

THE NAZI CONSOLIDATION OF THE HUMAN ECONOMIES



Within just a couple of years of German industry's rediscovery of the skilled worker and the permanent legal establishment of the Labor Administration, economic and political tidal waves threatened to sweep them away. The Depression beginning in 1929 meant that neither companies nor individuals, for whom immediate survival was at stake, were willing to invest much in training for the long-term future. Likewise, the Labor Administration had to redirect the bulk of its resources earmarked for vocational counseling toward the simple sustenance of the growing legions of unemployed. The rise to power of the National Socialists overturned more than simply the corporatist structures of the Labor Administration. The new regime's radical methods and goals—especially its focus on expansionary war—raised doubts about the future of all of the previous policies, including the vocational programs launched just a few years earlier.

The Great Depression

Only a few years after DATSCH had begun its work on standardizing vocational training and after the *Reichsanstalt* had been founded, the prolonged economic slump and unprecedentedly high unemployment that began in 1929/30 threatened the viability of all aspects of the German human economies. Even for an economy inured to unemployment, the scale of the downturn was dizzying. By the winter of 1931/32, six million Germans, fully one-third of the workforce,

were unemployed.¹ Only the US slump could compare; never before had an industrial nation experienced such an economic crisis.

The Depression cast the future of the Labor Administration, whose legal framework had been set up only a couple of years before and which had only begun to unify the divergent practices of its constituents, in doubt. The sheer scale of the unemployment renewed questions whether an insurance system could work at all:² designed to be in fiscal balance when an average of 700,000 were unemployed,³ the *Reichsanstalt* found itself paying claims to several times that number. Some politicians even called for the replacement of the *Reichsanstalt* by a state office funded by tax revenues.

The surge of unemployment upended the balance between the several branches of the Labor Administration. More generally, in terms of the underlying thrust of the workforce projects, the crisis significantly strengthened the tendency to emphasize order and centralized control at the expense of individual development. The unemployment wing absorbed an increasing share of all of the resources, to the detriment of job placement and, especially, vocational counseling. Vocational counseling also lost resources when the overburdened unemployment and job placement wings laid claim to its personnel. Wherever one looked, vocational counselors were occupied with “writing lists, filing documents and dispensing certifying stamps” to the unemployed, in short, “with all possible things, just not vocational counseling.”⁴ But the most demoralizing development for vocational counselors and the movement’s supporters were the outright attacks made upon that branch of the Labor Administration by critics within the *Reichsanstalt*. Many charged that a decade of vocational education and counseling had not been able to prevent the worst economic crisis in modern German history.⁵

Within the labor offices, vocational counselors saw themselves engaged in daily struggles for “full recognition.”⁶ Potentially of more consequence, in the public discussion about cutbacks in the *Reichsanstalt*, a former head of a labor office published a call for the “radical reduction of job placement and vocational counseling.”⁷ Several representatives of the labor unions to the *Reichsanstalt*’s governing administrative board even proposed the elimination of vocational counseling altogether.⁸ As the headquarters’ chief of vocational counseling said at a meeting on 23 January 1932, “everywhere vocational counseling is in a difficult position.”⁹

The vocational counseling statistics confirmed this generally gloomy picture, though not across the board. On the positive side, the number of visitors to vocational counseling offices dropped only marginally and, due to the declining number of school-leavers, vocational counseling actually managed to attract a growing proportion of youths.¹⁰ Much more ominous, however, was the fact that the number of apprenticeship placements had fallen from 176,000 in the *Reichsanstalt*’s first year to 98,000 by 1931/32; the proportion of visitors to vocational counseling who entered a training position thus fell from two-fifths to one-quarter.¹¹ Responsible for this alarming trend was German employers’ reluctance to take on apprentices during the economic crisis.

