FORCED LABOR IN NAZI GERMANY

AT THE KRUPP PLANTS

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Nazi Germany was responsibile for some of the worst and most shameful atrocities in world history. Among the most brutal were those committed against concentration camp inmates deemed "racially unacceptable" by the Führer and his National Socialist henchmen. For the victims of the extermination camps, death was often swift, leaving little time for victims to wonder what was happening or to suffer. For those in the Reich's work camps, there was all too much time to think and all too much time to suffer. While the Reich-controlled concentration camps have been studied in great detail, little attention has been paid to the camps owned and operated by private businesses. These enterprises, often in conjuction with the Gestapo, the SS, and the Wehrmacht, owned and supervised camps every bit as atrocious as those controlled by the government.[1]

The camps contained workers from all over Europe who involuntarily found themselves slaving for huge German conglomerates. Many industries participated in the utilization of such labor. Western Europeans, Eastern Europeans, Jews, prisoners of war, and political prisoners found themselves in the factories and workshops of world-famous firms like Messerschmitt, I.G. Farben, and Alfred Krupp. These, and other German businesses, took full advantage of the cheap and plentiful sources of workers offered by the regime's conquests. They demanded more and more workers, often with little knowledge of how many were actually needed or could be effectively employed.

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[1] See Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz: the Nazi Assault on Humanity* (New York: Collier Books, 1993).

Companies with long traditions of friendliness to workers and an almost family-like atmosphere became slave masters over laborers whom they considered to be less than human.

The experience of the Krupp firm is one of the best examples of this transformation from benign paternalism to malevolent mastery. The directors of Krupp worked hand in hand with Reich authorities to establish camps that were every bit as inhumane as any SS-controlled extermination camp. Instead of a quick death, workers at Krupp labored day after day in the forges and coal mines of Essen. Long-time Krupp workers became the foremen and overseers of masses of foreign workers. Instead of responding with decency and humanity towards the newcomers, Krupp's employees often resorted to violence and torture. Camp commanders, many of whom had ties to the Gestapo or SS, ignored company instructions to refrain from physical punishment and distributed beatings with impunity.

Life at Krupp was not always like that. For most of its history, Krupp was a struggling iron and coal producer. The advent of modern war led to changes at Krupp. Most of the pre-twentieth century world knew Krupp as Europe's largest producer of steel and iron products. The "Three Rings" symbol of Krupp -- derived from the lucrative manufacture of iron train wheels -- was seen throughout Europe and North America. In 1870, Krupp gained a new reputation. Train wheels and steel utensils were no longer the main concerns of Krupp engineers and marketers. Instead, the owners and directors of Krupp turned the attentions of the firm towards the manufacture of weapons, so much, in fact, that the owner of Krupp became known as the "Cannon King." Krupp first produced

small arms in the 1640s during the Thirty Years' War Following 1648, Krupp focused on less deadly products. Workers at Krupp, the *Kruppianer*, could point proudly to Krupp successes in steel and iron manufacturing at several London Expositions in the nineteenth century. While the world marveled at the size of solid cast iron blocks, few countries had been willing to purchase Krupp cannons, something that Alfred Krupp was aggressively pursuing.

All of this changed during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871 when the industrialized world observed how Krupp cannons demolished French fortifications with ease. Krupp artillery pieces were more powerful, longer-ranged, and faster-firing than the opposing French weapons at Sedan and Metz. Even so, such a quick victory gave Krupp little time to demonstrate its engineering prowess. Alfred Krupp's successor, Gustav Krupp, found it difficult to convince the naval-oriented Kaiser Wilhelm II to equip the German war machine with Krupp weapons. However, the rapid pre-war arms race and militarization allowed Krupp to find buyers throughout Europe. Krupp weapons were in almost every European army before Germany banned foreign exports and developed an exclusive partnership with Krupp. During World War I, Krupp artillery pieces proved themselves time and again.

Following the war, Krupp, like all German industries, was severly limited in the production of munitions. Krupp, however, had seen the profitability of arms production and violated the restriction almost immediately. With the encouragement and support of the newly reformed army, the Reichswehr, Krupp established secret firing ranges and test facilities. Thousands of models for new weapons were created in the planning

departments. The Weimar government, however, was neither willing nor able to remilitarize Germany on a large scale. Instead, Krupp had to wait for a new leader who was forceful and bold enough to defy openly the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles.

Krupp and other leading industrialists gave financial assistance to the National Socialists during their rise to power. They were rewarded with large military contracts once Adolf Hitler took power. They participated fully in the rearmament of Germany and reaped huge profits from it. Gustav Krupp and his son Alfried were members of the Party from the early 1930s. Alfried Krupp went a step further than his father and joined the SS in 1931.

The Krupps used their relationship with Hitler and the Nazi government to build an industrial empire of incredible proportions. German political and military successes, beginning in 1938, brought spoils and new workers for Krupp. From late 1939 on, thousands of foreigners arrived in Essen, where they were quickly assimilated into a hierarchy of workers. From the beginning, these non-Germans received treatment based on their ethnicity and nationality. Belgians and Dutchmen were considered to be at the top of the subject peoples. The French, because of their industrial skill, were next. Italians, Poles, and Czechs followed. At the bottom, with the worst treatment, were thousands of Russians, generally referred to as "eastern workers." No matter whether they were civilians or prisoners of war, Ukrainians or Russians, the eastern workers suffered more than Poles or Czechs because of their ethnic status and also because of their comparative lack of technical knowledge. Only the Jews were treated worse, but relatively few escaped the Reich's concentration camps and arrived at Krupp.

The use of slave laborers was not without price. After the defeat of Germany, Gustav Krupp was indicted by the International Military Tribunal. Nominally still the head of the firm, Gustav Krupp was in reality senile and near death. When Allied military investigators visited him to determine his ability to stand trial, he promptly lapsed into a coma. Gustav Krupp's illness led Judge Robert Jackson to demand that at least one Krupp pay for the crimes of the firm. He was unsuccessful in having Alfried Krupp included in the Nuremberg Trials, but his efforts led to a great deal of evidence being accumulated against the Krupp firm. When the trials for the minor war criminals were formed on 16 August 1947, Alfried Krupp and eleven other Krupp Directors were indicted on four charges: conspiracy to wage war, aggressive war, spoliation, and crimes against humanity. The first two charges were dismissed, but Krupp was found guilty of the second two. For his crimes, Alfried Krupp spent less than three years in prison and lost little or no property. It was a tragedy that Krupp and his lieutenants paid such a small price for the crimes he allowed to take place in his factories and work camps.

The Krupp case has been little studied. Despite the importance of the Krupp firm in arming Germany and the extent of Krupp's crimes against humanity, only a few authors have devoted their attention to the topic. William Manchester's *The Arms of Krupp* (1968) includes only brief synopses of conditions in the camps. Ulrich Herbert's two works, *A History of Forced Laborer in German, 1880 - 1980* (1990) and *Hitler's Foreign Workers: Enforced Foreign Labor in Germany under the Third Reich* (1997), provide only glimpses of life for foreign workers at Krupp. All three rely solely on what remains the best source on the Krupp plants, the Nuremberg Trial documents. The trial documents

cover the entire period of Krupp's use of slave labor, focusing on the conditions in the eastern workers' camps, the children's camp, the penal camps, and the women's camps. The trial documents serve as the basis for this study and would also be a major source for larger studies on conditions in work camps throughout Nazi-dominated Europe.

Krupp was certainly responsible for the use of forced labor and the abuses against the workers. Krupp, however, never directly ordered physical violence against the "guest" workers. Individual Krupp guards and officials took matters into their own hands. Camp commanders ignored or encouraged violent and inhumane actions, the equal of any in the Reich's many installations. It is the purpose of this study to examine the conditions of the foreign workers' camps and the treatment of mere workers, in the process showing that the Krupp firm was fully typical, rather than atypical, of Nazi Germany as a whole, both in its brutality and system of authority. "Ordinary" men, German workers and guards, when placed in extreme situations, quickly adapted to Nazi policies.[2] Such men, and women, exceeded their orders and liberally dispensed beatings and abuse. Only a few remained above such behavior.

This investigation of Krupp's use of slave labor begins with the initial decision to employ foreign workers and the methods used to obtain such workers. Both with the aid of Reich agencies and on their own, Krupp labor officials obtained workers from every conquered and Allied territory. Camps became overcrowded, and conditions deteriorated as new workers arrived daily. The influx of workers and the high turnover rate led to confusion and the breakdown of supervision by administration officials. The conditions

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[2] See Christopher R. Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992).

varied, but extreme examples of abuse were common in both the camps for eastern and western workers. Discipline was harsh and often capital, depending on the guards and camp commander. While violence and inhumanity took place frequently in the larger camps, the atrocities in the special camps -- those for discipline problems, children, and women -- were worse. The types of abuse remained the same but the frequency of abuse for such small camps greatly exceeded that within the larger camps. Krupp employees ignored the suffering of starving men, women, and children. Guard officials encouraged their men, often with threats, to punish innocent workers physically.

The experience of the Krupp firm leads to many questions about both Krupp and Nazi Germany as a whole. It is not the primary purpose of this study to speculate on the human condition and what led people to commit horrible atrocities. However, a careful examination of the evidence leads to questions about the involvement of Alfried Krupp and the top administrators in daily abuse. They surely knew what was happening but to what extent did they initiate it? Were the individual camps another example of Nazi Germany not being a monolithic, authoritarian regime from top to bottom? Why did the individual guards and camp leaders participate in abuse? These questions are impossible to answer for certain but this study should help to shed light on one example of the enigma of Nazi Germany.

CHAPTER II

KRUPP'S PROCUREMENT OF FOREIGN LABOR

Alfried Krupp never denied forcibly using foreign workers. Instead, in an affidavit for the trial, Krupp placed the blame on circumstances that forced the firm's directors to employ non-Germans. Events created a "certain moral pressure" by Reich authorities, despite, Krupp claimed, the many objections of Krupp officials.[1] The evidence produced at the trial suggested otherwise. Krupp officials demanded their share of the foreign labor spoils from the beginning. Their overzealous requests often brought investigations and indirectly resulted in the Law for the Protection of German Industry that regulated the use of foreign labor. Krupp worked hand in hand with Reich labor officials and was instrumental in beginning the use of concentration camp inmates by private business. Nazi Germany presented a unique situation for the Krupp firm. Krupp responded as so many others did with acceptance of the racial superiority belief and the abuse of basic human rights. There existed a direct correlation between Germany's military conquests and the employment and abuse of foreign workers by Krupp. This can, only in part, explain the abuse of the laborers by Krupp. The lack of an organized, efficient system of housing and food distribution overwhelmed Krupp officials. Instead of taking time to coordinate their efforts to ensure the better treatment of their "guest" workers, Krupp officials demanded more and more workers. After the war ended, Alfried Krupp merely shrugged and said he

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[1] International Military Tribunal, *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council Law No. 10*, 10 vols. (Nuremberg, October 1946 - April 1949), IX, 798 [henceforth cited as Trial].

had no choice. The workers were forced on him and he needed labor to produce military goods for the Reich.

The use of foreign workers by Germany did not begin suddenly in 1939. Rather, it resulted from fifty years of employing migrant workers in agriculture and an influx of industrial laborers since 1936. National Socialist officials used labor regulations from Weimar to build a system of labor control and recruitment. Beginning with the voluntary enlistment of Italians, Poles, and Dutchmen, Germany expanded its use of foreign workers to the forcible conscription of Polish farmers in the autumn of 1939. The use of prisoners of war followed the early labor experiments in Poland. It was not until the invasion of the Soviet Union, however, that Germany shifted industry and agriculture towards the use of slave labor. The Krupp armaments firm participated in this change and every stage that led up to it, often initiating new developments in Germany's use of foreign labor.

The growth of the German economy during the mid-1930s created a massive manpower shortage by 1936. Germany had long relied on foreigners as seasonal and temporary workers, especially in agriculture. Since the turn of the century, Polish migrant farm workers, as many as fifty thousand a year, crossed the border to work the German harvest. Economic depression during the end of the Weimar period decreased the need for such workers to about five thousand in 1932. Overall, only 108,000 foreign workers received work permits that year.[2] Many of these were industrial laborers from Czechoslovakia, the Netherlands, and Austria who had lived in Germany for several years.

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[2] Ulrich Herbert, *A History of Forced Labor in Germany, 1880 - 1980* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990), 126.

New arrivals attempting to enter Germany for work found it almost impossible to receive a permit because the Weimar government had adopted protectionist regulations to keep jobs in the hands of German workers. Guards closed the border between Poland and Germany to keep out Polish farmers although many illegal crossings were achieved with the aid of Prussian landowners. Ordinances carefully controlled existing foreign workers under a centralized administration. Thus, foreign workers under this system were already highly regulated and segregated even before the National Socialists took over.

Strict regulations against the migrant and industrial workers lapsed in 1936 as the economy recovered and a labor shortage developed. Negotiations between Germany and Poland allowed for the admission of ten thousand farm workers in 1937 and up to ninety thousand in 1939.[3] Poland, undergoing an acute economic crisis, suffered from an estimated forty-three percent unemployment rate. As a result, seasonal work in Germany became an attractive option for many Poles, especially for women who made up two-thirds of the farm workers. The appeal of abundant work in Germany also prompted other countries to conclude agreements with the Reich. By the summer of 1939, Italy, Yugoslavia, and Hungary each had over ten thousand citizens at work in Germany. While many of these were unskilled workers, the *Anschluss* with Austria in 1938 and the seizure of much of Czechoslovakia in 1938 and 1939 resulted in the conscription of one hundred thousand skilled workers from each.[4] With the already large numbers of foreigners at

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[3] Ibid, 127.

[4] Ibid, 129.

work in Germany in 1939, it was logical that more and more German officials began to see it as racially fitting for foreigners to work under German control.

Although accepted as an economic necessity, the rapid increase in the number of foreign workers in Germany created concerns for many Nazi officials. Except for the perceived racially-acceptable Austrians and Sudeten Germans, the new sources of workers appeared to Nazis to represent a threat to the culture and purity of the German people as well as providing numerous security concerns. The registration of outsiders expanded under the control of Friedrich Syrup, head of the Reich Agency for Labor Exchange. Several incidents between Czechs working in the Reich and their German employers resulted in a number of decrees that further separated foreigners from the German population. These ordinances, issued on 25 June 1939, allowed for the arrest of any Czech guilty of political activity or refusal to work. Despite such measures of control, the political and ideological fears of Nazi officials increased. There was simply no way to alleviate these fears without removing the workers, something that could not be done as the labor shortage reached one million laborers in 1939.[5]

As with other companies in 1939, the Krupp factories began to experience a labor shortage. Mobilization by the military depleted the ranks of skilled Kruppianer while firm officials vigorously sought more and more contracts. This necessitated more workers during an already critical labor situation. Factory owners throughout Germany pleaded for the return of their workers, but this could not be done without hindering Hitler's plans for conquest. To alleviate the worker shortage, the obvious solution for a government

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[5] Ibid, 130.

based on racial superiority was slave labor. Nazi officials contended that slave labor was perfectly legal despite the 1899 Hague Rules of Land Warfare that prohibited the use of military prisoners in war-related industries. During the post-war trial of Alfried Krupp and his lieutenants, the defense suggested that the Hague Convention was outdated and did not apply in an age of total warfare.[6] This same question had been raised in the aftermath of the First World War. On 3 October 1916, the German Supreme Command issued an order for the forced conscription of Belgians for work in Germany. The legality of the action was muddled by the wording of the order, which implied it was directed only against vagrants and the habitually unemployed. The Supreme Command said it merely provided jobs for the needy but, in fact, it frequently conscripted those who already had jobs in Belgium. World opinion disagreed, and the Kaiser quickly repealed the order, but not before several thousand Belgians were deported to Germany. Protests against the order rested on the Hague Convention and general principles of humanity. The United States formally condemned the act, which was said to be "in contravention of all precedents and of those human principles of international practice ... in the treatment of non-combatants in conquered territory."[7]

The withdrawal of the order and the international outrage notwithstanding, many in Germany did not change their opinions towards the forced use of foreigners. After the war, the German Constitutional Assembly created a commission to investigate the matter. On 2 July 1926, the investigation's report stated that the use of Belgians by the Imperial

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[6] Trial, 1429.

