

Women Employed in the Production of Gas Masks (1940)

Abstract

Although the demand for labor increased as the war continued, Hitler and other Nazi leaders rejected labor conscription for women on the grounds of ideology and Nazi population policy (they feared it would affect women's health and lead to a decline in birthrates). During the war, there was hardly any change in the number of women employed in Germany (May 1939: 14.6 million; May 1944: 14.8 million). However, female workers increasingly took jobs in branches of industry related to arms production. Furthermore, after the war began, a stint in the Reich Labor Service [*Reichsarbeitsdienst* or RAD] became mandatory for young women. On July 29, 1941, the "Führer and Reich Chancellor" issued a decree supplementing this service requirement with an additional six months in the War Assistance Service [*Kriegshilfsdienst*]. Ultimately, though, the authorities sought to address the labor shortage by mobilizing foreign forced laborers on a large scale. The photograph shows women workers producing gas masks in the Skara Rubber Works in the Wandsbek district of Hamburg.

Source



Source: Production of gas masks at the Skara Rubber Works. Photo by Gerd Mingram (Germin). bpk-Bildagentur, image number 30017523. For rights inquiries, please contact Art Resource at requests@artres.com (North America) or bpk-Bildagentur at kontakt@bpk-bildagentur.de (for all other countries).

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