If the economic crisis curtailed the ability and willingness of individual employers to train workers, it inflicted even more harm on German employers' collective efforts to promote a vocational system. In the face of immediate threats to its members' economic survival, the Working Committee on Vocational Training, which had been the coordinating body of these efforts, suspended its activities indefinitely. The affiliated German Committee for Technical Schooling (DATSCH), which depended for most of its funds on contributions from its members, reported in September 1931 that the "difficult conditions of the time" had forced its instructional materials service, which distributed training plans, tests, etc., to companies, to accept a "very great restriction" of its activities to only the most urgent tasks.¹² The next months, the darkest of the Depression, raised doubts about the organization's survival. DATSCH's chairman began his New Year's greetings for 1932 with foreboding:

Words for the new year cannot pass over the problems and the problematic of our days. The fateful question about the existence of German essence, of German culture, stands threateningly over the work of the "German Committee" as well. Will it be possible to continue to work organically on the multi-wing building of the technical education system?¹³

By the fall of the same year, DATSCH was contemplating a suspension of its activities, at least for the time being.¹⁴

National Socialism and Increasing Coercion in the Human Economies

The economic crisis that threatened to disrupt the German labor force projects also helped to bring Hitler and the National Socialists to power. Scholars in recent decades have reached consensus about some aspects of the economy under National Socialism.¹⁵ The Nazi leadership cared most deeply about a few political goals, in particular preparing the country for, and leading it in, war. In order to stay in power and pursue that main end, the regime needed to succeed in overcoming the economic slump and mass unemployment. Above and beyond these aims, visions of a new domestic order assumed only a secondary importance and may have even been mutually contradictory. Though by no means in total control of the state, the Nazis moved the country and the economy in the direction of their main political objectives. Nonetheless, the chaotic nature of the regime, along with undercutting the effectiveness of policies and opening the door for radical experiments, could provide opportunities for independent behavior by other actors. Depending on the importance of an issue to the Nazi leadership and the balance of forces at a given time, public ministries and other agencies might pursue their own policies. Industry lived under the constraints of an increasingly managed economy, weighing short-term opportunities and risks against long-term strategies of success.

How did the German human economies—the Labor Administration, especially its vocational counseling wing and the efforts to systematize vocational training—fare under the Third Reich? The most immediate effect of the new regime was to alter the internal and external political environments of the institutions of the vocational system. In the interest of overcoming an obvious impediment to their longer-term goals, namely, high unemployment, the Nazis also began to turn the Labor Administration into a more openly coercive instrument.

The National Socialists' assumption of power in 1933 meant both change and continuity for the organizations behind the German labor optimization projects. At the *Reichsanstalt*, the Nazis effected a "coordination," dissolving the supervisory bodies composed largely of union and employer representatives and, in the spirit of the *Führer*-principle, making the administrative head at each of the three levels sole arbiter.¹⁶ The personnel of the Labor Administration, who came disproportionately from the unions, SPD, Catholic Center, and liberal parties, suffered significant purges. If overall 2 percent of all bureaucrats lost their positions due to the 1933 Law on Civil Service, in the Labor Administration, the figure was 19 percent.¹⁷ Some of the more important figures from the pioneering generation of vocational counselors and psychologists were forced out or left because they were politically or religiously unpalatable to the new regime.¹⁸

Despite this purge, a surprising degree of continuity was maintained in the *Reichsanstalt* across the political gulf of 1933. Crucially, the head of the Labor Administration since 1922 and of the *Reichsanstalt* since 1927, Friedrich Syrup, continued in office. Many others, including Walter Stets, who in 1923 had drafted the original national guidelines on vocational counseling, and at the time was head of vocational counseling in the important *Landesarbeitsamt* Rhineland, remained in their positions from the pre-1933 period as well.¹⁹

Nazi Party membership by itself did not necessarily mean a change in substance, as was illustrated by the case of the new national chief of vocational counseling, Johannes Handrick. Handrick was a party member,²⁰ yet during his four-year tenure, he did not reveal himself to be a partisan figure. At lower levels, some fervent individuals might reshape personnel profiles in their districts. In the Berlin *Land* office, for example, the new head of vocational counseling reported in 1935 that, due to the previous paucity of vocational counselors in his district and the overall expansion of the service beginning in 1934, he had hired 90 percent new staff "since the assumption of power." In the last business year, in a change from 1933/34, he had hired as vocational counselors "only such personalities whose National Socialistic reliability was a given, if this could at all be humanly determined."²¹ However, none of the reports from the other *Land* offices nor the tenth-anniversary report on the *Reichsanstalt* even alluded to such wholesale turnover or to political criteria for hiring, suggesting that Berlin may have been an exception.²²

