

Organization Todt

Organization for large-scale construction work in Nazi Germany, named after its founder, the engineer Dr. Fritz Todt (1891-1942). The organization employed many foreign workers, prisoners of war and concentration camp inmates to build military factories and fortifications.

Todt was made road construction inspector-general in 1933. In 1938 he became the head of coordination of the building sector, as part of Hitler's Four-Year Plan. He was responsible for the construction of the Westwall (the fortifications along Germany's western border), and expanded the defense of the western coast from Norway to the Bay of Biscay after Germany defeated France in 1940. In March 1940 he became the minister for armaments and munitions, but was mysteriously killed in a plane crash in 1942.

After Todt's death, the organization expanded and was divided into units attached to different army groups. By 1944 it had 1,360,000 employees, who worked on projects such as the construction of Mittelwerk (the largest underground factory in the world, it produced missiles and plane engines); air force fortifications; and at least six underground factories with takeoff and landing strips. Tens of thousands of Jews transported from Hungary helped build large bunkers and a defensive structure called the Southeast Wall.