

# Hitler Visits a Thyssen Factory in the Ruhr Region (1935)

## Abstract

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German heavy industry reaped greater benefits from the National Socialist armaments program than any other sector of the economy. But it was also the place where conflicts arose between the Nazi regime, which was pursuing greater state regulation, and the industrialists, who rejected the government's unorthodox and often irrational production demands. However, despite occasional disagreements, most industrial leaders cooperated extensively with a government that exercised enormous pressure on the one hand but promised unprecedented profits on the other. The industrialist Fritz Thyssen (behind Hitler, middle right) represented an exception, both in his initial enthusiasm for the Nazi regime and his later disillusionment with it. In the 1920s, he had already provided the NSDAP with financial support. He joined the party in 1931 and began mediating between Hitler and other industrial leaders. The following year, he joined other important representatives of industry and the banking system in signing a petition to Reich President Hindenburg that demanded Hitler's appointment as Reich Chancellor. After 1933, he held a series of public offices and was involved in the formulation and implementation of National Socialist economic policy. But after the adoption of the Four-Year Plan and the associated escalation of state intervention into the economy, Thyssen came into increasing conflict with the Nazi government. In 1939, having grown even more disillusioned with the country's violent, antisemitic climate and with Hitler's warmongering, he emigrated to France. In 1940, he was arrested by the Vichy government and sent back to Germany, where he was interned in concentration camps until the end of the war. The Thyssen Corporation was nationalized.

The photo also shows Albert Vögler (at left, next to Hitler), who was then director of United Steelworks AG [Vereinigte Stahlwerke AG]. Vögler was a long-time supporter of Hitler and held a variety of public offices starting in 1933. During the war, as head of the military economy and later as chief representative of Reich Minister of Armaments and War Production Albert Speer, Vögler played an important role in the organization of the armaments economy. He committed suicide on April 14, 1945, after American troops had marched into the Ruhr region.

## Source

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Source: Adolf Hitler visits Thyssen Group factories in the Ruhr region. He is accompanied by Fritz Thyssen (right behind Hitler), the head of United Steelworks AG [Vereinigte Stahlwerke AG] Albert Vögler and Dr. Borbet, an industrialist from the Bochum Verein. Unknown photographer.

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