Inevitably, the regime's new ethos and the *lingua tertii imperii* permeated the Labor Administration to some extent, as they did nearly every German institution. The Nazis sought to endow the long-standing German reverence for work

with even greater pathos.²³ The highest Party authorities expressed their resolve to conquer Germany's economic woes in military terms: the effort to end unemployment became the "battle for labor," job placement became "labor deployment," and "vocational counseling" became "vocational steering." At the *Reichsanstalt's* new administrative school or "schooling camp" near Berlin, which began hosting six-week training courses for labor office presidents and others in June 1935, "comradely" activities such as common sleeping quarters and early morning exercises, along with explicit political lectures, were intended to foster a collective, National Socialistic spirit.²⁴

Yet in the day-to-day affairs of the Labor Administration or vocational counseling, the new vocabulary did not become the norm. Nor does the correspondence among vocational counselors reveal a particularly vibrant Nazi spirit. Of course, as argued earlier, a concern for overall efficiency, dirigiste measures, and even military models always had coexisted with—at times, dominated—attention to individual welfare and choice in the German Labor Administration. The Nazi military ethos—when it did filter down to the labor offices—represented a shift of emphasis and appearance, but not something fundamentally new.²⁵

The other major pillar of the vocational system, the employers organized in DATSCH, also preserved much of its earlier substance. Soon after their accession to power, the Nazis, as part of their efforts to "coordinate" and ultimately better control all areas of society, had consolidated the employers' groups into a new organization with a quasi-public status. They merged the various employers' organizations—the Reich Association of German Industry (*Reichsverband der deutschen Industrie*) and its affiliates—into what, after several reorganizations and name changes, became the Reich Group Industry (*Reichsgruppe Industrie*). The latter was then loosely combined with the successor to the German Chamber of Industry and Commerce, the Reich Economics Chamber (*Reichswirtschaftskammer*), to become the Organization of the Producing Economy (*Organisation der gewerblichen Wirtschaft*), which the Economics Ministry recognized as the official representation of industry's interests.²⁶ As contradictory as the judgments in the scholarly literature are about the overall effects of this merger and affiliation with the Ministry of Economics,²⁷ in the realm of vocational training, as we shall see, industry acted with even greater unity than before.

DATSCH did make apparent concessions to the new regime. It accepted Gottfried Feder, one of the National Socialists' chief economic ideologues and a senior minister in the Economics Ministry, as "honorary chairman."²⁸ Referring to the new regime, DATSCH claimed that it had "immediately acknowledged the new events" and invited several party members, including a representative of the German Labor Front, a Party organization with ambitious plans to remodel German work relations and the working class, to join its supervisory board. As articles in the August and September 1933 issues of *Technical Education* subtly suggested, however, these concessions to the party did not alter DATSCH's basic commitment to its program of *economic*, and not political, measures.²⁹

As long as the regime was still consolidating power, labor policies largely were concerned with the challenge of conquering mass unemployment. To this end, the new power holders utilized a variety of strategies, including increasing coercion in the labor market. During the first two years of Nazi rule, unemployment fell by more than half, from 35 percent in January 1933 to 17 percent two winters later, and 13 percent in the summer and fall of 1935.³⁰ Still, the recovery remained fragile and uneven: even as the overall level of joblessness fell, alarming pockets of high unemployment remained in the large cities.³¹ To improve the balance in the recovery, but also—so it was claimed—to serve the regime’s longer-term goal of restoring a balance between the nation’s industrial and agricultural sectors,³² measures in 1934 and 1935 gave the *Reichsanstalt* new powers to control the allocation of labor. Two laws allowed the Labor Administration to prevent companies from hiring workers in high-unemployment areas if the workers recently had moved there or if they recently had been employed in agriculture, as well as from hiring young workers (under twenty-five) at the expense of older ones. In 1935, a monopoly law finally brought the remaining independent job placement offices, which had been tolerated by the 1922 Labor Exchange Law and 1927 *Reichsanstalt* legislation, under the control of the Labor Administration.³³ While these measures were limited in important ways—applying only to selected cities, exerting largely indirect pressure on employers, or sanctioning a de facto monopoly that had long existed—the extension of the *Reichsanstalt’s* explicit powers still gave a preview of the more sweeping changes that would occur after 1935, in particular, in 1938.

