

German Industry Responds (after August 1914)

Abstract

The mobilization of German industry was essential to the war effort. Organizations like the War Committee of German Industry [*Kriegsausschuß der deutschen Industrie*] emerged from the marriage of the two leading industrial federations. It helped transform the economy by mobilizing industrial production for the needs of the military. The committee advised the War Ministry on industrial policy, a role that gave this body vast influence not only over the general design and administration of policy, but also over the distribution of war contracts.

Source

Germany is surrounded by enemies. Germany's development during the last few decades has been a thorn in their flesh. Therefore they wish to destroy the fruits of Germany's labor. Their hostility is directed toward the German national economy, because this is the foundation of our world power.

As operations begin on Germany's borders, it is incumbent upon us here in the heart of our country (along with many other things) to ensure to the best of our ability that the economy is kept functioning and that the forces available for this effort are brought together and organized in the most rational manner, principally in order to prevent the fragmentation and squandering of the sources of our power.

To this end the *Central Association of German Industrialists* and the *League of Industrialists* have merged. These two organizations have called together the signatories of this document, who were accessible in Berlin, and requested that they lend their support to the common effort.

We, the signatories, have followed this request without hesitation and have today formed the *War Committee of German Industry*, on the stipulation that additional representatives from other parts of Germany later be included.

The great challenge that we face is to pool all the intellectual and material means that are united in our industry, to put them under the unified guidance of proven leaders of the German economy, who will work in tandem with the country's administrative and financial leadership. What is involved here is planned cooperation among existing industrial organizations, in order to achieve an appropriate division of labor and the most effective use of available economic resources, not only for the defense of our country's borders, but also *to meet domestic needs for the duration of the war*.

The life and death of German industry are at stake.

We must secure the systematic apportionment and accommodation of white- and blue-collar workers in agriculture as well as in industry.

By transferring parts of the manufacturing process etc. from sectors that have been put under extraordinary demand, we can arrange for support and employment in branches of industry that have been adversely affected by the war.

We want to organize the fastest possible distribution and dissemination of requests for contracts by state and individual administrative branches (military, post office, railroads, etc.).

We want to advise and instruct industry by publishing regular bulletins concerning laws, regulations, and

official decrees that are issued in wartime, and to support industry by providing information about administrative and legal questions that arise in connection with the war.

We want to focus the power of industry in order to promote general national aims and to keep ourselves ready for all further tasks that industry will face in these serious times.

The War Committee of German Industry has immediately begun its activity. The Central Association of German Industrialists and the League of Industrialists have placed their entire organizations and facilities at the disposal of the War Committee.

We are requesting all industrialists to make use of the services of this “War Committee” – but also to support it to the extent possible in every area. We are hoping especially for the participation of regional and professional trade associations, which is essential if the goals that we have set are to be achieved and realized. We are certain that we can count on your assistance.

The *business office* of the “War Committee” is located at Berlin W9, Linksstr. 25 III.

(Signatures)

Source: Aufruf an die deutsche Industrie, nach August 1914, in *Der Kriegsausschuß der deutschen Industrie. Seine Entstehung und seine Aufgaben: Vorläufiger Bericht der Geschäftsführung*. Berlin, no date, pp. 3–4; reprinted in Ulrich Cartarius, *Deutschland im Ersten Weltkrieg: Texte und Dokumente*. Munich, 1982, pp. 57–58.

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