, *Slave Labor in Nazi Concentration Camps*, 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Herbert, “Forced Laborers in the Third Reich,” 201. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Ibid., 205. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. J. Adam Tooze, *The Wages of Destruction: The Making and Breaking of the Nazi Economy*, 1st American ed. (New York: Viking, 2007), 134. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Neil Gregor, *Daimler-Benz in the Third Reich* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 109. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Spoerer, *Zwangsarbeit unter dem Hakenkreuz*. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, *Forced and Slave Labor in Nazi-Dominated Europe*, 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Herbert, “Forced Laborers in the Third Reich,” 206. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Herbert, *Geschichte der Ausländerpolitik in Deutschland*, 130–132. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Wachsmann, *KL*, 409. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Herbert, “Forced Laborers in the Third Reich,” 205. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. Heinrich Himmler, “Häftlingseinsatz für Zwecke der Luftfahrtindustrie - Januar 1944. Himmler letter to Göring.” (USHMM, February 1944), Goudsmit RG10.228, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Oswald Pohl, “Häftlingseinsatz für Zwecke der Luftfahrtindustrie - Januar 1944. Charts signed by Pohl.” (USHMM, February 21, 1944), Goudsmit RG10.228, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. KZ-Gedenkstätte Neuengamme, “Das System der Konzentrationslager” (KZ-Gedenkstätte Neuengamme, 1995), 5 (412), KZ-Gedenkstätte Neuengamme (Hamburg), accessed September 21, 2015, http://www.offenes-archiv.de/de/medium-ansicht?id=4879, Wachsmann, *KL*, 446. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. Herbert, “Forced Laborers in the Third Reich,” 205. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Plato, Leh, and Thonfeld, *Hitler’s Slaves*, 3–6. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)