The manpower distribution measures also revealed the mounting tensions among offices competing for influence over labor policy, as well as the continuing alliance between the Labor Administration and the Ministries of Labor and the Economy, on the one hand, and industry, on the other. In the second decree, which was partly a response to proliferating efforts by Nazi Party cells to pressure employers into hiring party loyalists, the Economics and Labor Ministries as well as the *Führer’s* deputy declared that the *Reichsanstalt* alone was responsible for labor allocation.³⁴ The following year, as interference by Party offices, and in particular by Robert Ley’s Labor Front, in job placement and vocational counseling continued, a law was promulgated, making the *Reichsanstalt* the sole authority in these matters.³⁵ This directive, which gave wide latitude to employers’ needs, followed, as Syrup put it, “the thought-processes” of a joint communiqué issued by the *Reichsanstalt* and the head of the united industrial groups in June 1934 on the necessity of close cooperation between the two sides.³⁶ This constellation of forces—the Labor Administration and the Ministries of Economics and Labor allied with industry, more or less openly, against Party offices—would continue to shape the development of the Labor Administration and vocational system throughout the Nazi period.

The Nazis’ gradual extension of coercive measures continued even after the situation on the labor market fundamentally had changed. Thus, the next, more serious, step in controlling the labor market occurred in 1935, not in response

to the sinking though still high unemployment, but to the first signs of a worrying *lack* of skilled workers. The law of February 1935 introducing workbooks for all laborers and salaried employees primarily was intended to give employers and the labor offices greater control of workplace turnover, which had begun to rise again in some sectors. In order to take on a new job, the worker was required to present his workbook, which his previous employer controlled. The Labor Administration's frequent admonitions to adhere to this policy, however, suggested its limited effectiveness in lowering turnover. Furthermore, contrary to plan, which had foreseen a year to implement the scheme, it was only by 1939 that all 20 million workbooks had been distributed. In the future, the workbooks might also serve another purpose, by giving the regime a complete statistical overview of the workforce.³⁷ Each employee's workbook listed such information as his age, health, marital status, training, skills, and previous employment; the local labor office kept a registry of all workbooks and copied their data on card files. The workbooks alone would prove to be an inadequate tool to restrict workplace turnover, and in the following years, as the job shortage gave way to a worker shortage, new measures proved necessary—both on the part of the Labor Administration and other authorities and of employers.³⁸

Despite their limitations, the workbooks represented a new degree of state control of labor movement, or at least the aspiration to achieve the same. Later in the decade, as we shall see, the statistical overview allowed by the workbooks would be put to use in an attempt, of unparalleled ambition but only modest success, at macroeconomic allocation of the workforce. The fact that workbooks were first introduced in the armaments and construction industries reflected the emergence in these sectors, as early as 1934, of shortages of skilled workers in some regions.³⁹ By the following year, when continued growth and especially the reintroduction of conscription sharply slashed the number of available young men, the shortages had spread throughout the country and to an increasing number of industries. We now examine the effects of the tightening labor market on the vocational training system—which occurred, contrary to the increasingly coercive measures just discussed, without Nazi Party involvement.

“The Great Cooperative Endeavor”⁴⁰

While the Labor Administration, at the Nazis' bidding, turned to dirigiste measures to combat unemployment and then labor bottlenecks, employers' associations led the way in reviving and extending the project of the previous decade to create a standardized vocational training system. As in the 1920s, long-term economic and demographic assessments provided the motivation; the new political circumstances facilitated the collective action, if largely indirectly. In this effort, the employers would again find willing partners among important government agencies. Compelled by the new regime to act with greater coordination and recognizing the movement toward more compulsion and centralization in the labor

market, employers apparently sought to make the best of the situation by turning these trends in their own favor.