[7] Ibid, 1430.

German government was legal and in no way violated either international law or the Hague Convention. The commission based its judgment on the lack of available work in Belgium and the need for labor in Germany.

Before foreign labor could be fully utilized, attempts were made at solving the problems domestically. The first was as early as June 1938 when the Compulsory Labor Decree was passed. Under the decree, all residents had to accept any work assigned to them by the Reich. A series of labor regulations passed in the early fall of 1939 increased the burden on the German people, particularly the working class, by requiring longer work days and weeks. The increase in discontent resulting from these measures forced the government to repeal the regulations in order to restore morale. Little could be done to augment from national sources a labor force that was at almost full mobilization.

Hermann Göring, chief of the Four Year Plan, believed that a solution could be found in the East. Göring followed Hitler's orders for planning the conquest of Poland with directives to the *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* (OKW) in January 1939 to prepare a system to evaluate the use of Polish prisoners of war as laborers and for their subsequent employment by the Reich.[8] The plans allowed for the utilization of large blocks of prisoners, ten thousand or more, in agricultural work only.

The September 1939 attack on Poland exceeded expectations regarding the number of prisoners as nearly one million Polish soldiers surrendered. Labor officials accompanied advancing army units to examine the suitability of captured Polish units, and

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[8] International Military Tribunal, *Trials of the Major War Criminals Before the International Military Tribunal*, 42 vols. (Nuremberg, 1947-1949, 1947-1949), XXXVI, 545-549 [henceforth cited as IMT].

the Reich Labor Service, not content with conscripting only former soldiers. quickly moved to set up civilian recruitment offices. Over thirty such operations were in place by 15 September, two weeks before the surrender of Warsaw.[9] The labor offices were highly successful. By November 1939 approximately 110,000 civilian workers had reported for work in the Reich.[10] They worked alongside over three hundred thousand prisoners of war who had also been conscripted for service in the Reich.[11] The influx of Poles into Germany increased the number of foreigners from one percent to three percent of the labor force by May 1940. Of the foreigners -- approximately 1.2 million from all areas, including Polish soldiers, Polish Jews, and Czechs -- nearly two-thirds were involved in agriculture or other rural pursuits such as forestry and fishing.

Reich plans for the new territory in Poland were often internally at odds and seldom other than purely experimental. Edward Homze, one of the first historians of Nazi forced labor, calls Poland the "laboratory for the foreign labor program."[12] The non-Prussian areas of Poland were organized into the General Government under Dr. Hans Frank, who took a passive approach to labor recruitment because of fears of mass opposition from Poles. His desire to pacify the areas under his control contradicted Nazi plans for Poland. A series of decrees, *Arbeitspflichte*, eliminated Polish work

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[9] Edward Homze, *Foreign Labor in Nazi Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 23.

[10] Ibid, 33.

[11] Herbert, 131.

[12] Homze, 26.

organizations, regulated wages and employment of Jews, and established compulsory registration for work. Employment in Germany proper, however, remained voluntary because of Frank's desire to pacify the Poles first.

In January 1940 Reich labor officials realized that voluntary enlistment would not meet demands and ordered a protesting Frank to conscript one million male and female agricultural and industrial workers for service in Germany.[13] Despite Frank's appeals to consider the effects of forced removals, the Four Year Plan Council prepared for the daily delivery of eight to ten trains containing ten thousand Polish workers.[14] German troops raided cinemas and schools to meet the quota. Villages and towns saw sizeable portions of their population shipped off to the Reich. The reaction was not surprising; many Poles went into hiding and potential volunteers disappeared. The reasons that German officials ignored repeated warnings and pressed forward with more aggressive recruitment are two-fold: racial hatred of Poles and the events in the West, most especially the May 1940 invasion of France. It became evident to German employers and labor officials that Hitler's conquests were not over and that soldiers would not soon be returning to their factories and fields.

Herbert Bache, the German Food Controller, told Göring that he required 1.5 million more workers if Germany's food needs were to be met. Attempts to meet the needs by stripping villagers from Posen, Danzig, and Upper Silesia in the spring of 1940

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[13] International Military Tribunal, *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, (Nuremberg, 1947 - 1949), IV, 926 [henceforth cited as NCA].

[14] Trial, VIII, 328.

were unsuccessful.[15] Göring demanded more civilian workers from Frank, who met the demands by changing the status of prisoners of war. With this classification switch and increased conscription, approximately seven hundred thousand Poles were at work in Germany by the end of 1940.[16] Most of these remained employed in agriculture or non-industrial jobs.

In Germany, the Reich Security Main Office (RSHA) issued a number of regulations to control the Polish workers. Officials required them to live in separate housing from Germans. A clearly recognizable "P" had to be worn somewhere on their clothing. The regulations also governed wages. This was an area of major concern for labor officials. Foreign workers demanded equal pay, and it was believed that they would work harder if paid more. Also, if foreign laborers were paid less, employers -- especially large industrialists who employed great numbers of workers -- would be tempted to replace German workers with cheaper foreigners. To address this potential problem, labor officials required employers to use the normal wage scale for paying Polish workers. However, the government did not want Poles to earn the same as Germans. This arose from fears of offending German views of "racial superiority." To maintain the perceived hierarchy, the wages of Polish workers were taxed with a fifteen percent "social compensation" fee.[17]

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[15] Homze, 33.

[16] Herbert, 134.

[17] Ibid, 125.

The Krupp plants had already received their first foreign workers as conscription in Poland increased. These early arrivals were not from Poland but Czechoslovakia and received quite different treatment than the Poles and others who would follow As one Krupp employee noted, "there was no reason to abuse them and since there was enough to go around, the first arrivals were treated with an apologetic hospitality."[18] An example of the early benevolence of Krupp is the welcome received by one Czech. On 3 June 1940, Constantine Sessin-Arbatoff feared the worst when he and approximately 150 others received orders from their local labor office to report to the Prague train depot. Instead of the expected Nazi thugs, two Krupp officials greeted them and loaded them into five brand new sleeping cars. Porters served them sandwiches and sausages on their journey to Essen. Upon arrival, the Czechs received help with their luggage and a guided tour of the town on luxurious buses. For lunch, they ate a three-course meal and received postcards to send home to their families. Their quarters in a nearby hotel had individual bathrooms, fresh linen, and German maids. After they settled in, they reported for work in an appliance shop where they were paid wages competitive with German pay.[19] It was certainly not their home, but it was a far better situation than those who arrived two years later would find.

Krupp lavished amenities on foreign workers when there were only a few, but the expanding war created a demand for more munitions, leading to a need for more workers.

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[18] William Manchester, *The Arms of Krupp, 1587 - 1968* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1968), 536.

[19] Ibid, 537

Continuing military campaigns kept Germans in uniform and brought more contracts to Krupp. Poland alone could not meet the demands of the Reich. The invasion of France and the Low Countries brought 1.2 million French prisoners into Germany by late October 1940. Krupp was not slow in requesting Dutch and Belgian workers, namely, three hundred prisoners of war and 250 civilians, in June 1940. These and an additional twelve hundred French prisoners and civilians had arrived in Essen by February 1941.

The capture of so many French soldiers and the increase in recruitment of Italians, Belgians, and Yugoslavs led to a feeling among labor officials that the shortage had finally been solved.[20] Initially, no effort was made to register French civilians or forcibly recruit them. The fears of the German population, feeling overwhelmed by the increase in foreigners, were another factor in limiting the use of French workers.[21] To many Germans, it seemed that the foreigners were everywhere. Reich labor and security officials responded with new restrictions and punishments for foreign workers, especially Poles. Local authorities were not hesitant in enforcing their own rules either. The RSHA received numerous reports of public executions of Poles accused of sexual contact with German women.[22] The women were also publicly punished. Officials in Baden even went so far as to issue ordinances allowing farm owners to flog workers.[23] Conditions also began to deteriorate in industrial firms.

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[20] Homze, 111.

[21] Trial, 674.

[22] Homze, 113.

[23] Ibid., 113-114.

At the Krupp plants, the French, along with one thousand Italians provided by an agreement with Mussolini, were to be housed in hastily constructed barracks.[24] The necessity for speed in building new quarters created deplorable conditions. The workers were not hesitant in complaining about the poor housing conditions, and Krupp officials realized: "We will have to expect them to leave unless a change is made."[25] This statement made in August 1941by Heinrich Lehmann, Krupp liaison with the German Labor Front and head of labor procurement, is typical of the early and somewhat sympathetic reaction to the foreign workers.

Part of the concern for the well-being of "guest" laborers can be traced to the involvement of the army in labor issues. Requests for the use of prisoners of war passed through the army, which could and did refuse to allocate workers if conditions were deemed unsatisfactory. Furthermore, the army strictly followed the Geneva Convention rules against the use of prisoners of war in armaments industries. This, however, was often easily sidestepped in the frequent juggling of workers between labor offices and industries. Krupp, like other firms, preferred civilian workers to military prisoners. The wage policies, the cost of guarding prisoners, and problems with the army made the use of prisoners extremely unprofitable, especially when a whole new source of cheap labor -- thousands of Russians -- was being made available.[26] The involvement of the army applied

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[24] Ibid., 675-676.

[25] Ibid, 677.

[26] Homze, 48

only to military prisoners, not to political or criminal prisoners, who were subject to the Gestapo.

The Reich Labor Ministry held its first conference on the use of Russian civilians in September 1941. Its desire for limited recruitment in well-pacified areas only was brushed aside by Göring's directive for the maximum utilization of Russian manpower.[27] Workers sent to the Reich were to be quartered in closely guarded groups and kept separate from all others. Civilians were to be paid enough for food and were provided a simple uniform with wooden shoes.[28] The situation for foreign workers at Krupp and other firms in Germany eroded quickly with the decision to use Russian laborers. Initially, the Reich had no plans to take advantage of the large Russian population. Military and political leaders expected a large portion of the Russian people to flee either to Siberia or to starve. By the time German labor officials decided to use the Russian prisoners of war, 1.4 million had died under inadequate army care.[29] The decision to allow the conscription of Russian civilians and prisoners of war came from the realization that a quick victory was not going to happen.

Hitler and Göring finally relented and plans were made for the employment of Russian prisoners. Göring demanded, however, that the condition of their work achieve "maximum exploitation." Hitler was reluctant at first to allow the use of Russians in

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[27] IMT, XXXIX, 498.

[28] Homze, 77-79.

[29] Herbert, 143.

industry but relented provided that non-Asiatics who could speak only Russian be allowed. They were to be used only in large groups and were to be closely guarded at all times.[30] To accommodate the Russian prisoners, most French prisoners were transferred to industrial work. Russian workers replaced them in agricultural areas on a 120 to 100 exchange rate.[31] This directive from Hitler to move French military prisoners into factories effectively ended army opposition to the use of prisoners in munitions-related work. Göring's restriction of Russians to agricultural work was ignored almost from the beginning as labor officials rushed to meet demands.

The exploitation of the Russians was fully adopted by industrialists, especially at the Krupp firm. Requests by factories for workers overwhelmed labor offices. Abuses were noted, and appeals to Hitler prompted his 21 March 1942 decree for the protection of the arms industries. The decree prohibited unnecessary labor requests, which were determined by the Ministry of Labor, and provided a labor court to deal with violators.[32] Krupp, whose officials were zealous in their requests, was one of the main firms towards which the decree was directed. In Essen, where foreign workers on the whole had been rare before January 1942, the arrival of the first Russian prisoners altered for the worse the condition of foreign workers. The drive to the East brought numerous changes in camps and throughout Germany as a whole.

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[30] Homze, 74.

[31] IMT, XXXI, 474.

[32] Trial, 680-681.

By August 1942 Krupp factories employed seven thousand Russian and Polish workers. Krupp embraced Nazi ideology in dealing with the allegedly subhuman easterners. Signs where both Kruppianer and Slavs worked proclaimed "*Slaven sind Sklaven* (Slavs are Slaves)."[33] Krupp was also not reluctant to make use of another Nazi institution, the concentration camp. On 25 April 1942, Director Erich Mueller instructed the Krupp representative in Berlin to negotiate for the creation of a plant at Markstaedt, Silesia. Mueller, a favorite of Hitler who called him the "first technician of the Reich" for his construction of large siege cannons, used his influence to make his desires known. The factory, to be known as the Bertha Works, would make use of labor from a nearby concentration camp. Krupp officials desired the factory both for its cheap labor and its location. Recent air raids in Essen necessitated a possible evacuation plant. Some saw this as unnecessary, but the support and encouragement of the Führer made the plant a certainty.[34] Otto Saur, Chief of the Technical Office of the Speer Ministry, later testified that he doubted the plant would ever be a success because of the high costs of constructing an entirely new plant. Instead, Saur's office wanted to expand existing factories. Alfried Krupp, however, convinced Hitler to intercede on behalf of his building the plants. Krupp was allowed to proceed with its plans to utilize this new source of workers. The use of labor from the concentration camp, beginning in late 1942, marked one of the first such uses by private industry in Nazi Germany.

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[33] Manchester, 537.

[34] Ibid, 687, 692-694.

Back in Essen, labor allocations from the Plenipotentiary for Labor, Fritz Sauckel, failed to meet expectations. Requests for ten thousand workers in May and June of 1942 resulted in the delivery of only 6,844 workers, including three thousand Russians.[35] Overall, the Reich Iron Association reported in a July meeting with the Central Planning Board a deficit of eighty-eight thousand men for coal mining alone.[36] Many of the workers who did arrive were unskilled and ill-suited for the precise tasks necessary for weapons production. Most companies turned to independent recruitment to alleviate the labor shortage. In June, Heinrich Lehmann, the head of labor procurement for Krupp, traveled to Paris to negotiate with the Vichy government for group allocations of skilled workers.[37] French workers were more desirable than Russians, who were often women and children. One Krupp factory foreman wrote in September 1942 , "We really get the bad remainders only. Just now six hundred Russians, consisting of 450 women and 150 juveniles, fourteen years of age, arrived."[38] French voluntary workers, however, demanded better wages and better conditions to reward their technical ability and higher productivity. Krupp believed their results merited the expense, especially as weapons orders poured into Essen.

More orders necessitated more workers, requiring more demands for labor allocations. This is a key to understanding the conditions at Krupp. No time was put

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[35] Trial, 699.

[36] Ibid, 701.

[37] Ibid, 704.

[38] Ibid, 707.

aside for ensuring better treatment for those already present because new workers were arriving daily. Instead of improving existing camps, Krupp officials concentrated on constructing new factories and housing camps. Krupp actively sought new orders, and its technicians developed new weapons that were aggressively marketed by the Concern. The development of an automatic 37cm. anti-aircraft cannon resulted in plans for a new factory at Auschwitz. Krupp provided the equipment and technical expertise while the Waffen SS loaned workshop buildings and leased out labor from the concentration camp. Initial plans estimated that a staff of fifty Kruppianer would be sufficient to supervise 550-600 inmates. The proposal for the works set the spring of 1943 as an opening date.[39] Until the plant construction finished, Krupp felt one thousand Jewish workers could be put to work immediately in Essen. Only skilled workers, from cabinet-makers to lathe operators, were needed. It was hoped that some of these workers would gain experience for the Auschwitz factory. One Krupp official, Director Mueller, on 17 September 1942, received a request by the Main Committee for Armaments to prepare a list of potential concentration camp sites near Essen.[40]

A pressing need for more housing already existed. The number of French volunteers for employment in Germany had virtually ceased. Labor officials turned towards more forceful measures. A January 1943 levy of French workers by the Reich Labor Ministry hoped to gain 265,000 conscripts. Krupp, however, received warning from the Labor Allocation Office that factories from which complaints from workers had

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[39] Ibid, 709-710.

