

Hasag

Hugo Schneider *Aktiengesellschaft-Metalwarenfabrik*), one of the privately owned German companies that used concentration camp prisoners as forced laborers. Hasag, which manufactured armaments, was the third largest of such companies, after I.G. Farben and the Herman Goering Works.

In 1932 a Nazi Party member and SS officer named Paul Budin became general manager of Hasag. In 1933 the company became the German army's regular ammunitions supplier. In 1934 Hasag was officially designated as *Wehrmachtsbetrieb*, a company working for the armed forces. In 1939 its classification was raised to *Ruestungsbetrieb*, meaning armaments company. In 1940 Budin was made responsible for the production of all light ammunition for the air force and infantry; his responsibilities were expanded in 1942. In 1944 Hasag was assigned a contract to produce infantry rocket launchers.

During World War II Hasag had eight factories inside Germany. Two types of workers were employed at these factories. The first group included civilian workers from all over Europe, especially the Slavic countries. Some of these employees volunteered to work for Hasag, but most were forced laborers. The second group of workers consisted of concentration camp prisoners. In the summer of 1944 the Nazis set up labor camps next to each Hasag factory. In all, some 41,000 prisoners passed through the Hasag labor camps.

Hasag also opened its doors in Poland during the war. In 1940 Hasag was put in charge of the ammunitions factories in Skarzysko-Kamienna, the grenade factory in Kielce, and the foundry in Czestochowa. In early 1943 Hasag bought those factories from the *Generalgouvernement*. After Germany invaded the Soviet Union in mid-1941, Hasag became the *Generalgouvernement's* main ammunitions supplier. Until 1942 it employed mostly Poles; at that time, Hasag began employing Jewish forced laborers, whose wages were paid directly to the SS. Six forced labor camps were built by Hasag in the Radom district. By June 1943 Hasag's camps held 17,000 Jewish prisoners, who were subjected to terrible conditions and periodic selections (see also Selektion). From July 1944 to early 1945, Hasag transferred most of its equipment, materials, and workers from the

Generalgouvernement factories to its factories within the Reich. (see also Forced Labor.)