In the spring of 1934, as the first signs of an economic turnaround manifested themselves, the president of the Reich Estate of Industry had made known his organization's conviction that "today more than ever quality-work"—and hence the training of apprentices—was of signal importance for the long-term recovery of German industry.⁴¹ The Estate's subcommittee on industrial training identified the issue as "ever more urgent" in most branches and, in the words of Dr. Herbert Studders, a board member of the Estate, considered both quantitative and qualitative sides of the matter.⁴² It was the quantitative aspect that first led to industry's initiative, but these demands soon turned into a general effort to systematize vocational training.

Industry's initiative, in the summer of 1934, combined a call for statistical data on vocational trends with a critique of the *Reichsanstalt*. Pointing to the volatility in recent years of economic trends and the resultant difficulty of projecting the numbers of workers required, the leaders of DATSCH asserted that a more effective vocational counseling program needed a thorough statistical analysis of the current labor situation and prediction of the future dynamic.⁴³ Such statistics would serve as the basis for organizing a new "cooperation of all public offices interested in vocational counseling." Unthinkable a dozen years earlier, it was now industry that was advocating centralized public control. Where the new central office would be based, the industrial leaders suggested in a provocative swipe at the *Reichsanstalt*, remained to be decided.

The *Reichsanstalt* was not slow to respond. In the next edition of *Technical Education*, the head of vocational counseling, Johannes Handrick, while acknowledging the general validity of DATSCH's complaints and the difficulty of reliable predictions in recent years, reminded his interlocutors that such a central office already existed: the *Reichsanstalt* had been working determinedly on these questions for years and had been designated as the "strategic headquarters for the labor battles of the new state." Handrick ended his response, though, on a conciliatory note by encouraging a cooperative venture between DATSCH and the *Reichsanstalt* to enable a centrally steered vocational counseling program.⁴⁴

Out of this exchange would grow the endeavor, jointly borne by German industry through DATSCH and the German Labor Administration over the subsequent decade, to standardize and coordinate the elements of the German vocational training system. The project drew substantially on each side's efforts of the 1920s to systematize vocational training and counseling, respectively. Yet in this second phase of work on the human economies, industry and the Labor Administration cooperated more closely than before in developing standards that united both vocational counseling and training into a single system and that would become an enduring part of the German economy.

Cooperation began almost immediately, as a DATSCH committee on vocational counseling gathered in November 1934 for its inaugural meeting.⁴⁵ In a sign of the increasingly close links between industry and the *Reichsanstalt*, Han-

drick, the national head of vocational counseling, chaired the committee. Already at this first meeting, however, the focus shifted from statistics to “clearly distinguished vocational profiles,” which all agreed were a prerequisite for any quantitative analyses. Resuming the work of the Working Committee and DATSCH from nearly a decade earlier, the committee decided, was now “an urgent task.” As the difficulty of statistical projections of future economic needs became clearer,⁴⁶ work on vocational profiles as the pivot of a coordinated system of vocational training and counseling took center stage. A lead article in the February 1935 *Technical Education* on “The Vocational Profile” posited that “[t]he significance which the most complete possible inclusion of all vocational activities in the form of vocational profiles has for the planned training of apprentices and hence for the entire economic praxis—this cannot be overstated.” The profiles would provide the most basic guidance for the apprenticeship training. Of far greater importance, however, than the significance of this work in directly improving the quality of individual training, according to the article, which echoed the arguments made in the mid 1920s, was its role in overcoming the informational and coordination problems undermining collective action; namely, the standardization of the profiles and, based on them, also of the training and the exams would permit the smooth flow of labor around the country. Only with such guarantees of standard quality could every apprentice be certain that he might be hired by other employers, in other regions; and only then could employers be confident in hiring someone trained elsewhere.⁴⁷

Not only did it solve the information problem, but the cooperation itself also strengthened the employers’ organizations, such as the Chambers of Trade and Commerce, and the mutual expectations that made firms’ compliance more likely. Even as several Nazi laws restricted the freedom of workers to move from job to job and region to region, industry and the Labor Administration were cooperating to create a system of mobile skilled labor.