[40] Ibid, 712.

been received were to be excluded from deliveries of new recruits. Letters from French workers to their families containing complaints about food, housing, and treatment made recruiting difficult.[41] Many of these letters originated at Krupp plants, and Reich officials demanded action to rectify the sources of complaint. French workers demanded better pay under a new wage-scale. French officer prisoners of war were placed in charge of both French civilian and military workers in hopes of remedying some of the problems, but they too demanded better pay and social allowances for families in France.[42]

The most important event of early 1943 was the 12 February directive concerning foreigners whose work contracts had expired. Every effort was to be made to encourage continued voluntary service. In the event that this was unsuccessful, the workers were to be detained by local labor offices for compulsory service. This order affected only Dutch, Belgian, and French workers; Bulgarians, Danes, Italians, Hungarians, and Spaniards were free to return to their countries. Under the same order, eastern workers and Poles, including those who had volunteered for work, received notification that their contracts had been extended indefinitely. The directive, issued by the Plenipotentiary General for Labor Allocation, stressed immediate action.[43]

Early 1943 also brought continued debates on the construction of the Markstaedt and Auschwitz factories. On 8 February Hitler ordered an expansion of the Markstaedt plant. This included two additional workshops in the still uncompleted installation. In an

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[41] Ibid, 714.

[42] Ibid, 715.

[43] Ibid, 718.

effort to get the construction -- harassed frequently by Allied air raids -- finished, Berlin officials ordered contractors from other programs to be reassigned to the Krupp project.[44] At Auschwitz, Krupp interests also expanded. A proposed fuse-production facility received the complete support of officials. The Waffen SS relocated five hundred skilled Jewish workers to Auschwitz for employment there. The SS officer in charge of labor at Auschwitz, First Lieutenant Sommer, pledged full support to any Krupp endeavors. The army, however, felt that only Germans should work at something as vital and sensitive as a fuse plant.[45] Krupp officials suggested that German workers would defeat the purpose of removing fuse production from Essen to Auschwitz. Haste for approval was necessary because of fears that the workers would be stolen by other firms or exterminated. Mueller noted in early 1943: "Up to now it was always supposed that the supply of workers in Auschwitz is unlimited as regards quality and quantity. The whole reason we accepted the difficulties present in Auschwitz, namely the free disposal over workers, will not be available."[46]

In September 1943 Army High Command demanded explanations for the delay at Auschwitz. Investigators accused Krupp of not doing its utmost to begin fuse production. The initial starting date in March had passed without any sign of progress, and little more had been done by fall. Alfried Krupp personally responded to the charges with an explanation that placed responsibility on the slow delivery of machines and on damage

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[44] Ibid, 717.

[45] Ibid, 722.

[46] Ibid, 725.

from air raids.[47] At the Bertha Works near Markstaedt construction progressed better The facility to house eight hundred concentration camp inmates opened on 1 October 1943. Additional housing for fifteen hundred more was to be completed by 15 October.[48] German, Czech, and French workers arrived to provide initial training to the concentration camp inmates. Two shifts worked around the clock with changeovers at noon and midnight to finish construction. To spur completion, a directive from Berlin announced that the "highest officials in the Reich followed the developments with keenest attention since the production which is scheduled here is of greatest strategic importance."[49] Despite completion of housing and statements of support like the above, production still did not begin. Saur, of the Speer Ministry, sent a strongly worded teletype on 4 October 1943: "There may be reasons for your not having carried out your program with regard to the September deliveries for Markstaedt; *but I could at least expect that you would have informed me about them*."[50]

Pressure from the Reich bombarded other Krupp efforts in late 1943 The Special Committee for Tank Production sent to Essen an urgent request for increased production on 27 October. It warned that a failure to improve would result in a transfer of projects, like the behemoth Mouse tank, to other firms.[51] A letter from the Navy High Command

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[47] Ibid, 739.

[48] Ibid, 741.

[49] Ibid, 743.

[50] Ibid, 745. Italics in the original.

[51] Ibid, 747

Torpedo Weapons Office demanded "extraordinarily high priority" and a concentration of operations on production important for the outcome of the war."[52] Once again failure would result in a loss of orders to other German firms. Krupp feared to lose orders and responded to demands like this with more and more requests for workers. Workers from all over Europe were needed and, when assigned, were quickly allocated. The haste in recruitment led to a haphazard dispersal of labor. In Krupp factories, despite directives from Reich labor officials, workers of many nationalities worked side by side, often unable to communicate with each other or their foremen and trainers. As of January 1944 the Bertha Works in Silesia contained a mix of 900 Jewish concentration camp inmates, 650 French prisoners of war, 900 Italian civilians, 1,750 Polish civilians, and approximately 2,000 others.[53] This mixture of nationalities made it virtually impossible to coordinate work.

The steady stream of male prisoners and construction camp inmates slowed to a trickle in mid-1944. Krupp plants throughout the Reich began to lag in production as more German workers were conscripted and air raid damage increased. Theodor Braun, an engineer and head of Rolling Plant II, requested three hundred more workers from the local labor allocation office.[54] The response was a visit by the SS commandant at Buchenwald, Captain Pister, and a Krupp department supervisor, Adolf Trockel. Upon inspection of the mill, Pister informed Braun that Hungarian Jewesses were available and

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[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid, 748.

[54] Ibid, 1171.

ready for shipment. Braun, preferring male laborers, protested but the decision had already been made by the Krupp Board of Directors.[55]

The agreement to take female inmates from concentration camps resulted from a conference attended by Fritz von Bülow, head of the plant police and in charge of foreign labor, and Hans Kupke, one of Alfried Krupp's chief assistants, on 4 July 1944. Pister had revealed that over the next several weeks two thousand women would arrive. Kupke and von Bülow, because of concerns about heavy labor, convinced Pister to substitute some male workers for female workers. Pister, however, was unable or unwilling to locate suitable male workers. He told Krupp to select up to two thousand female workers, the only available labor for Krupp, from a camp near Gelsenberg. Pister's assistant in charge of labor allocation, Captain Schwarz, traveled to Essen to review the housing conditions there. His report after the inspection of the proposed camp at Humboldtstrasse cited a lack of barbed wire and an overly large compound. Furthermore, word arrived from Pister that only five hundred women were available. These would be augmented by twenty other persons for administrative jobs. The number of workers had been reduced due to SS concerns that Krupp would not be able to keep such a large number of Jewesses separate from other foreigners.[56] The SS provided one guard commander and ten guards to supervise Krupp guards. Forty-five Essen women attended a three week SS training camp after voluntarily responding to Krupp requests for female guards. They were sworn into the SS and received racial training.

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[55] Ibid, 1177.

[56] Ibid, 1137.

While the female guards were being trained and the camp readied, Trockel and Braun traveled to Gelsenberg to pick from the camp inmates.[57] There they found poorly-clothed women clearing heavy rubble. The SS guards assembled the young women for the perusal of the Krupp officials, who found them to be wholly unsuitable for the work intended for them but, nonetheless, selected the strongest for immediate shipment.[58] Elizabeth Roth and her sister were two of the selected women; both later testified at the Krupp trial. The Roth sisters and their family had been taken from Czechoslovakia where they and other Hungarians had moved to find work. On 19 May 1944 they arrived at Auschwitz where everyone in their extended family except the two sisters was gassed immediately. The SS removed two thousand women and girls -- the youngest fourteen -- to Gelsenberg. Braun selected both of the Roth sisters to be among 520 females sent to Essen for work in a rolling mill None of the women was sure where they were going because the women had been asked to volunteer without being informed where they would be going or what they would be doing. Trockel testified that they were happy to be selected because of the poor conditions at Gelsenberg, although the testimony of the Roths reveals none of this happiness.[59]

Some of the women at Humboldtstrasse had connections to a camp that was much worse than theirs. The camp at Voerde and its sub-units, approximately forty miles from Essen, contained 4,000 men, women, and children. One sub-unit in particular,

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[57] Ibid, 1158.

[58] Ibid, 1159.

[59] Ibid, 1163-1165.

Buschemannshof, shocked American troops upon its liberation. This camp was a former Organization Todt installation acquired by Krupp in January 1943, and refitted to house the children of eastern workers born during the war at Krupp factories.[60] Kupke ordered the refitting after Krupp hospitals filled with infants. While some of the children were conceived before arrival at Krupp, others were the results of guard-prisoner and prisoner-prisoner interaction. Alfried Krupp blamed the first on sloppy recruitment by Fritz Sauckel, the Plenipotentiary for Labor Allocation; the second on incompetent subordinates who should have been monitoring this.[61] A regulation that allowed mothers to visit their children once a week was ineffective and impossible to permit due to inadequate transportation, long distances, and increased bombings. The children did not stay long in the Voerde camp. They either died, as many as thirty a day, or were put to work clearing rubble or hauling scraps in the mills and workshops.

The records of the Krupp trial include many individual stories of people brought to Krupp and the conditions they found there. Electrical Engineer Jaroslav Brandejs, a Czech from Melink, reported to his local labor office in October 1942. Despite his doctor's report that he was physically unable to work, Brandejs was ordered to Essen.[62] From 30 November 1942 to 14 December 1943, he worked in an engine construction shop. Brandejs's experience was unique because his foreman allowed him to go home for the funeral of an aunt. He refused to return to Essen despite repeated notices. Finally the

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[60] Manchester, 630.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Trial, 756.

local police, after receiving orders from Krupp, arrested Brandejs and sent him back to Essen.

Another example is that of Father Alphonso Come, a Belgian priest from Smuid. At 5 a.m. on 15 August 1944, German soldiers surrounded his village residence. They took Come and nine others, including the mayor, the village clerk, two magistrates, and two councilmen to Arlon prison. The prisoners stayed there for ten days without any charges brought against them or questions asked of them. On 25 August a train took them to Essen. A German sergeant welcomed the new arrivals: "Now you are going to work at Krupp, and for you that is going to be boom, boom, I mean bombing."[63] Come worked at a Krupp factory until 4 May 1945. Come's experience is unusual because of the trip to the prison but typical of the shock and confusion. Come worked at the Dechenschule camp, mostly with fellow Belgians. Adolf Trockel, assistant to Lehmann, testified that this camp was mainly for political prisoners sent to Krupp by the Gestapo.[64] Guarding and administration were done by Krupp plant police under an agreement with the Gestapo and Bülow.

Krupp's labor recruitment progressed along with Germany's conquests. Following the *Anschluss* and seizure of much of Czechoslovakia, Krupp received workers from local labor offices. Private deals with Mussolini produced several thousand Italian workers. These early workers, unlike those who followed, received a warm welcome to Essen. This can be explained by their relatively small numbers and remnants of the Krupp

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[63] Ibid, 759.

[64] Ibid, 761.

tradition of taking care of the firm's workers. The conquest of Poland brought a people perceived as racially less-desirable into the Reich. Laws to limit the contact of Poles with Germans and punish their transgressions placed the Poles firmly in the power of their employers. However, the outright abuse of workers did not start until the appearance of large numbers of Russian workers. The masses of forced laborers quickly overwhelmed available housing, and their treatment consequently deteriorated. The Kruppianer tradition faded and then disappeared as foreign workers became a resource to be exploited.

CHAPTER III

CONDITIONS AND DISCIPLINE IN THE KRUPP CAMPS AND WORKSHOPS

"They came crammed in freight cars. The Krupp foremen rushed the workers out of the train and beat them and kicked them. I watched with my own eyes while people who could barely walk were dragged to work."[1] These words from a Krupp railroad worker describe the arrival of the first Poles and Ukrainians in Essen in 1941. This was a far cry from the welcome the first Czech and French workers received. The early arrivals benefited both from their place in the National Socialist racial hierarchy and from the relative lack of overcrowding. The treatment of Krupp's foreign workers was only to get worse in the years that followed. New arrivals received wooden clogs, Krupp blankets, and uniforms. Camps were set up haphazardly throughout the Essen area: in open fields, city parks, school playgrounds, bombed-out warehouses, dog kennels, and public urinals. Conditions in the camps were unsanitary and food was practically nonexistent. Beatings were common and violations of camp rules often resulted in removal to a concentration camp. Neither western nor eastern workers received humane treatment, but the masses of Russians received the worst by far. The Krupp tradition of family and unity among the Kruppianer and between the workforce and the owners disappeared under the multitude of foreign workers, the increased pressures of war, and Nazi racial ideology.

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[1] William Manchester, *The Arms of Krupp: 1587 - 1968* (Little, Brown, and Co., 1968), 538.

Discipline in the Krupp camps came in many different forms. Most developed from regulations passed down from Reich labor authorities, the Gestapo, or from within Krupp. By looking at the response of camp commanders and guards to the regulations, or rather, their interpretation of the rules, one can gain insight into how the National Socialist system affected one group of Germans. Some Germans exceeded the physical punishments outlined in the regulations; some Germans, often at great personal risk to themselves, violated the rules and helped foreign workers. Examining conditions and discipline in the camps also reveals what role Alfried Krupp and leading Krupp officials had in the perpetration of such atrocities.

Krupp officials were not ignorant of the pitiful conditions in which the Russian laborers lived and worked. One foreman at the Cast Steel Works wrote his manager on 14 March 1942 that the Russian workers were daily getting weaker and weaker. Some were "not strong enough to tighten a turning point sufficiently for lack of physical strength."[2] This unnamed foreman blamed such weaknesses on inadequate feeding arrangements. He refused to accept more workers until conditions improved. Other managers voiced similar concerns. A motor vehicle department foreman named Grollius, on 18 March 1942, complained of inadequate rations for his workers. Food distribution officials told him simply that there was no more to be had. Grollius informed his superiors of the frequent lack of food deliveries. When rations arrived, they were "the thinnest of watery soup. It was literally water with a handful of turnips and it looked as if it were

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[2] International Military Tribunal, *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council Law No. 10*, 10 vols. (Nuremberg, October 1946 - April 1949), IX, 874 [henceforth cited as Trial].

dish water."[3] Grollius's protest, an exception to widespread indifference, was passed by his supervisor to Director Max Ihn. When asked about his complaint, Grollius offered the suggestion that improved care would result in increased production. He ridiculed the company emphasis on maximum output when workers were dying daily from inadequate food and from filth:

> I have seen a few figures in the camp, and a cold shudder ran up and down my spine. I met one there, and he looked as though he'd gotten a barber's rash. It is not to be wondered at when just as the moment the motto is "increased production." Something must be done to keep the people capable of production, otherwise we shall experience a great disaster in this respect, not only in production but also in the matter of health, and what that means especially today, we all know.[4]

It is difficult to tell from the trial documents whether Grollius was more concerned with the workers, their production, or epidemics, but the membership of Grollius in the SS must be recognized. Grollius, to his credit, refused to take the Russians to work when their food was forgotten. Only after they were fed did he allow them to work.[5] The protests by Grollius and others caused the Deputy Works Manager to investigate conditions in the unnamed camp from which the workers came. His attempt to talk with camp commandant Weihburg, Grollius's supervisor, met with resistance from Hassel, the assistant plant police chief. Hassel dismissed complaints as mere rumors and reminded all present that they were dealing with "Bolsheviks." In his opinion, "they ought to have

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[3] Ibid., 875.

[4] Ibid., 875-876.

[5] Ibid., 877.

beatings substituted for food."[6] The investigation's report to Ihn stressed that Russians were good workers provided they received enough to eat. It recommended that sanitary conditions be improved and food deliveries increased. Krupp's indifference to the well-being of its "guest" workers -- in this case, their basic food requirements -- demonstrates that, in at least some cases, management was aware of conditions. It condoned brutality through its inaction. If ordinary guards and camp commanders saw that it did not matter whether workers were fed, why would they not have believed that it did not matter whether they were beaten?

