

Workers Shortly before the Completion of a New Section of the Reich Autobahn (1936)

Abstract

One of the largest Nazi job-creation programs was the construction of the Reich Autobahn network, which began in September 1933. The idea for a country-wide, multi-lane highway system was based on the Italian model. It had already been proposed in Germany in the 1920s, but had not been realized because of the depression. Hitler, a passionate auto fan, revived the project after becoming Reich Chancellor. He named Fritz Todt general inspector of the German highway system and tasked him with developing and implementing plans for the Autobahn network. The project was financed mainly by the Reich Institute for Labor Placement and Unemployment Insurance. In 1936, the number of workers employed on the project reached its highpoint at about 120,000. By 1938, 3,500 kilometers (2,175 miles) of highway had been completed. Hitler himself took part in designing some of the highway sections, bridges, and rest stops. After the war began, highway construction almost came to a complete stop, and many parts of the Autobahn network were not completed until after the war. Today, some historians regard the Autobahn network as the Nazi regime's most enduring propaganda project.

Source



Source: Workers shortly before the completion of a new section of the Reich Autobahn, 1936. Photo by Krupski.

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