In its work on vocational profiles, DATSCH began where the Working Committee had begun in the mid 1920s, with the centrally important skilled metalworking positions, and it drew on the latter’s work. It concentrated initially on skilled vocations, all of which required a three to four year apprenticeship; only later in the decade would it take on the trickier task of standardizing the “several thousand” semi-skilled positions, which spanned a much greater range of training schedules. By the spring of 1935, DATSCH could publish its first ten profiles.⁴⁸ These limited themselves to describing the “task area” and both the necessary and the desired “capabilities” of the workers.

In the course of the same year, DATSCH committees began to engage in a flurry of activity, extending the work on standardization to the other aspects of vocational training: the practical training in the firm and the courses in the vocational school, as well as the completion exams.⁴⁹ Important issues—such as the exact relation of the “basic vocations” of training to the more specific positions in the economy and the proliferation and nature of training for semi-skilled vocations—remained subject to lively debate, but the participants regarded their work

as an “evolving enterprise” and carried on. By early 1936, DATSCH had published two dozen profiles of the most important “basic vocations.”⁵⁰ Although the question had not been overlooked completely in the first two years of DATSCH’s renewed efforts to systematize vocational training,⁵¹ it was only in the subsequent years, in particular 1936 to 1939, that attention would turn to an additional element of the vocational profile—to the “demands” and “suitability demands” upon candidates for a vocation.

An historic agreement within industry lent all of this standardizing work immediate practical relevance. In July 1935, the Reich Group Industry and the Association of Chambers of Industry and Trade agreed to establish for the first time industry’s own formal vocational certification system, independent of that of handicrafts, which since the 1897 revision of the Commercial Code had had a monopoly on certifications.⁵² The vocational profiles, training plans, and completion exams being developed at the time were to be incorporated formally into the “apprenticeship contract” between the firm and the trainee. This step by industry, taken with the approval of the Economics and Labor Ministries and in expectation of a future legal regulation of the matter, began to draw to a close the long-running dispute between industry and crafts over the latter’s monopoly over accreditation, a dispute which, as we have seen, already had been partly resolved in the late 1920s by the cooperation of the two sides in the Working Committee on Vocational Training. A 1938 decree of the Reich Education Minister would finally put the industrial completion exams on the same legal footing as *Handwerk*’s.⁵³ Within several years in the mid 1930s, the industrial training system had acquired not only standardized content, but also fully fledged formal accreditation. Close monitoring by local Chambers of Industry and Trade prevented serious free-riding and ensured that firms in fact took on their fair share of apprentices. A decade after German industry had become fully conscious of the potential value of the skilled worker and had initiated a project to standardize training, a second round of these efforts in the mid 1930s effectively had launched the “German skills machine.”

In all of this, industry and key ministries, in particular, the Labor Administration and the Reich Economics Ministry—the same groups that had promoted the first round of vocational consolidation in the mid and late 1920s—were the main motors of reform. But while the Nazi regime intervened directly in the vocational system only minimally, it played an important indirect role. Not only did the new authoritarian atmosphere dampen at least open disputes and, along with the enforced organizational consolidation, encourage more concerted action; also of importance in bringing employers together and in forging the alliance between them and the key governmental ministries was the threatening behavior of a particular Nazi organization: Robert Ley’s Labor Front.

Even in a regime characterized by the active political entrepreneurship of its subordinate agencies, Robert Ley and his Labor Front stood out for their relentless quest for power.⁵⁴ In its efforts to play a central role in Nazi labor and social policy, the DAF pursued numerous avenues to reshape labor relations at the com-

pany level, including, prominently, worker training and selection. In substance, important DAF goals—such as promoting skilled work and inculcating worker loyalty to the firm—were congruent with company policy and even drew on corporate social policy.⁵⁵ In 1933, the DAF absorbed DINTA, which from 1925 had served heavy industry in its “fight for the souls” of its workers. However, the DAF’s broader political ideology and, in particular, its claims for “total control” from the outside frightened even many of DINTA’s former backers, who insisted on company prerogative.⁵⁶