Within days of this incident, perhaps in response to reports of such problems, Reich leaders became involved in monitoring camps for foreign workers. Adolf Hitler and Albert Speer met in late March 1942 to discuss the conditions of Russian civilian workers in the Reich. Speer, the Minister for Armaments and War Production, had been receiving numerous reports of the horrendous situation in the work camps throughout the Reich. A document presented as evidence in Speer's trial at Nuremberg tells of Hitler's surprise in learning that Russians were kept behind barbed wire. The Führer declared that they should not be fed so poorly and kept fenced in by wire. "The Russians must receive an absolutely sufficient amount of food and Sauckel [head of labor allocation] is to see to it that Becke [head of food distribution] makes sure that such feeding measures are taken."[7] Speer, however, pointed out in his report on the meeting that the measures applied primarily to Russian civilians and not military prisoners, who comprised the majority of

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[6] Ibid., 876.

[7] Ibid., 877.

Russian workers. The Gestapo obeyed Hitler and ordered that barbed wire be removed provided that it was replaced by increased supervision. Furthermore, under no circumstances were guards to change the punishments for violations of camp rules by foreign workers.[8]

The reaction by German industrial leaders to Hitler's new instructions on the treatment of workers was a circular issued to economic groups and chambers of commerce on 4 June 1943. The circular agreed with the limitations of strict segregation but urged an immediate remedy for the "undesirable state of affairs" necessary for multi-national work forces.[9] The business leaders suggested that workers who were reliable and productive be allowed to leave their billets in small groups and under immediate supervision. They hoped this would serve as both a reward and incentive for increased productivity. In the Krupp camps, despite specific orders from the Führer for their removal, barbed wire fences remained. Local commanders chose, most likely for ease of control, to keep the barriers around the camps. The matter received little attention from local Reich authorities or Krupp officials.

Whether or not barbed wire surrounded the camps, the recruiting of foreign labor became more and more difficult as the war progressed. In an effort to make recruiting propaganda more effective, Reinhard Heydrich, the Chief of the Gestapo, suggested that conditions be improved and wages increased. Surprisingly, he even advised that the policies of strict ethnic segregation be relaxed in order to increase the areas in which non-

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[8] Ibid., 878.

[9] Ibid., 882.

Germans could work.[10] His program still recommended separation but recognized that German industry was undergoing a period of transition with the influx of large numbers of eastern workers. Heydrich hoped that eventually "Russian plants" would be established, but integration was necessary until then. As it was, Russians and their families could work and live together provided the children were over fifteen years of age. Recruiters were told to ignore women with young children and pregnant women because of the burden they placed on the camp structure. In the event that they were brought into the Reich, they were to be deported immediately.[11] Families with children who could work were allowed to live together if feasible. But despite Heydrich's relaxation on many Gestapo restrictions, workers had little freedom and most remained confined to their quarters when not working.

All of these directives and circulars had little effect on actual conditions for the average worker. The Krupp housing administration investigated Camp Spenlestrasse after receiving numerous complaints. Home to eastern workers, the camp had reached "a stage which could hardly be surpassed."[12] Inadequate toilet and washing facilities helped create the deplorable conditions. Because of their constant use, it was not possible to arrange for the proper cleaning of the barracks in the camp. Krupp housing officials monitored the

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[10] Ibid., 879.

[11] Ibid., 879-880.

[12] Ibid., 883.

conditions from 9 July 1942 to 1 September 1942 when two additional wash facilities were completed and the problem was believed solved.[13]

Krupp officials took a negative approach to the problem of declining easterner morale. The camp leaders, instead of promoting good behavior as recommended by the directives of Heydrich and industry heads, favored the punishment of "bad" elements. Plant police leaders described the work force as one-third good, one-third indifferent, and one-third bad. The last third consisted of alleged criminals, shirkers, and "politically unsuitable" persons.[14] The method chosen to deal with the alleged trouble-makers was the creation of special punishment camps. The Gestapo had secretly let plant police leaders know of its new method of dealing with escapees and other bad elements -- severe corporal punishment.[15] Bülow, however, chose not to endorse physical punishment in Krupp-owned camps. Camp leaders received specific instructions neither to tolerate nor order such actions by their guards. The camp leaders disagreed with the order and doubted whether discipline and production efficiency could be maintained without such threats. They expressed fears that news of the recent instructions would lead to widespread insubordination.[16] A compromise between Bülow and the camp leaders did not apply to the spontaneous punishment given to workers caught in the act of violating rules, especially to those who were insubordinate or guilty of theft. Physical punishment

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[13] Ibid., 884.

[14] Ibid., 885.

[15] Ibid., 886.

[16] Ibid.

given in such cases was to be reported to plant police headquarters at regular intervals. In practice, this never occurred. Under no circumstances were women to be physically punished. The recommended punishment for them and for slackers was to deprive them of their meals. Rations freed in this manner were given to workers who had performed well.[17]

Krupp police officials were hardly slow in acting when it came to punishment. An October 1942 meeting of Bülow, Hassel, Weihberg, and other Krupp camp leaders discussed the management and punishment of eastern workers. The camp leaders complained of frequent desertions. Morning role calls in darkness -- at approximately 4:40 a.m. -- allowed for workers to sneak away. They were often found hiding in latrines, cupboards, under beds, etc. As a remedy, the camp leaders suggested that they be allowed to "treat the shirkers harshly and bring them to work by force."[18] The beginning of cold weather increased the unwillingness of workers to go to their workplaces. The workplaces varied in distance from the camps. Some required several miles of supervised walking to reach; others were next to or part of the camps. Poor clothing, lack of footwear, and various sicknesses increased the workers' reluctance. Officials hoped that better pay, more comfortable camps, and better food would decrease the number of desertions, but the morale of workers did not, in fact, improve because of the policies of camp leaders.

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[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid., 886.

Unfortunately for the workers, it did not matter whether new policies ordered increased food allocations. There were seldom enough rations to begin with due to corruption by camp officials, and the increased food was never seen by the inmates. One camp commander owned a restaurant in Essen where camp food often found its way. The inmates received excellent food when there was an inspection but watery broth and breadheels otherwise.[19] It is amazing that this camp was not for easterners but for western workers who had eighty-three marks a month deducted from their pay for room and board. Instead of receiving better treatment than eastern workers because of their higher status on the Nazi ethnic totem pole, the western workers paid for abuse similar to that meted out to everyone else. Extra food could be purchased from the camp commander, but at exorbitant prices. The workers were often beaten for sleeping in their clothes, the lack of clean bedding -- which they involuntarily paid for with deductions from their wages -- notwithstanding.[20] The same camp commander was also known for getting drunk and violent. Guards also got in on the corruption. Soap, water, cigarettes, and food stolen from the western workers were all sold to Russians at inflated prices. One camp commander was known for hoarding food he had his prisoners steal during bombing raids. He then later sold it, and crate loads of camp bed linen and other supplies, on the black market.[21]

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[19] Ulrich Herbert, *Hitler's Foreign Workers: Enforced Foreign Labor in Germany under the Third Reich*, Trans. by William Templer (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997) , 217.

[20] Ibid., 218.

[21] Ibid.

Not all of the business of the camp leaders and Bülow centered around punishments or corruption. Some effort was made to provide limited forms of self-administration and comfort for the eastern and western workers. All camps had a senior worker and barracks seniors under him. They were responsible for some discipline and day-to-day administration. In response to frequent complaints from camp leaders, Bülow ordered additional cleaning materials to aid the barracks chiefs in keeping their living quarters clean. Ten thousand postcards for the workers arrived from the Krupp printing shops in 1943. Bülow hoped this would boost worker morale and quiet some of the negative stories circulating about the conditions at Krupp.[22] The postcards were later found by other workers scattered in several trash heaps at the steel works.[23]

Yet another effort to improve morale was the development of a cultural welfare program. The testimony of defense witness Ferdinand Schmitz, a supervisor in charge of the feeding and care of foreign workers at Krupp's Friedrich Alfred Foundry, provides some information about the program.[24] He stated that everything possible was done at his camp to provide decent and clean accommodations and adequate food. The plant had a library with books in several languages available for loan free of charge. There were many daily newspapers and fliers for the inmates. There was also a sports field with equipment and uniforms available for free time activities. Schmitz was also proud of a soccer team of

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[22] Trial, 887.

[23] Ibid., 730.

[24] Ibid., 986.

Belgians who played against teams from other camps. He also talked of worker orchestras and theater groups from the various nationalities who made regular circuits of the camps. For large performances, the workers were allowed to use the high school or town assembly hall. Special food was provided on holidays, and religious services, both Catholic and Protestant, were regular.[25] There is no evidence, other than Schmitz's own testimony, of many of these activities or privileges. Without corroborating evidence and without a record of such activities or privileges here and at other Krupp camps, it is difficult to give credence to Schmitz's claims. In any event, conditions could hardly have been pleasant for the workers, even with such privileges.

Reports of success with the prototype program at the Krämerplatz camp in late 1942 resulted in Bülow's orders for the construction of recreation rooms in all camps. Camp leaders also received orders to arrange conducted walks around Essen for eastern workers. It was hoped this would increase physical fitness despite the fact that no additional food was being distributed. Carefully selected workers of both genders led early excursions until complaints from local residents resulted in Gestapo orders to allow walks only if German employees were in charge.[26] As with other privileges, camp leaders used the walks as a reward for good behavior and denied them as punishment. It must be understood that, for the Krupp leaders, these privileges were considered important although they were of little real significance.

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[25] Ibid., 946-947.

[26] Ibid., 887.

Even with some small efforts like the aforementioned, such as they were, the workers obviously remained in an extremely servile position. All Russian workers continued to wear badges on their clothes. The badges consisted of an upright rectangle with a blue and white border surrounding the word "OST."[27] The relaxation on the segregation of easterners did not mean that open contact was allowed between them and German nationals. Sexual intercourse between Russians and German women was punishable by death for the Russian and public humiliation or shipment to a concentration camp for the woman. Regulations discouraged guards from engaging in any unnecessary conversation with the foreign workers. The giving of presents of any type was also strictly forbidden, but there are many recorded instances of food or clothing being given. Insubordination, because of fears that it would result in widespread revolt, was especially feared.

Police rules issued in 1943 stated that "the slightest signs of insubordination must be dealt with ruthlessly, and arms must be used unsparingly to break any resistance."[28] To enforce the strict discipline, violations of any rules were punishable by denial of food, penal details, imprisonment, extra work, and drill. Penal details received mostly workers identified as slow and negligent. The more serious offenses, such as sabotage and political activity, passed to the control of the Gestapo. Any escaping easterners were to be shot at with the intention of killing. But it was not just eastern workers who experienced growing restrictions in late 1942. The Himmler decree of 15 December aimed at combating the

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[27] Ibid., 890.

[28] Ibid.

violation of labor contracts by foreign workers of all nationalities. It empowered the Gestapo to deal with a wider range of such cases and allowed for deportation to concentration camps for extreme incidents. This applied even to volunteer workers from allied and occupied countries.

The crack-down on contract violation resulted from increased numbers of workers trying to leave. At Krupp, health conditions, despite Bülow's directives, continued to deteriorate. Disease and other problems continued to be prevalent. Camp Spenlestrasse, inhabited by male and female eastern workers, was brought to the attention of Ihn and Bülow when most of its female inmates were alleged to be pregnant. The camp nurse suggested that the women be returned to Russia. Krupp doctors examined the workers and discovered that in fact only thirteen of nearly seven hundred women were pregnant.[29] The examinations, however, revealed that nearly two hundred of the women had amenorrhea (an abnormal absence of menstruation sometimes caused by malnutrition) of more than three months duration.[30] The doctors determined that the condition resulted from the poor diets and strenuous work the inmates experienced. Krupp officials, after talking to concentration camp officials, dismissed this as common to work camps. They reported that the overall health at the women's camp was "quite satisfactory."[31]

This report on Camp Spenlestrasse included details of the death of a Russian man. The worker, who had been at Essen only five months, died suddenly in a wheel-set shop.

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[29] Ibid., 895.

[30] Ibid., 896.

[31] Ibid.

An investigation determined carbon monoxide poisoning to be the cause of death. Tests were conducted because of the possible danger to other workers. They revealed no evidence of poisoning but an extreme case of malnutrition. The worker possessed zero fat tissue. Instead, there existed a "so-called gelatinous atrophy." The liver was small and weak, lacking fat and glucose.[32] The lack of tissue did not allow the worker to store up the slightest amount of energy. The doctor's report cited inferior endurance on the part of the Russian although it did note that unhealthy eastern workers could not be restored to normal health under the diet offered.

Both of the above cases show the disregard Krupp officials felt towards the conditions of the foreign workers. While there was a limited investigation in each case, neither was acted upon. Krupp merely considered the near-starvation conditions an acceptable result of using the slave labor of ethnic groups considered inferior to Germans. In these two extremely disturbing cases, the situation seemed to be that the Russians received such brutal treatment because the Krupp officials simply felt they did not deserve better. The inaction of Krupp leaders once again provided an example of indifference to guards and camp commanders.

In January 1943, Hans Kupke became head of Krupp's camp administrators. He was responsible for "procuring quarters for the foreigners, for camp discipline, and security."[33] These duties included ensuring the sanitation of the camps and organizing the leisure time of the workers. Kupke, whose chief lieutenant was Bülow, reported to

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[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid., 897.

Director Ihn but retained a great deal of autonomy. The Directors of the firm, in the orders for Kupke's appointment, wrote, "he enjoys the rights of a master of the house."[34] The first issue Kupke's house faced was a series of new Gestapo regulations for eastern workers in October 1943.

As before, the new rules required the use of badges to signify the origins of easterners. It called the use of Krupp stores by easterners deplorable and reminded Kupke and Hassel, the chief of plant police, that such use was to be punished harshly. The Gestapo ordered the selection of mail agents to spot check eastern and western workers' incoming and outgoing mail. One in ten postcards -- no more letters were allowed after August -- was to be checked.[35] It is unclear, as earlier mentioned, how many postcards were actually delivered to workers and if the postal inspectors were needed. The regulations also contained many guidelines for dealing with Russian physicians, who made up the majority of medical personnel for the camps. They were not allowed any free time except for an optional visit outside of the camps once a week. The excursion had to be supervised and could not be to a restaurant, theater, or church. These restrictions on doctors were in addition to ordinances covering ordinary eastern workers. These included bans on the use of public transportation; attendance at cultural gatherings, church, or any form of public entertainment; and general social contact with non-easterners.

None of these restrictions applied to western workers. Any violation of these rules resulted in harsh punishment for the offending party as well as those who aided in the

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[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid., 902.

infraction. The reason for this severity in dealing with easterners derives from the belief in racial hierarchy. While the westerners were treated little better, Nazi officials did not believe they posed the same genetic risk to the German people. No reason was given for the additional restrictions on doctors, but one possible reason may be that German officials did not want German citizens seeing educated, professional Russians. It would have provided an example contrary to the Nazi propaganda of Russian barbarians.

The most serious infractions under the new Gestapo regulations were escape and breach of labor contract. The Gestapo now required companies to print the name of the firm and camp location on all articles of worker clothing. This resulted from the increased number of escapes and the difficulties in returning escapees to their place of work.[36] As already mentioned, the regulations sought to limit the use of German stores by easterners. The same restriction was later expanded to include western workers. Such use had long been prohibited, but shop owners, ever interested in profit, frequently violated the ordinances. Reich authorities recognized the difficulties in enforcing the ban and allowed the sale of merchandise provided it was not in demand by German consumers.[37] This relaxation on the ban did not extend to barber shops where it was "an imposition for German racial comrades to have their physical culture needs attended to after eastern workers."[38]

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[36] Ibid., 901.

[37] Ibid., 902.

[38] Ibid.

While regulations covered the punishments for eastern workers, none punished German employees for laxness in providing medical care. A file note from 7 May 1943 lists the causes of the day's deaths for fifty-four eastern workers in one hospital. Four died from unreported external causes, thirty-eight from tuberculosis, two from malnutrition, and the rest from various intestinal and organ diseases.[39] Most of these ailments can be associated with poor nutrition. Bülow became concerned about the decreasing productivity of the foreign laborers and tried to implement some changes. This also occurred at the same time Reich labor authorities put increasing pressure on Krupp to improve its treatment.

