

I.G. Farben (IGF)

A corporation of eight of Germany's major chemical companies.

HITLER aspired to create a self-sufficient Germany not dependent on raw materials from the outside world, and thus sought to develop a synthetic-materials industry. IGF produced synthetic rubber and synthetic fuel from coal; Hitler guaranteed large state purchases of these products from IGF. This helped create a strong connection between the corporation and the Nazis. In 1936, when Hitler launched his Four-Year Plan under the management of Hermann Goering, an IGF board member named Carl Krauch was given a leading role. The corporation also contributed huge sums of money to the Nazi Party between 1933 and 1944. The poisonous Zyklon B gas used for mass extermination was first developed by a subsidiary of IGF, DEGESCH, before the war.

As Germany annexed new areas, IGF took over the management of chemical factories located there. In 1941 IGF set up synthetic rubber and gasoline plants at Auschwitz. A new section called Auschwitz III was even added to Auschwitz near the IGF plants to house the prisoners working there. The average life span of prisoners working for IGF in Auschwitz was three months.

After the war, IGF paid reparations to the Jews who had been forced to work for the company at Auschwitz; non-Jews were not compensated. In the late 1990s the issue of reparations was re-opened.