The struggle between the DAF, on the one hand, and much of industry and its allies in the state ministries, on the other, over control of vocational training began early in the Nazi regime and continued, despite repeated efforts to exclude the DAF, into the early 1940s. Ley’s organization employed an array of strategies to shape company training: the DINTA-successor within the DAF continued to offer its services to companies and also to gain a foothold in the local chambers of industry, which oversaw accreditation; DAF’s vast publishing empire produced a stream of materials on the topic; its questionnaires about training policy put pressure on companies to fall into line with the DAF; the Reich Vocational Competitions—in which companies could vie, through their apprentices’ work, for the DAF’s commendation—and other competitions encouraged firms to adopt DAF standards.

In response to the DAF’s continuing encroachments upon the field of vocational training, Economics Minister Schacht in September 1935 cemented the already close relationship between industry and the Economics (and Labor) Ministry. Citing “the significance of technical-economic training for the economy,” Schacht, in conjunction with the Minister of Education, gave DATSCH official status as his advisory body.⁵⁷ In 1938, DATSCH was given an even more secure position when it was re-baptized as the Reich Institute for Vocational Training. This protection would prove highly useful to DATSCH in the coming years, for after 1935, the Labor Front’s efforts to influence vocational training would become only more strident. Between 1935 and the outbreak of war in 1939, a central field of competition between DATSCH and DAF was in the provision of vocational materials—profiles, course material, exams—to companies and chambers of industry.⁵⁸ It was only the outbreak of war and the decision of Hermann Göring, the head of the Four-Year Plan, in December 1939, which finally secured the Economics Ministry’s—and private industry’s—ultimate control of vocational training.⁵⁹ In the intervening years, however, the Labor Front’s relentless activity decisively spurred the standardization work by industry and the ministries through DATSCH and deepened the alliance between the two.

The Flourishing of Vocational Training and— as a Result—of Vocational Counseling

In the years 1934/35, industry not only made crucial advances in reviving and extending its project of standardizing vocational training system, but it also began

offering an increasing number of apprenticeships, not least thanks to the concurrent organizational work. The rise in the number of open positions employers registered with the labor offices from its nadir in the years 1931/32 and 1932/33 no doubt reflected a number of factors. In addition to the appeals by the Reich Estate of Industry and the Labor Front to devote more resources to training, the general improvement in economic conditions from 1933 onward made employers more willing to offer apprenticeships. Yet the rapid increase from fewer than 130,000 positions in 1932/33 to 219,000 the next year and nearly 300,000 in 1934/35, when unemployment still hovered well above 10 percent, surpassed the number of apprenticeships offered in the best years of the Weimar recovery (255,000 in 1927/28) and cannot be attributed to the general economic climate alone.⁶⁰

The growing cooperation between industry and the Labor Administration, which was spurred not only by their shared goal of creating a high-skilled workforce, but also by their common opposition to the German Labor Front, extended to practical matters of vocational placement. Thanks to agreements assuring employers more influence in the labor offices, firms became more willing to report open positions.⁶¹

Even more important than the improved atmosphere between the two sides, however, was the underlying shift in companies' willingness to train workers as a result of the creation of common standards of vocational training. In an essay in *Technical Education* in July 1936, a leading representative of the Reich Group Industry emphasized the decisive role of the organizational work: "[F]or industry until now clear legal bases for an impeccable training and education of the industrial youth have been lacking. A responsible attitude on the part of many industrial firms has always existed.... But today for the first time the conditions have been created which allow German industry to solve these tasks on its own."⁶² The response of German industry would be so strong, in fact, that by 1938, it would offer more apprenticeships than there were job seekers. Before we turn to this development and its effects on vocational training and selection, we must first explore the state of vocational counseling in the first years after the Depression.