Efforts to increase the rations for workers, or at least meet the state-required levels, failed despite some creative attempts. Krupp agents attempted to purchase food on the black market in the Netherlands in December 1943.[40] Reich officials discovered their activities and inquired of Krupp what their purpose was. The Krupp agents had attempted to buy large quantities of apples at six times the government-controlled price. The agents promised the food supplier an additional bonus for each freight car-load of apples delivered. Large amounts of potatoes, beans, onions, and dehydrated vegetables had already been purchased illegally. Such transactions were punishable by heavy fines in both occupied territories and the Reich.[41] The Dutch involved in the scheme were severely

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[39] Ibid., 905.

[40] Ibid., 906.

[41] Ibid., 907

punished, but the documents do not reveal if Krupp ever explained its actions or if fines were levied.

The final destination of the food purchases was never known, but if intended for the foreign workers, it was not the only effort of Krupp to meet minimal subsistence requirements. An eastern worker clothing shop constructed in January 1943 employed three Russian tailors and twenty female needle-workers under the supervision of a trained German director. The shop repaired hundreds of clothing items daily for reissue to new arrivals from both the West and the East. Bombings finally destroyed the shop in March 1943. Most of the clothing survived the attack, but the nearby worker camps for whom the clothing was intended did not. As a result, the repair shop closed after only three months and an estimated 240,000 pieces of clothing repaired.[42] Hassel, Bülow's deputy police chief, was awarded a twenty percent pay raise by Krupp directors for his attentiveness to the damaged sites in late June 1943. The repair shop was not so much an example of Krupp kindness as of Krupp's feeble attempts to provide basic human services. If Krupp had been serious about meeting the clothing needs of tens of thousands of foreign workers, instead of merely meeting Reich requirements, the firm would have done more than employ twenty-three tailors and seamstresses. They received no reward for their incredible efforts in repairing clothes. Instead, Krupp felt Hassel's supervision of the damaged shop merited recognition.

The bombings in Essen not only damaged valuable production facilities and destroyed workers' camps, they created rebellious sentiments among some workers. A

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[42] Ibid., 908.

Russian prisoner of war named Gagiel told his German supervisors: "Everything will soon be ruined in Germany, then all officials, foremen, masters, plant chiefs, etceteras, will have their throats cut. Then we Russians will live in good houses and you Germans will then have to live in barracks."[43] Krupp officials decided to handle this insubordination instead of letting the Gestapo get involved. Before punishment could be meted out, the prisoner escaped. Days later, German and Russian workers saw Gagiel walking freely around the camp, but the plant police were unable to locate him. Bülow asked Captain Borchmeyer, the local Gestapo representative, how to deal with cases such as this. Borchmeyer recommended the removal of food and privileges, imprisonment for twenty-four hours with only bread and water, and/or detention for several days. Extreme cases were to be sent to the Gestapo where, Borchmeyer noted, the result was always a death sentence.[44]

Gagiel's resistance was not unique among eastern or western workers. A French worker, Robert Ledux, refused to move a thirty kilogram corner iron along with two other men. Ledux pointed to himself and told his supervisor, "No food, no work."[45] The foreman was unsure what to do with this sudden opposition to his authority. Ledux indicated a nearby crane and motioned for it to be used. The foreman saw it was being used for other tasks and once more told Ledux to help the other two workers move the iron. Ledux refused this second order and persuaded other nearby Frenchmen to protest also. The foreman, named Hagemann, pushed the crane aside and ordered Ledux once

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[43] Ibid., 910.

[44] Ibid., 911.

[45] Ibid., 913.

more to work. Ledux struck Hagemann, and the two proceeded to fight until the appearance of plant police. This incident, occurring on 13 February 1944, resulted in the arrest of Ledux. He was placed in a penal camp until his escape in May.[46] Ledux's resistance is important because, in many ways, he had more to lose. While eastern and western workers were treated approximately the same, a western worker who violated camp rules lost his status as a western worker, forfeited his wages, and was sent to the penal camps. In the penal camps, punishment was more common and often more severe. An eastern worker who resisted and who was sent to the penal camps did not lose any status and had little or no wages to forfeit.

Workers did not have to threaten or strike Krupp employees to get in serious trouble. Many found themselves in the punishment camp for tardiness, excessive absences, and low productivity. The cases of Boguslav Szarawarski and Jan Cremers are examples of this. Szarawarski, a Pole, spent fifty-six days in a punitive workers' camp for "transgressions against work discipline."[47] Between 30 December 1943 and 24 January 1944, Szarawarski missed five days and was late nearly every day. He was sentenced by a Reich Labor Trustee for laziness and received various light punishments before his long sentence in the penal camp. Jan Cremers also "repeatedly offended against the work discipline" by being tardy.[48] He was arrested on 15 September 1944 by the Gestapo at the request of Krupp officials. Because he was Dutch and considered almost the racial

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[46] Ibid., 914.

[47] Ibid., 914-915.

[48] Ibid., 917.

equivalent of a German, Cremers was not sent to a penal camp but was expelled from Germany as an unreliable foreigner. The documents are full of such cases including several other requests for deportation to concentration camps, particularly Buchenwald.[49]

Punishments varied in severity, often at the discretion or whim of the guard present. An extreme case of punishment for violating camp discipline was that of Sergei Schosow. Schosow and others were clearing away rubble from a bakery when a guard saw him reach for a moldy piece of bread. The guard shot and killed Schosow. The incident was investigated by Krupp officials and the guard was found to have acted according to regulations. No action was taken against him.[50]

Krupp guards did not rely solely on the Gestapo, summary execution, or concentration camps to punish workers. Efforts were initiated by Krupp to provide less permanent methods for dealing with violations of camp policy. Plant police officials requested "ten leather truncheons or similar weapons for clubbing for our shock squads."[51] The shock squads were groups of five men in peak physical shape and absolute political reliability. Many were also members of the SS or SA. Overall, by the end of 1942, there were two hundred men in these special squads. An additional two thousand could be summoned from their regular work posts with special siren calls. They, like the shock squads, were armed with steel helmets, white armbands, and leather truncheons. The guards also had at their disposal 250 rifles. The special squads were used only in

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[49] Ibid., 918-919.

[50] Manchester, 574.

[51] Trial, 919.

emergencies and spent the majority of their time working at their normal jobs.[52] The request by the police for the clubs was quickly granted with the choice of either truncheons or steel birches.[53]

Despite the large numbers of guards and other security measures, it was relatively easy for foreign workers to escape. Most camps, except the penal camps, were lightly guarded. If not, opportunities often presented themselves at work or in transit to and from the workplace. Two female eastern workers, Pasha and Wera Sulim, escaped from a sheet-metal bending shop and fled into Essen proper where they found employment as domestic servants at a inn after disguising themselves as Czechs. They fled again when the Gestapo raided the inn in search of them. The Gestapo and plant police exchanged many memos discussing the escapees during the period from 14 September 1943 to 10 January 1944.[54]

Wasall Myckno, another example of a worker lucky enough to escape, had received a new assignment from the Labor Allocation Office. He refused to work in the brickyard and demanded that he be allowed to stay in the Armored Plate Rolling Mill. When told he would be forced by the police to change workplaces, he said he would return to the rolling mill. The plant police, after Myckno resisted for over a month, finally went to arrest him. He promptly fled and was never heard from again.[55]

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[52] Ulrich Herbert, *Hitler's Foreign Workers*, 232-234.

[53] Trial, 919.

[54] Ibid., 921-922.

[55] Ibid., 922

Others deemed to have violated camp rules were not as lucky Antonie Ricci, an Italian civilian laborer, worked only eighteen hours during the month of December 1944 He was caught using a stolen stamp on his food card that had enabled him to get extra food without working. As punishment, he was sent to the special penal camp at Neerfeldschule.[56] A Polish civilian, Eugen Malinowski, was also sent to the same penal camp. Malinowski had not worked since the beginning of January 1945 because his boots were in the shoe repair shop. During a routine barracks inspection, his locker was opened. Inside were two pairs of new shoes and two "very good sweaters of German manufacture."[57] Malinowski denied having any knowledge of the clothing and was arrested. On the way to Neerfeldschule, he attempted to escape but was caught.[58]

While Krupp's Essen camps were terrible, the situation in other camps was even worse. One of the suppliers of workers for the Bertha Works, Fünfteichen concentration camp, received an inspection team of Krupp officials in August 1944. The team's report included a number of feasible recommendations that would have improved conditions for the workers. The report noted a hole in the washroom that let in the elements and could have provided an escape opportunity. There was no hot water for the inmates, and the drinking water was polluted. But the conditions of the workers received only minor notice. More important to the inspectors was the refusal of camp guards to remove their

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[56] Ibid., 923.

[57] Ibid., 924.

[58] Ibid.

hats when they walked by.[59] While no explicit reason is given for this insubordination or lack of respect, it seems from the tone of the guards that the inspectors were intruding upon the guards' territory and authority. The testimony of the Chief of Personnel at the Bertha Works, Eberhard Franke, provides some additional detail. He dismissed Senior Camp Leader Rolle for beating civilian foreign workers. Franke resisted pressure from the Party to reinstate Rolle, who held a Golden Party Badge and was a lieutenant in the SA.[60] The Golden Badge denoted either long term Nazi Party membership or performance of some meritorious act.

Other than Rolle's case, Franke noted little mistreatment of workers to his superiors. He reported that the Czechs and Frenchmen had relatively pleasant living quarters and received the same rations as Germans. The food and clothing of concentration camp inmates was handled by the SS but was, in Franke's opinion, entirely adequate. The inmates were treated well and never beaten.[61] When cross-examined about this statement, Franke said that even the Jewish workers looked healthier after several months than when they first came to the camp. But Franke replied in the negative when asked if they were healthy.[62] In truth, Franke's report varied greatly from actual conditions. Either he believed that the workers' conditions were what they deserved or he was covering up obvious mistreatment.

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[59] Ibid., 926.

[60] Ibid., 963.

[61] Ibid., 964-967.

[62] Ibid., 971.

It is unsurprising that the inmates of Markstaedt saw life at the Bertha Works a little differently. To them, Markstaedt was all too similar to German work camps elsewhere. Tadeusz Goldstajn was a young sixteen year old boy from Poland. He and six hundred other Jewish men and boys were selected by a Krupp official at Auschwitz. They were sent to the Bertha Works where Goldstajn found horrors equal to Auschwitz, "In the fifteen months which I spent working for Krupp I was always hungry, sleepy, filthy, tired beyond any human comparison, and most of the time, by any normal standards, seriously ill."[63] Workers subsisted daily on a single watery bowl of broth prepared out of some sort of grass. Each arrival had been issued a shirt, undershorts, jacket, pants, overcoat, and a pair of wooden clogs. No replacements were issued. Goldsztajn's body was black with oil, infested with lice, and covered with sores. SS guards and trained dogs paralleled the three mile march to work. Prisoners who fell out were never seen again. The camp had its own gas chamber -- Krupp efficiency at work again -- and daily beatings and executions took place in the courtyard. Life was not easier at work. The slightest mistake would provoke Krupp supervisors, who struck the workers with rubber hoses and iron bars. Goldsztajn was often severely beaten by the Kruppianer and slept on his stomach at night because of the sores on his back, a habit he retained for the rest of his life. There were several cases where the SS guards, for unknown reasons, intervened to stop the beatings by the supervisors. Of the six hundred who made the trip, twenty were alive a year later.[64]

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[63] Manchester, 581.

[64] Ibid., 581-587

The testimony of the prosecution witnesses provides more details -- details absent from records produced at the trial -- about the treatment of workers at Krupp. Josef Dahm worked for Krupp from 20 December 1939 until 14 February 1947 During the war, he labored in a tank construction plant with eastern workers. Dahm lived near the guardhouse for a nearby eastern worker camp. He testified at the trial about one of the more terrible methods of punishment used by camp guards. Inside the guardhouse was a steel cupboard approximately five feet tall, two feet deep, and three feet wide. The cupboard had steel bolts to lock the doors shut, a partition in the center, and two air holes on top. On New Year's Eve 1944, Dahm was on air raid duty in the guardroom. Plant guards brought in three eastern workers for punishment. They had been causing a disturbance celebrating and were told to be quiet by the assistant camp leader, a man named Gerlach. The workers were later caught by Gerlach in the barracks for female workers. Gerlach beat the three easterners with a rubber truncheon before taking them to the guardroom. There Gerlach locked the three workers in the cabinet, one on one side and two on the other. When the workers began to moan in protest, Gerlach poured water into the air holes of the cabinet. The workers remained in the cabinet for at least six hours and were still there when Dahm went home in the morning.[65] At the trial, Dahm was asked why he did not protest. He said one worker was removed from the cabinet at his request, but he refused to protest more because of fear of Gerlach.[66]

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[65] Trial, 928-930.

[66] Ibid., 932.

Another witness, Fritz Fell, also spoke of the punishment of easterners in the steel cupboard. Like Dahm, Fell worked in the tank construction shop as an air raid warden. In the summer of 1944 he saw a prisoner placed in the cabinet. In this case, it was a female eastern worker who had returned late from leave. Upon her arrival, Gerlach said, "I have waited a long time for you to overstay your leave."[67] Gerlach ordered her locked in the cupboard despite the obvious seven months pregnancy of the worker. Fell was unsure how long the woman remained confined in the cage but knew of other workers having been kept in there for over a day.[68] Gerlach was also known for waking the young female inmates of the camp with buckets of cold water, even during the winter. This occurred as early as 4:00 a.m., although work did not begin until 7:00. Like Dahm, Fell did not protest out of fear of reprisal. Gerlach had no actual authority over Fell or Dahm, but Fell noted that Gerlach was a "brutal person not only towards the prisoners but also toward the Germans in every respect."[69] Gerlach's cruelty seems to have exceeded the normal indifference of Krupp's German employees. Most guards, but not all, were unwilling to participate in prolonged torture. Quick beatings, without premeditation, were much more common. However, the passive reaction of the other guards to extreme brutality was all too typical.

Gerlach's supervisor, camp leader Willi Loewenkamp, also testified at the trial. His testimony for the defense called the facility a model camp in which seventy female

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[67] Ibid., 936.

[68] Ibid., 934-936.

[69] Ibid., 938.

easterners and twenty-two eastern males were housed. Loewenkamp called those who testified about physical punishments and steel cupboards "mentally unbalanced."[70] The steel cabinet, made from eight millimeter armor plate, merely kept files safe in case of bombings. The air holes existed only to provide ventilation for any materials inside of the safe. Loewenkamp denied that it was possible for anyone, especially a pregnant woman, to fit in the cabinet. He even testified of his pride in having helped Russian women give birth. Because medical help was often unavailable, Loewenkamp took charge and successfully delivered several babies with the help of a couple of eastern women.[71] Loewenkamp testified that he gave pregnant women only light work and tried to get them to the Krupp hospital for care when delivery was near. After giving birth, they were sent to Voerde for "rest and recreation."[72] He also told of the "great pains" he went through to get milk and cereals for the children despite overwhelming odds. As far as the rest of the inmates were concerned, Loewenkamp said he never let guards physically punish them or withhold food, although occasionally he ordered bread deliveries postponed to enforce proper camp hygiene. "I really had a reason, for the sake of order and discipline, to deprive the camp inmates of their food."[73] As for Gerlach, Loewenkamp referred to him as someone easily excited and not well-liked by others. Loewenkamp obviously lied to

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[70] Ibid., 980.

[71] Ibid., 981.

[72] Ibid., 982.

[73] Ibid.

protect himself from possible reprisals. He magnified his role in "helping" the foreign workers and minimized his knowledge of any inhumanity.

