

Toy Production in Thuringia (November 1932)

Abstract

This short segment from a 1932 *Deuligton* newsreel offers glimpses into the production of dolls and animated stuffed animals in Sonneberg, Thuringia, on the border with Bavaria. The images and narration suggests that toy production—withstanding that year’s worsening economic conditions, as German unemployment climbed to record levels—remained a thriving business sector, as the country entered the Christmas season. Employees did much of the manufacturing by hand, and footage here shows one worker pouring rubber onto molds for doll bodies. By the early 1930s, doll production had already enjoyed a nearly century-long tradition in Sonneberg. In 1850, the world's first baby doll, the “Sonneberger Täufeling,” was produced, and, in the decade prior to the First World War, Sonneberg earned the nicknames “world toy city” and “Santa’s workshop.” After all, this town of less than 20,000 people produced one-fifth of the toys and dolls traded worldwide, and, in the 1920s, it also played a leading role in the teddy-bear market. While factories handled some of the production, workers still performed many of the manufacturing processes—including molding and pressing the parts for dolls, farm animals, and other toys—in their own homes, which reveals the persistence of cottage industry well into the twentieth century, even in a modern industrial powerhouse like Germany.

Source

Speaker: The harbingers of Christmas are here. The toy factories of Sonneberg in Thuringia are now in rush mode.

Source: *Deuligton-Woche* No. 45 (clip), November 1932. Bundesarchiv Filmarchiv Filmwerk ID: 57663.
<https://digitaler-lesesaal.bundesarchiv.de/video/57663/666851>

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