

Drugs for the Wehrmacht (c. 1940)

Abstract

Germany's chemical industry was well established by the 1930s, as companies such as IG Farben had long produced pharmaceuticals, paint, fertilizers and other chemical products for both industrial and consumer use. The industry also became a focal point for Nazi war production, as the government's economic policy of autarky necessitated the development of synthetic alternatives for many goods. Prior to the war, the chemical industry's efforts to produce synthetic rubber, oils and gas were a vital element of the government's planning for a fully mechanized war. IG Farben also owned 42.5% of the company Degesch, which produced the Zyklon-B gas used to murder Jews. Chemicals also played a more direct role in the war effort itself. A small variety of synthetic drugs were available to soldiers, including Pervitin—a low-dose methamphetamine—to help them cope with the conditions of the battlefield and to stay alert. The drug was produced by the Temmler pharmaceutical company and its use was widespread among the military. Pervitin was capable of fending off drowsiness for up to 48 hours, as well as providing its users with a temporary sense of euphoria and confidence. Pervitin tablets were also available to civilians over the counter at some German pharmacies, though their distribution was not widespread. This image shows workers in the Temmler factory in Berlin producing Pervitin pills.

Source



Source: Temmler Pharma GmbH & Co. KG, Marburg

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