Heinrich Huemmerich, another defense witness, provided testimony that proved rather damaging for Krupp. Huemmerich was a member of the plant squad, an auxiliary of the plant police. The squad was under the direct command of Hassel, who regarded it with particular interest.[74] Hassel was a lieutenant colonel in the SS and had a Golden Party Badge. Hassel frequently had squad members, including Huemmerich, severely beat eastern workers in the basement of the Krupp administration building. This was done despite the order of the plant police chief, Wilhaus, not to beat the workers. When a member of the unit protested the beatings and mentioned Wilhaus's order, Hassel replied: "In this basement, I am the chief. No one has anything to say at all."[75] Punishment increased as the war progressed and bombings became more frequent. According to Huemmerich, corporal punishment became common only in the last months of the war. When asked why he did not inform Wilhaus or a Director of the beatings, Huemmerich told of Hassel's threat to anyone who talked: something would happen to him.[76] However, when Bülow was around, there were no beatings. Bülow took particular interest in the activities of this unit and issued specific instructions against corporal punishment. "In the presence of Mr. von Bülow, nobody would have dared to maltreat

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[74] Ibid., 958.

[75] Ibid., 951.

[76] Ibid., 952.

any worker."[77] Unfortunately for the workers, Bülow was rarely present. Hassel brought in large numbers of workers and stood them against the basement wall until he had time to beat them one by one. Miraculously, according to Huemmerich, there was never any blood on the workers, despite having often been struck at least fifteen times with rubber or leather truncheons.[78]

Lorenz Scheider, another defense witness and former plant police supervisor, provided an interesting explanation for beatings at his camp. He and his guards administered occasional beatings but modeled themselves on orders against corporal punishment:

> If it did happen, it was not the outcome of any order received by us, but because even the guards were human, and in the face of the indescribable difficulties their tempers occasionally ran away with them or their patience was exhausted. In order to be able to judge rightly of these happenings, one must know that a large proportion of the eastern workers had been accustomed to totally different living conditions and, as far as food and the satisfaction of the natural human needs were concerned, conducted themselves in a manner which differed considerably from that which our Germans believed.[79]

Thus, a worker who was slow to accept German standards received a "thump to help him make up his mind."[80] This explanation places the blame on the workers and not on the Germans. The guards were human, but it seemed to Scheider that the workers were not.

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[77] Ibid., 953.

[78] Ibid., 944-945.

[79] Ibid., 976.

[80] Ibid.

The treatment of eastern and western foreign workers, whether prisoners of war or civilians, worsened progressively during the war. Despite the official directive of Hitler and company orders by Bülow, beatings frequently took place and were endorsed by the immediate superiors of guards. Physical punishment played only a small part in the terrible conditions. Forced starvation, horrible working environments, and unsanitary living quarters made daily life almost unendurable. Russians bore the brunt of the mistreatment in the Krupp camps and workshops, but other ethnic groups, even those deemed almost racially acceptable, fared little better. Few were treated as humans and most were often blamed for the guards' own inhumane actions. In Essen and in Krupp's other facilities, non-Germans felt the full effect of the National Socialist system. In many cases, Krupp officials, camp leaders, and foremen, exceeded the Reich's orders. Whether or not the cause was the overwhelming numbers of foreigners arriving daily, the Krupp camps were out of company and state control. They existed as their own fiefdoms where each camp leader or foreman was absolute ruler.

CHAPTER IV

KRUPP'S SPECIAL PENAL, WOMEN'S, AND CHILDREN'S CAMPS

The conditions at Krupp's foreign worker camps were inhumane, and it is hard to understand the motivation behind the attitude of Krupp employees towards the workers. It is even harder to understand the conditions of prisoners in the penal camps, the women's camps, and the children's camp. Much of the treatment foreign workers received in the special camps was similar to the treatment of workers in the regular camps. The difference, however, is in the amount. While abuse was not rare in the regular camps, it was common, almost expected, in the special camps. The special camps contained only several thousand workers, but the documents indicate that almost every worker experienced some form of brutality. The role of the Gestapo and SS in the supervision of the special camps is also distinctive. Not even the testimony of former inmates during the Krupp trial could fully describe life in the camps, as one worker noted:

> When I started to testify before this Tribunal, I swore to speak the truth, all the truth, nothing but the truth, to which I have absolutely limited myself, giving the Tribunal facts and facts only, and beyond that, only facts that are facts of which I had personal knowledge, and where I could supply the Tribunal with the necessary detail. However, I am very much afraid that this kind of sober testimony does not render, and does not show the Tribunal, the atmosphere of terror that prevailed in both camps, both in the Dechenschule and the Neerfeldschule. The Tribunal has to remember and has to hold before their eyes that these men in both camps could not make a gesture and could not make a move constantly without having to fear these beatings, these beatings that they were submitted to without any reason being given. I am afraid that the facts I have given the Tribunal cannot and will not paint truthfully the whole atmosphere of that camp, this

> atmosphere of terror and that is why I made it a point to make this additional statement.[1]

Even this does not give a very descriptive impression of the camps. Krupp, the Gestapo, and the SS created a system of labor control and exploitation that was unique in cruelty. Only by examining the special camps can one even begin to understand what life was like for the prisoners.

Growing problems with foreign workers and overcrowding in Gestapo penal installations caused Krupp to consider the establishment of a punitive "training" camp in mid-1943. As early as September 1942, special arrest barracks contained workers who had violated either camp or workplace regulations.[2] They usually formed only a small part of larger camps and did not exist to punish the detainees for long periods of time. Initial plans in October 1943 called for the construction of a penal camp in the remains of a bomb-damaged factory at Dechenschule. Camp administration and operations, including housing and feeding, were to be controlled by Krupp personnel.[3] Close cooperation between camp guards and plant police, both units employed by Krupp, would handle any discipline problems. Originally the camp was to house only one hundred foreign workers for periods no shorter than a week. Inmates were to spend their time digging water basins for fire fighting and hauling trash from foundries to slag heaps.[4]

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[1] International Military Tribunal, *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council Law No. 10*, 10 vols. (Nuremberg, October 1946 - April 1949), IX, 1070 [henceforth cited as Trial].

[2] Ibid., 1031.

[3] Ibid., 1043.

[4] Ibid., 1033-1034.

Part of the reason for the creation of the Krupp penal camps came from the overcrowding in the Gestapo's camps. Before 1943 Krupp had sent large numbers of workers to the Gestapo for punishment. Bülow explained the fate of the workers to the Krupp directors: "Frequently we had on occasion to denounce foreign workers, especially Russians, to the Gestapo, for criminal offenses, particularly theft, also because of absenteeism. These workers were transferred in many cases by the Gestapo to a punitive camp, and they were never sent back to use for work."[5] The Gestapo finally told Krupp that the state prisons and penal camps were overcrowded. Krupp needed to set up its own camps. Peter Nohles, the Gestapo chief in Essen, testified that Bülow strongly resisted the order to establish a penal camp because it was "incompatible with the prestige of Krupp."[6] Krupp officials stalled as long as they could. Finally, the Gestapo warned them that, should they continue to resist the order to construct a company penal camp, action would be taken against them.[7]

Krupp delayed obeying the Gestapo order through hesitation and the assistance of outside forces. Construction of the camps proceeded slowly, but Krupp officials considered the progress satisfactory considering material shortages, air raid damage, and their own resistance to the company taking a more active hand in punishing "bad" workers. Delays with the installation of iron bars for barracks' windows, considered of high importance, further hampered construction. Toilet facilities did not merit the same

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[5] Ibid., 1076.

[6] Ibid., 1079.

[7] Ibid., 1080.

attention. Previous bombings left little remaining from earlier washrooms. Instead of moving to repair or replace the remains during the construction period, camp officials decided to let the inmates clear the toilet facilities during their spare time. It was deemed far more important, however, for Krupp's men to construct a reinforced air raid shelter for the guards. Inmates spent days digging a deep foundation pit for the bunker and later covered the concrete structure with dirt. No such provisions were made for the safety of the camp prisoners.[8] No reason was given for this indifference towards worker safety, but it fits in with Gestapo policy and Nazi racial ideology.

On 12 January 1944, while Dechenschule was still under construction, a meeting of top Krupp supervisors discussed the new penal camp and growing problems with workers. During this meeting, Bülow decided that the camp should be under the supervision of the Gestapo. The guards would still be Krupp employees, but the camp commandant would be from the Gestapo.[9] For the inmates, "special labor allocation offices were invited to enumerate heavy and dirty work."[10] At this meeting, Bülow also noted the high rate of absenteeism and breach of contract. Of 250,000 foreigners employed at Krupp in the beginning of 1943, only 125,000 remained a year later due to breach of contract and absenteeism.[11] Bülow and his lieutenants hoped the new penal camp would serve as a deterrent for those considering escape or dereliction.

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[8] Ibid., 1035.

[9] Ibid., 1036, 1043.

[10] Ibid., 1036.

Gestapo and Krupp officials met in March to discuss the details of the Dechenschule camp. No date has been found for the opening of the camp but, contrary to earlier plans, the camp soon contained eastern workers, Poles, female eastern workers, and western workers. The Gestapo was unhappy with this arrangement and ordered all except the western workers to another camp. The remaining inmates were mostly westerners guilty of breach of labor contract, loafers reported to the Gestapo, and captured escapees. Many had been apprehended in France or Belgium and returned to Essen. As escapees, they no longer maintained their status as civilian workers and were treated like criminal prisoners and kept under close guard.[12] Because of the success of Dechenschule in containing the "problem" workers and the likelihood of increasing numbers of western workers, many of whom would eventually find their way into the penal camps, construction began on a second punishment camp. The second camp, Neerfeldschule, opened in April and functioned under the same Krupp-Gestapo agreement as Dechenschule. Under this agreement, workers in the penal camps did not receive wages for their labor. They did, however, receive sickness pay and accident insurance.[13] Although Krupp had removed all non-western workers from Dechenschule in compliance with Gestapo orders, overcrowding forced Krupp temporarily to lock up eastern workers in cells at Dechenschule. The population of the camp was 166 inmates, but a bombing

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[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid., 1037.

[13] Ibid., 1038.

raid in early-1944 cleared more space and allowed for the construction of additional housing capable of holding a total of four hundred workers.[14]

While construction expanded Dechenschule through early and mid-1944, Krupp officials corresponded frequently with the German Industrial Accident Insurance Association. The association wanted to know the nature of the camp inmates. Political civilian internees and penal prisoners were subject to the 30 June 1900 Prisoner Accident Insurance Law, which stipulated that the employer was responsible for any injuries. Prisoners of war, on the other hand, were covered under the Reich Insurance Order, which placed responsibility in the hands of the government. Krupp plant police chief Wilhaus responded to the inquiry by classifying the inmates as military prisoners. Because the workers had been sentenced for labor infractions, they had lost their civilian status. Violations of labor regulations were against the Reich and therefore subject to the Gestapo and Wehrmacht. The inmates were thus "elements upon which a corrective influence is to be exerted."[15] They had no rights and no one to protect them.

The change in worker composition and status resulted in a new set of camp regulations issued by the Gestapo in July 1944. Dechenschule now held the title of State Police Reception Camp for Foreign Civilian Workers, but remained the responsibility of Krupp.[16] The regulations allowed twelve hour work days and seven day work weeks, all without pay. Punishments for violations of camp rules, general unruliness, and poor work

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[14] Ibid., 1040.

[15] Ibid., 1040-1041.

[16] Ibid., 1042.

performance progressed as follows: verbal or written reprimand, deprivation of warm meals at noon, deprivation of bed use, assignment of additional work up to sixteen hours in a week, and imprisonment for a period up to two weeks.[17] Like the non-penal camps, strict discipline was enforced at all times. No unnecessary conversations or gatherings were allowed. The rules strictly prohibited anything that could be construed as anti-German or political in nature. "At the slightest sign of unruliness and disobedience," the rules stated, "ruthless action has to be taken, also fire arms have to be used relentlessly to break resistance. Escaping internees are to be fired at immediately with aim to hit them."[18] One of the cruelest of the regulations was the requirement that prisoners remain in their barracks during air raids. This resulted in a large number of deaths among workers at all Krupp camps although no exact figures are available.

One inmate of Dechenschule, Father Alphonso Come, testified about life in the camp. Come was one of three priests in the penal camp.[19] Come and the other two priests tried repeatedly to conduct religious services but were forbidden by the camp commandant under threat of capital punishment. Guards had taken his habit and treated him no differently than other inmates, although a few called him "Father." Krupp, instead, replaced Come's habit with yellow-striped convict's clothes. When the stripes either wore off or were removed by a prisoner, guards took special delight in chasing after the

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[17] Ibid., 1044.

[18] Ibid., 1048.

[19] Ibid., 1050.

offender with a bucket of yellow paint and slapping the paint on.[20] The entire day for the inmates was like this.

There was never any relief from the control and abuse of the guards. Come and the other inmates rose at 4:30 every morning to the screaming of guards and, for the tardy, the strike of rubber hoses. Between 5:00 and 5:10, the camp leader parceled out the prisoners into work details. The inmates worked from 6:00 to 9:00, when they had a fifteen minute free period. For lunch, the prisoners had a thirty minute break, but were not given any additional food. At 6:00, the prisoners marched back to camp for evening roll call and food distribution. The food ration consisted of a ladle of soup and a lump of bread. The soup was watery and tasted like dishwater; the bread was often moldy. This ration had to last from dinner until the next day's dinner ration and thus was hoarded carefully. The only free time for the inmates was between 7:30 and 8:00. Most internees used the opportunity to visit the meager washroom facilities to scrub some of the day's grime from their filthy clothes and bodies. To make sure the prisoners never forgot or misunderstood their situation, guards constantly referred to them as "*Stuecke* (Stock)" and told them, "*Keine Arbeit, kein Fressen*. (No Work, No Food)"[21] Even the language used in this insult demeaned the workers. *Fressen* is the word used for the feeding of animals, not people. The women were not human, only tools of Krupp, just like any other machine or animal, although Krupp tended to treat its machinery better.

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[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid., 1057.

Come's witness to numerous beatings left no doubt as to the seriousness of the threat. "Our guards were employees of Krupp's and they would hand out beatings right and left whenever they pleased."[22] Guards were not alone in administering beatings; ordinary German workers and foremen often participated. Fernand Thieltgen, a Belgian prisoner, served as an assistant medic for his camp. One afternoon an unknown foremen went into Thieltgen's room and beat him severely without reason.[23]

Most of Come's comrades worked near the camp, either digging trenches or clearing debris. Occasionally they worked in one of the foundries doing hauling and lifting. The guards considered this light work, but such work often meant the transportation by hand of two twenty kilogram rounds of iron between factories.[24] When not working, the inmates were subjected to speeches by Krupp officials. The speeches usually contained a political or motivational message. Bülow, in one such speech after a bombing raid, told the prisoners that it was not Germany's fault that there were victims on account of the air raids. Nor was the war the fault of Germany. Instead, it was caused by the Allies.[25]

The construction of Neerfeldschule did not improve any of the conditions at Dechenschule. The removal of workers did not alleviate overcrowding because of the influx of new prisoners. Instead of relief for the inmates, Neerfeldschule provided another

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[22] Ibid., 1052.

[23] Ibid., 1053.

[24] Ibid., 1054-1055.

[25] Ibid., 1057

example of extreme barbarity. Hendrik Scholtzens was nineteen when his local labor office in the Netherlands called him for work in Germany He originally labored in a Messerschmitt factory but escaped. He was captured and spent several months in various prison and transit camps. He arrived in Essen on 4 April 1944 weighing only forty-four kilograms. His situation did not improve. Scholtzens was among a group of new arrivals who saw their coats, ties, belts, and watches stripped from them by Krupp guards. Because he and the rest of the new prisoners were escapees and discipline problems, they were sent to Neerfeldschule punishment camp for western workers via a four hour march in which the fallen were beaten severely.[26] Neerfeldschule was full of contract breakers, escapees, and other types of "shirkers." During the processing of the new arrivals, guards discovered on Scholtzen a photograph of his parents. Camp leader Rath, a member of the Gestapo, tore the photograph into little pieces and ordered Scholtzen beaten by the guards. Minutes later Scholtzen was beaten again for hesitating during the head-shaving of the prisoners.

> The guards concluded I did not want my head shaved. The result was another beating. The rubber truncheon was made ready. I had to take off my jacket and then was pounded on my bare back till I fell down completely dazed. I was kicked to a room opposite the administration where my hair was shaved off. This shaving was done with a knife without any previous soaping. The result was that after the treatment we walked about with bleeding heads.[27]

After a welcome reception like that, Scholtzen found the conditions inside the camp even worse.

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[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid., 1058.

The inmates' quarters were in a concrete bunker. Inside the bunker, several inches of water covered an uneven dirt floor. Every night prisoners fought over the dry spots on the floor. Those who were slow or unable to get a dry area slept either in the puddles of water or slept standing up. A guard, after witnessing one such fight, was heard remarking: "That's fine, they educate themselves."[28] Scholtzen and his fellows received no food the first thirty-six hours in the camp. To cope with the hunger, they followed the suggestion of older prisoners. They searched their straw beds for mice, a staple and constant companion of the inmates. Scholtzen caught one, killed it, and put it in his pocket. The next day, during a break from work at a steel mill, he and another prisoner built a small fire. Using pieces of rusted scrap-iron and slivers of glass, they skinned the mouse, cooked it, and then ate it.[29] One of the first days in the camp was spent digging an electrical cable out of the frozen ground. Because the cable was live, extreme care was taken by the prisoners and no accidents occurred. Working alongside the inmates were some young Jewish women. Any communication between the two groups was forbidden, but Scholtzen learned that they were Hungarians and no better off then penal camp inmates.[30] Scholtzen lived six weeks in the camp. His daily meal consisted of half a liter of warm water and cabbage leaves and fifty grams of bread. Once a week the prisoners received twenty-five grams of margarine, twenty-five grams of jam, and twenty-five grams of sausage. They received no soap, no wash water, and no additional clothing. At night

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[28] Ibid., 1059.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

they were not allowed to use the outside toilets. There was little medical treatment. A doctor occasionally visited the camp, but he paid almost no attention to the inmates. Those who were sick worked until they dropped. "When there were enough sick people, they were put on a truck till the floor of the truck was covered. They disappeared from the camp and were never seen again."[31]

Medical care like this was commonplace. Paul Ledoux, a Frenchman, was a camp medic at Neerfeldschule and Dechenschule who described the performance of the German doctors. At Dechenschule, the physician was supposed to come twice a week but rarely troubled himself. The dispensary was under a forty-man barracks. This created unsanitary conditions as dirt and excrement often fell or dripped between the cracks down into the dispensary.[32] This was a serious problem because the forty inmates had only two jelly buckets to serve as night pots. Because most of the food contained lots of liquid and, because dysentery was common, the pots filled quickly and often overflowed onto the plank floor.[33] The inmates complained of the conditions to the camp commandant but were ignored. Even had proper sanitary conditions been present, it would have been difficult for all of the inmates to have received decent medical care. The dispensary contained only six beds, but because it was so difficult to get classified as sick, the small number of beds was never a problem. The difficulty, instead, derived from the camp regulations. Medical personnel could only classify ten percent of the inmates as sick at a

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[31] Ibid., 1060.

[32] Ibid., 1065.

[33] Ibid., 1066.

time.[34] So, if the full ten percent of the four hundred inmates got medical attention, this would have meant forty people for six beds. But, in Ledoux's two months at Dechenschule, the beds were never full and only one person was sent to the hospital. Thus it was nearly impossible to get medical care. The doctor was rarely present, a prisoner had to stand for morning roll call at 5:15 to get recognized as sick no matter how ill, and the dispensary was severely limited in size for the number of prisoners it served.

It is difficult to believe that conditions could be worse, but they were, in fact, at Neerfeldschule. Camp authorities transferred Ledoux to the other penal camp in December 1944. He became the official camp medic although his only medical training was the completion of a Belgian Red Cross first aid course.[35] Conditions at Neerfeldschule were so bad that the doctor refused to come to the camp at all.[36] It was no great loss for the workers. The last time he had come, he was supposed to have investigated the death of a worker. The doctor was drunk and began his autopsy by taking the pulse of the corpse.[37] The absence of medical treatment combined with poor rations to produce numerous deaths. Once, Bülow inspected the camp because of a number of recent deaths. One prisoner reported that the guards had stolen his food.

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[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid., 1068.

[36] Ibid., 1069.

[37] Ibid., 1069-1070.

Bülow promised action, but none came. The prisoner was promptly beaten as soon as Bülow left.[38]

The Gestapo's regulations strictly forbade Krupp's guards from using such corporal punishment against foreign workers. Only in emergency situations, such as a prisoner revolt or escape attempt, was physical abuse allowed by the Gestapo regulations for the penal camps.[39] Guards who violated this order were themselves subject to police action. Bülow and assistant police chief Hassel were often at odds over the enforcement of these rules. Unfortunately for the inmates of Dechenschule and Neerfeldschule, the camp leaders echoed Hassel's brutal treatment of inmates.[40] Willi Toppat, a guard at Dechenschule, was particularly noted for his brutality in dealing with prisoners. Almost every former inmate who testified about conditions in the camp mentioned Toppat, who, himself, was called to the stand during the Krupp trial. It is not surprising that his view of camp conditions was strikingly different. Toppat worked at Krupp from 1935 to 1939 in a rolling mill. In 1939 he joined the plant police and joined Dechenschule's guard detachment in the Spring of 1944. Toppat frequently beat the inmates on the orders of the camp leader, a man named Rath.[41] It was not done by the guards' choice, Toppat testified, but from fear of Rath, who told them to obey or suffer the consequences. Not all

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[38] Ibid., 1074.

[39] Ibid., 1083.

[40] Ibid., 1085.

[41] Ibid., 1088.

did at first, according to Toppat. "A number of guards were guilty of small disciplinary failings and were taken away by the Gestapo without us ever knowing as to where they were taken, neither did their relations know."[42]

Although inmates had the right to complain to Krupp officials about their treatment, in only one instance was a prisoner able to get past camp leader Rath to an outside authority. In this case, an inmate who worked in the main administration building approached Bülow and told him of the conditions in Dechenschule. Bülow called in Rath and Hassel to explain what was going on in the camp. The inmates, as a result, received a number of blankets, warm underwear, and shoes.[43] According to Toppat's testimony, there was no retaliation. Bülow became a frequent visitor to Dechenschule but had little real authority over policies in the camp since it was formally under the Gestapo. The camp commander remained under Gestapo control; Krupp provided guards and quarters. His concern, in any case, was not so much with the status of the workers, as with camp security and guard vigilance. Rath, however, resented Bülow's interference and the attention Bülow received from the prisoners whenever he was present. Rath, in front of his guards, frequently referred to Bülow as a woman or as having a woman's heart.[44] The animosity between Rath and Bülow grew, but neither could take action against the other. Rath feared Bülow's position in the firm. Bülow feared Rath's connections with the

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[42] Ibid., 1090.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid., 1093.

Gestapo and SS. Toppat went so far as to suggest that continued interference from Bülow might have resulted in Bülow's disappearance at the hands of Rath's associates.[45]

Bülow's relationship with Rath's predecessor, Fritz Fuehrer, had been much better. Fuehrer testified during the Krupp trial about conditions in Dechenschule and its function in the Krupp system, "The purpose was to punish foreign workers by order of the Gestapo."[46] Fuehrer's testimony was certainly biased but he may have had some genuine concern for the inmates. In his view, the camp was not like a prison and workers were allowed to move freely and to participate in evening sports activities.[47] When food was inadequate, as it frequently was, Fuehrer was often able to obtain additional rations through Bülow. Bülow, like Fuehrer, should not be considered a humanitarian. From the documentary evidence, it seems Bülow's actions were motivated primarily by concern over worker productivity and government interference. In cases where worker efficiency was not an issue, as in the Voerde camp, Bülow did nothing.

When American military units first entered the Essen area, they found a tragedy beyond human comprehension at the Voerde-West camp. Voerde was a former camp of the Organization Todt that had been taken over by Krupp. It became a concentration camp for very young children, the oldest no more than two years of age. American soldiers found rows of small graves marked only by numbered stone slabs. The number of

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[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid., 1098.

[47] Ibid., 1100.

children who died at Voerde is unknown. Despite the age and helplessness of the children, conditions were no better there than at other Krupp camps. Instead of the expected human concern for the young, Voerde was full of homicidal indifference. One record from the camp lists the names of eighty-eight children who died during the period from August 1944 to March 1945.[48] The record is incomplete and certainly does not contain the probable number of deaths. When Ernst Wirtz, a supervisor from another Krupp camp, visited Voerde, he found the children undernourished. "There was no child at all whose arms or hands were thicker than my thumb."[49] They were the children of eastern workers from the larger Voerde camp. Most had swollen bellies, all the more visible because of their lack of clothes. Wirtz asked the eastern female nursemaids why the children were so undernourished. The answer was simply a lack of food. They told him that fifty to sixty of the children died every day, but there was a constant influx of children from new arrivals and births in the camp.[50] The nursemaids were primarily from the Ukraine and without professional training. They were overseen by a Ukrainian doctor who had little equipment to take care of the children. The mothers of the children were allowed to visit on Sundays, but few were able to make the journey.[51] Many mothers were transferred

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[48] Ibid., 1110.

[49] Ibid., 1114.

[50] Ibid., 1115.

[51] Ibid., 1127.

away from Voerde. Other mothers were simply unable to walk the thirty-seven kilometer distance from Essen to Voerde to see their child.[52]

The responses by Krupp personnel to questions about Voerde paint a different picture. According to Hans Kupke, the nurses were trained and under the supervision of a German doctor. Kupke acknowledged only forty-six deaths during late 1944 and early 1945. Similar testimony came from Anne Doering, the cook for the camp. Doering said that the children were absolutely normal.[53] They did not sleep on bare rubber sheets like Wirtz reported but on clean linen. All had clothes and were well-cared for Those that died received a proper burial in a casket. She made no mention of the mass cremations that Wirtz found. Doering, like the approximately twenty nursemaids, had no formal training either as a nurse or as a dietitian. She did not know what scurvy was. She did not know what vitamins children need to maintain proper health. She did not know about rickets, a malady suffered by many of the children. Still, she selected and prepared food for the children.[54]

Doering, during the trial, could not explain the causes of death for the children of Voerde. Neither could Johann Wienen, the camp commandant. Wienen blamed most of the deaths on tuberculosis, a diptheria epidemic, and an outbreak of scarlet fever.[55] In his

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[52] William Manchester, *The Arms of Krupp: 1587 - 1968* (Little, Brown, and Co., 1968), 631.

[53] Trial, 1121.

[54] Ibid., 1126.

[55] Ibid., 1130.

view, Voerde was a bright, cheerful place where the children were well taken care of by himself and his staff. The approach of Allied troops caused the removal of the children two hundred miles east to Thuringia.[56] Only four Ukrainian nursemaids accompanied the several hundred children. None was ever seen again.[57] The decision to liquidate the camp arose from fears of the Allied reaction to the camp if found.[58] Whether such fears arose over the other camps in Krupp's control is unknown. Obviously this contradicts Wienen's view of the camp. It was not healthy, and it was certainly not happy.

Voerde was not the only camp evacuated as the Allies approached. In the Humboldtstrasse camp, female concentration camp workers worked at Krupp facilities but were supervised and guarded by the SS. There were approximately five hundred of the women. Most were Hungarian Jews from Auschwitz and between the ages fifteen and twenty-five. A careful system of merit badges controlled the treatment of the inmates. Prisoners who performed well and who did not pose a discipline problem wore a white badge. The badge entitled them to better accommodations, additional food rations, and some free time outside of the camp. Average workers received a blue badge, which carried no benefits or extra privileges. A red badge was reserved for prisoners who either did not perform adequately in the workplace or behaved poorly. The wearer experienced the deprivation of many rights, less food, and physical punishment.[59] When the women

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[56] Manchester, 636.

[57] Ibid., 637.

[58] Ibid., 627.

[59] Trial, 1135-1136.

arrived at the camp from Auschwitz in August 1944, they found life little different. The SS furnished twenty administrative workers to supervise the camp and its inmates. Krupp provided forty-five women to the SS for three weeks training. After the training, the women were sworn into the SS and served as guards at Humboldtstrasse.[60]

Arriving at the camp, the prisoners found only filth and trash left from the former inmates. Before being fed or allowed to rest, the guards forced the women to clean the camp. Originally, the camp contained several barracks and enough iron and wooden beds to house the prisoners. In October, an air raid forced the inmates into a single barracks. Five hundred women crowded together until another air raid forced them into a large cellar. This raid, in January, destroyed the remaining barracks and all other buildings in the camp. The cellar was without light, heat, water, or beds. Only thirty straw mats were available to serve roughly five hundred women. During the day, the women were parceled out in small groups under SS guards. On average, the inmates went twice a week without food for periods longer than twenty-four hours. When they were fed, it was only once a day and in small amounts. Complaints about the conditions resulted in beatings by the guards. Likewise, reporting to the dispensary for medical treatment was not recommended. Too frequently, the women noticed, such visits resulted in disappearances.[61]

Beatings were common, both in the camp and in the factories. Usually, a leather truncheon was used, but workers also received many kicks and punches. Elizabeth Roth,

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[60] Ibid., 1139.

[61] Ibid., 1145.

one of the inmates, testified that the camp leader's "only pleasure was to hit anybody in the eyes" with his truncheon.[62] Roth was struck once during the evening food distribution. She was standing in line waiting for her food when one of the SS guards walked up to her and hit her in the face.[63] She was not alone. She estimated that ten to twenty of the five hundred inmates received blows every minute.[64] This may seem high, but in situations like feeding and other group gatherings, it was entirely possible. Some prisoners' bodies were blue and red from the continual beatings. Every day the SS guards, both male and female, told the women, "We always have five minutes; the last five minutes we shall kill you."[65] Often, Kruppianer felt the women did not work fast enough. On such occasions, the German workers were able to get the guards to distribute beatings by simply pointing at the offending woman. Typically, without cause, the SS guards, both men and women, waited for a prisoner to stop and rest for a second. Then they hit the offender repeatedly with an iron bar until her body was covered with bruises.[66]

Roth was extremely fortunate in being able to escape from Humboldtstrasse before its liquidation. As the American Army approached Essen, rumors flew around the camp that the inmates were being transferred to Buchenwald for extermination. Roth told her sister: "I don't want to go; I can't. I know that if they take me to Buchenwald I won't

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[62] Ibid., 1147.

[63] Ibid., 1148.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid., 1157.

[66] Manchester, 620.

live any more."[67] One of the German workers offered to help Roth, her sister, and two other girls to a hiding place if they could escape. An air raid provided an opportunity, and the four young women fled the camp. They were unable to find the German who had offered shelter. They hid in a graveyard until they met another German, Gerhardt Marquardt, who told them to go back to the camp. Roth asked him for a pistol so she could kill herself; it would have the same result as going back to camp.[68] The German, who knew them from the workplace, relented and hid them in a root cellar. For three days Roth and her comrades huddled in darkness without food or water. On the fourth night of their escape, Marquardt gave them each a potato and slice of bread. The daily ration of potato lasted for two weeks. During this time in the cellar, another German stumbled across them. They told him that they were Germans fleeing the advancing Americans. The German said: "You had better watch, because the Gestapo found twelve Hungarians who escaped from the camp and they were just killed."[69] The German realized that they were escapees and did not inform on them. Marquardt removed the group to a small wooden hut. Unfortunately, he was unable to feed them any longer. "He was a very, very poor man who didn't have enough for himself to eat. A few days later he said he couldn't feed us, and he couldn't come back, because he was afraid of his neighbors."[70] Luckily, he

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[67] Trial, 1150.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Ibid., 1154.

[70] Ibid., 1151.

had found another German who was willing to hide and feed the escaped prisoners until they were liberated.

The actions of these few Germans show that not all of the Kruppianer and Essen residents had lost their humanity. Peter Gutersohn had been a Krupp employee since 1912 and worked in a machine construction plant during the war with the concentration camp inmates. As he described it at the trial:

> These women were in a very run-down condition. They had to load rubbish and cart it away on wheelbarrows and carry iron girders; they were also employed on other cleaning-up activities. These Jewesses had neither work clothes nor protective gloves for these jobs. Their entire clothing consisted of one ragged dress made of burlap. They wore wooden slippers on their naked feet. The huts in which these Jewesses lived were severely damaged during an air attack, so that the huts were no longer waterproof. Thus in winter the Jewesses had to come to work in the worst weather, dressed in their wet rags, with simply their thoroughly soaked blankets on their shoulders. I have witnessed this myself on many occasions. If, in these conditions, the women wanted to dry themselves out a little at a coal fire, or if they tried to wash some of their rags, they were immediately driven away by Wunsch [the plant leader].[71]

Gutersohn had seen the women when they arrived in Essen in August. They passed his workplace in locked streetcars without windows. He did not see them again for two months, and when he did, he was shocked and deeply ashamed to be a German.[72] Obviously, National Socialism did not rest well with Gutersohn. His reaction also shows that some, at least a few, had the strength and courage to resist the hatred to which all too many Germans had succumbed.

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[71] Ibid., 1153-1154.

[72] Ibid., 1154.

The female workers began work in the plant carrying debris and iron. Two SS women guarded the prisoners and were free with punishment. Gutersohn witnessed several German workers, apparently influenced by Nazi propaganda, say over and over again in front of the women, "What are we going to do with this rabble? Why don't we kill them?"[73] Gutersohn identified the offending workers as aggressive National Socialists. They reacted to the encouragement of the plant leader who, in morphine-induced rages, brutalized the females.[74] In Gutersohn's view, the majority of the Krupp workers were long-serving family men who never bought into National Socialism. They were just weak-willed victims of the time. This does not explain why some resisted the influences of their environment. Gutersohn was certainly the exception to the indifference or brutality of most German workers at Krupp.

So, not all chose to join in the inhumane treatment of the women. Peter Hubert noticed that "bare-handed fourteen-year-olds weighing less than ninety pounds were pushing loads of stone on all-metal wheelbarrows."[75] Hubert loaned his gloves to one of the smaller girls. A supervisor promptly tore them from her hands and threw them into a nearby fire with a curse: "If they don't want to work like that, just give them a kick in the ass!"[76] Roth's benefactor in her escape was Gerhardt Marquardt. He worked in the rolling mill with some of the prisoners, to whom he often gave bread and clothing,

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[73] Ibid., 1156.

[74] Ibid., 1158.

[75] Manchester, 621.

[76] Ibid., 621.

whatever he could spare. In one case, a prisoner was able to bribe a French doctor for medical treatment, using cigarettes from Marquardt. Marquardt was able to obtain medicine for the woman's malady at great risk to himself. The danger in helping the Jewish women was great. When he hid Roth and her friends, he did so without his wife's knowledge. He feared that, if he were caught, his wife would be punished also. After the escape, the SS had warned people living near the camp: "If we find the man who is giving shelter to the girls, we will certainly hang him."[77] During their period in hiding, the women told Marquardt about Auschwitz and what was happening there. He did not want to believe the stories of extermination, but, he said, he could not doubt the women.[78]

It must have made Marquardt's decision to believe the stories about Auschwitz easier when he witnessed beatings and public humiliations every day at work. The prisoners went without food many times. Inmates guilty of idleness or talking to Germans had their hair shorn in the shape of a cross on top of their heads.[79] Frequently, the SS female guards were seen randomly to walk to prisoners and begin kicking them. On the hour-and-a-half march from Humboldtstrasse to the plants, guards distributed blows to the slow. Karoline Geulen, one of the female SS guards, testified that she never saw violence like others reported.[80] The prisoners, she asserted, were well-fed, never worked

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[77] Trial, 1171.

[78] Ibid., 1172.

[79] Ibid., 1175.

[80] Ibid., 1182-1183.

exceedingly hard, nor physically abused. Any discomfort the inmates experienced was due solely to bomb damage.

During her cross-examination by the prosecution, Geulen remembered a few details about Humboldtstrasse that she had neglected to mention earlier. She affirmed that, toward the end of the war, inmates frequently relieved themselves in the open. Inmates who were slow leaving the showers or work were beaten. In the cellar where the women lived, temperatures often froze solid the damp straw on which the prisoners slept. Guelen also remembered that Rieck, the camp commandant, carried a long leather whip and was particularly brutal to the Jewish women.[81] "Sometimes on a whim, he would enter the wooden barracks and thrash the girls while they were undressing. Although most of his Jews were between fourteen and twenty-five, one was in her thirties, and when he was informed that she couldn't keep up with the others he methodically whipped her to death that night."[82] Rieck was noted for his accuracy with the whip. As the prisoners returned from work, he looked for those who were most tired. With a flick, he tried to whip the inmates in the eyes. At least one was blinded in this fashion.[83] Needless to say, Elizabeth Roth and her three fellow escapees were extremely fortunate. Those who remained in the camp were taken to Buchenwald in March 1945 and never heard from again.[84]

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[81] Ibid., 1186-1187.

[82] Manchester, 619.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Trial, 1159

How could the Krupp officials and guards treat the workers like they did? The penal camps were under the control of the Gestapo, but the guards were often long-term Kruppianer, men used to the Krupp tradition of family. They quickly accepted orders from camp commanders to abuse the workers physically, often despite direct orders from Krupp and the Reich to the opposite. As the war drew to a close, the violence increased as the individual guards took more and more liberty in distributing beatings. The camps acted as independent kingdoms outside the control of Krupp and the Gestapo. The German tradition of the master of the house was embodied in the actions of sadistic, power-hungry men.

Violence in the penal camps was directed against male prisoners. Most were not easterners, and there was not nearly the same level of negative propaganda directed against the westerners who comprised the majority of inmates. Instead, it is likely that much of the guards' behavior derived from Nazi racial ideology and the German tradition of authority. In the eyes of the guards, the prisoners were rule-breakers and deserved to be punished. How does this explain the conditions in the Humboldtstrasse camp for female concentration camp inmates? It does not. One explanation for the brutality towards the Jewish women may derive from the testimony of Gutersohn. As he noted, some of his fellow workers were aggressive National Socialists and subject to propaganda. To them, they were not beating defenseless women but the sub-human enemies of the Reich.

There can be no explanation for the treatment of children at Voerde. It is obvious that no effort was made to ensure their survival. When it became a possibility that the

camp would be discovered, Krupp sent the children to their deaths. Perhaps at Voerde the children were not viewed as children but merely worthless baggage associated with the eastern workers. In any case, Krupp violated simple laws of human decency and left children to die. The special camps of Krupp are distinct in their rate of brutality No restraint was exhibited in delivering punishments. Only a few thousand workers, women, and children received abuse the equivalent of that received by tens of thousands of normal workers. It is obvious that there was no firm order or control. Instead, there existed a disorganized system of abuse. Some individual acts of decency occurred, but they exist only to illustrate how far the other workers and guards had fallen.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The Krupp firm's use and abuse of forced labor was not the result of Nazi government directives or a lack of suitable alternatives. It was a conscious decision by the Krupp directors to take full advantage of a cheap, plentiful source of workers. Krupp officials made little effort to ensure that the conditions in which foreign workers lived and worked were humane. Instead, they issued vague orders for the use of physical punishment only in extreme cases. Much of the decision to use violence was left up to individual camp commanders. No investigators inspected the camps to determine if the workers received treatment that would both encourage maximum productivity and allow them to live like human beings. Judging from their conduct in using foreign labor, Krupp did not follow any logical course in its treatment of the "guest" workers. Where proper care and treatment would have increased productivity and encouraged volunteers, Krupp responded with a beating and a bowl of watery broth. Individual camp commanders often turned a blind eye to violence on the part of the guards under their control or actively participated in torture themselves. Like Nazi Germany as a whole, the Krupp firm was full of Germans turned abusive and violent in an extreme situation. They resisted and ignored orders by Krupp management and Reich authorities. Camps often became independent autarchies where only the camp commanders held power.

The transformation of Krupp from a traditional German company where workers were treated well and taken care of by management to a loose collection of slave camps

was sudden. Initially, foreign workers received treatment little different from that accorded German workers. This changed quickly as the war expanded, German workers disappeared into the military, and Krupp became more and more reliant on Reich labor agencies to supply needed workers. The influx of thousands of non-German, non-German speaking workers after late-1939 overwhelmed Krupp authorities, who soon grew indifferent to the needs of the newcomers. The early arrivals, Poles and Czechs, were assimilated with little harshness or upheaval. Krupp quartered most in local homes or in small barracks. They received pay lower than that of comparable Germans, but often higher than wages in their homelands. Although most were involuntarily drafted by local labor boards for service in Germany, many volunteered because of the scarcity of local work. Access to public events and buildings was generally prohibited but local authorities ignored early violations of such prohibitions.

The fall of France in June 1940 brought additional workers into the Krupp plants and workshops. They, like the Czechs and Poles, did not initially experience the full brutality that later arrivals underwent. The change from limited acceptance to intolerance and persecution took place in only a matter of months. It occurred after the invasion of the Soviet Union by the Wehrmacht in June 1941. Early victories as the German military machine thrust eastward produced hundreds of thousands of prisoners. Many were left to die on the Russian steppes, but escalating war production in Germany prompted Reich labor officials to act. Russian prisoners of war and civilians were lumped into the category of "eastern workers." Many found themselves on trains to Krupp factories in the Ruhr.

Hundreds of Jews, relatively few in comparison, joined the forced migration to Krupp factories.

Some Jews did not have to travel far to fall under the control of Krupp. On its own initiative, Krupp gained the permission and support of Reich authorities to build factories at Markstaedt in Silesia and Auschwitz. In conjuction with the SS, Krupp personnel supervised the work of concentration camp inmates in slave-built workplaces. It is unclear why Krupp wanted the plants. Reich armaments officials pointed out that it was more profitable and productive to expand existing shops in Essen. The evidence leads one to conclude that Krupp acted out of greed and fear. If Krupp did not move quickly to utilize the camp inmates, another company would or the labor source would disappear into the extermination chambers.

In determining the involvement of Alfried Krupp and his assistants in everyday abuse, the trial transcripts and documents provide some assistance, but several considerations must be remembered. The papers presented at the trial were selected by attorneys and legal assistants who had definite agendas. Furthermore, American soldiers in Essen found the remains of thousands of documents burned before their arrival. Whether those papers contained explicit orders by Krupp directors for inhumane treatment will never be known. The existing evidence shows only Bülow's memorandums forbidding physical punishment except in "extreme" cases.

This does not remove responsibility from Krupp and his lieutenants. It was impossible for them not to know what was going on in the camps. Hundreds of installations housing workers, everything from a German home with a single foreign

worker to camps with several thousand inmates, surrounded Essen and the Krupp facilities. Tens of thousands of humans living in crowded, unsanitary conditions leave ample evidence of their presence. It is absurd to believe that the Krupp directors were unaware of the masses of unwashed scarecrows who filled the streets and workshops. The limited attempts to ensure proper treatment do not alleviate the responsibility of Krupp either. If Bülow and others really meant for the workers to be treated justly, they could easily have established a system of inspection and regulation. Instead, only cursory visits to camps were made by Bülow and no effort was made to follow up on his recommendations.

The foreign workers, abandoned by Krupp officials, found themselves supervised by Germans who, three years earlier, had been simple workers, but who now were suddenly made foremen and guards. In their new positions, the guards and foremen often turned violent and abusive. The reasons for this desensitizing can only be postulated from the evidence. Some obviously accepted National Socialist propaganda that was commonplace throughout the factories, workshops, and camps. Many may have felt that the Russians were truly inhuman and Godless barbarians. They may have been morally weak or just found such doctrine agreeable with their individual beliefs. Others may have harbored a genuine hatred of foreigners. Xenophobia is, after all, common in German history. The stab-in-the-back legend following World War I can also be considered a factor in the easy acceptance of violence towards the "enemy." In this case, the enemies were often innocent and powerless workers of all types: westerners and easterners, prisoners of war and civilians, skilled craftsmen and technologically ignorant peasants.

Gentiles and Jews, men and women, adults and children. Constant bombings by the Allies, food shortages, and fear of government action against dissenters probably also shaped the behaviors of the Kruppianer.

None of these excuses for German actions for valid. Individual Germans did resist Nazi propaganda despite risks to their safety and the safety of their families. Unfortunately, they were all too infrequently encountered, and their acts of kindness affected only a few of the thousands of displaced foreigners. Still, the resistance by those who retained their humanity provides further evidence for the contention that Krupp was a typical Nazi institution. The acts of resistance are further support against the view of an authoritarian, Nazi monolith. The examples of brutality, however, far outnumber the examples of kindness.

Camp commanders, many of whom had direct connections to the Gestapo and the SS, were often the instigators of independent action. They, and Assistant-Police Chief Hassel, encouraged guards to violate express orders not to abuse the workers unnecessarily. However, their ties with the SS and the Gestapo were not solely responsible for their behavior because official regulations from both organizations prohibited such actions. Once again, it was a matter of individual decision whether to exceed orders. Hassel actually threatened guards in order to gain their participation in beatings. Camp Leader Rath ignored inmate pleas for food and clothing. Normal human decency did not matter to such men. Sadly, the vast majority of their fellow Germans followed their lead or stood by without interventing.

The conditions in the camps for western workers were intolerable. Food was scarce, beatings were common. The same was true, but even more common, in the camps for eastern workers. The severity of the special camps can not be comprehended by comparing the types of brutality present with those in the normal camps. Instead, one must consider the relatively small size of the special camps, which contained only a few hundred workers, but which experienced atrocities on a far larger scale than did the more heavily populated normal camps. The influence of the Gestapo cannot be blamed for the situation in the penal camps. Krupp owned the penal camps, paid the guards, and provided housing and food. The Gestapo provided only the camp leader, who was often already an employee of Krupp.

The camps for males provide horrifying examples of inhumanity. The special camps for women and children are all the more disturbing because of the dichotomy they present. German traditions and National Socialism both emphasized the role of the family. Children were the future of Germandom; women were the mothers and nurturers of that future. Certainly from 1941 on, German women were needed for the war effort but were actively discouraged, nonetheless, from becoming involved. Only a few thousand ever found their way into industry. Unlike Great Britain and the United States, Germany refused to undermine traditional gender roles. Instead, as already mentioned, the Reich relied on the labor of millions of slaves. The protective and isolationist attitude towards German women did not carry over into the treatment of foreign women, who received abuse equal in severity to that meted out to male workers. Their work assignments, as illustrated by the Roth sisters, were no different from those imposed on men. Food was

just as scare and housing just as unsanitary. Because of their supposed "racial inferiority," they ceased being women and, like foreign men, were only another resource to be exploited.

Although perhaps difficult to believe, the children of the foreign workers received even less compassion from their German captors. The infants laid on bare pallets without clothes. Their stomachs were swollen from a lack of proper food. A small group of female eastern workers attempted to provide some relief. Krupp, as the end of the war neared, attempted to erase any evidence of the camp. The children were sent eastward where they most likely perished. No explanation can be given for the complete indifference of Krupp towards the children's camp at Voerde. During the trial, the Krupp defendants testified that they either had no knowledge of Voerde or believed it to be an ideal camp.

Alfried Krupp and the directors of the firm supervised a business that should not be seen as somehow separate from National Socialism but, rather, as exemplary of it. In the Krupp camps, many Germans became brutal or indifferent towards the foreign workers. Only a few had the courage to resist. Those put into positions of power ignored directives from their superiors. They acted independently and encouraged violence from their employees. The Krupp firm and its employees, from top to bottom, were responsible for atrocities the equal of any in the concentration camps.

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