The archival materials documenting vocational counseling in these early years have, unfortunately, almost all been lost. Still, a collection of reports by the state offices from 1935 provides us with a snapshot of the state of affairs two years into Nazi rule and economic recovery. The reports unanimously described a general efflorescence of vocational counseling during the course of the previous two years. In the previous year, in response to "the significance which vocational counseling has gained in the new state"—that is, to the combined effect of the Nazis' rhetorical embrace of the ennobling value of work, their promises to restore a healthy balance to the country's economic order, and the longer-term prospect of national mobilization for war—as well as simply to the increased number of visitors, the *Reichsanstalt* headquarters had approved a significant increase in the number of vocational counselors.⁶³ Over several years, the number of counselors would double from 600 to nearly 1200.⁶⁴ Several of the *Land* reports suggested

that an important part of this increase helped vocational counseling expand into rural areas, where it until then had been largely absent.⁶⁵ Most importantly, as already mentioned, the number of school-leavers consulting with the vocational counseling offices was rising rapidly. The total number of visitors had more than doubled in just two years, from 394,000 in 1932/33 to 601,000 a year later, and 848,000 in 1934/35. Roughly 70 percent of young Germans now visited the vocational counseling offices before they left school, while a hundred thousand older people also availed themselves of the service.⁶⁶ How had vocational counseling been so successful in approaching its long-held goal of a “total inclusion” of all job seekers?

No single reason, the reports from 1935 suggest, was alone decisive. However, a small number of factors appear to have been important in nearly all states. To a far greater extent than earlier, parents had become convinced of the importance of sending their children—or, more accurately, accompanying them—to vocational counseling. Several offices attributed this welcome change to their own assiduous efforts to woo the adults through “parent evenings,” and press and even radio coverage.⁶⁷ No doubt, other, more diffuse, factors also made parents increasingly eager to have their children visit vocational counseling. The general economic revival of these years had inspired a cautious optimism, which, along with the needs of industry for specific kinds of workers, influenced youths’ and their families’ decisions about what to do after completing school. “A clear effect of the currently observable economic climate and of the scarcity of skilled workers,” the South-West state office reported, “is also that the desire to undergo an apprenticeship dominates by far the majority of male youths.”⁶⁸ The Bavarian office wrote “with satisfaction” that parents “more than previously desire for their youths a skilled, or at least a semi-skilled, vocation,” and concurred with the South-West Germans that unskilled work was becoming ever less attractive or significant.⁶⁹ Indeed, the new enthusiasm among youths for particular “fashionable” vocations—especially those in the metalworking sector, which was expanding rapidly due to the incipient Nazi rearmament, but also perhaps as a result of the regime’s martial values—had grown so powerful that several state offices perceived new dangers. Pointing to the fact that among male youths “access to the metal vocations dominates over everything else,” the South-West office warned of a “uniformization of the vocational ideal among youth, which is not unalarming.”⁷⁰ Thanks to the more favorable economic climate, in the new state, the Bavarian office reported, a new “vocational ethos” had taken hold of the young.⁷¹

More tangible factors, such as who controlled access to jobs, played an even more important role in boosting vocational counseling nearly to the level of “total inclusion.” As the vocational offices had forged closer ties with employers, they had gained control of increasing numbers of apprenticeship positions, creating a powerful incentive for parents and youths to visit. The wish for closer cooperation, beginning usually with vocational counseling, but also at times with employers,⁷² was mutual; the initiative to collaborate, though paralleling the improving ties at the national level, came also from the local level. In many states,

the vocational offices and employers' organizations, especially in handicrafts,⁷³ but also in industry, had formalized their relations in agreements about apprentices. The employers promised to obtain their trainees only through the labor office's vocational counseling service; the latter, in turn, agreed to attend to firms' needs. By the mid 1930s, then, the relationship between two of the main pillars of the human economies, the Labor Administration and employers, significantly had been deepened.

This collaboration between the labor offices' vocational counseling and local employers' groups, like the cooperation on the national scale that had influenced it, emerged from several sources. It built on the ties established from the mid 1920s on, when employers' groups recognized the utility of a centralized, coordinated distribution of trainees for the purpose of a standardized apprenticeship system. After the disruption caused by the Depression, these efforts seemed in the mid 1930s even more imperative: the economic boom and demographic shortfall combined to make the shortage of skilled workers even more threatening. As at the national level, local conditions shaped by the new regime helped to realize this cooperation, even if unintentionally. Nazi measures to take greater control of economic life, including restrictions on the free movement of labor, gave employers an incentive to try to influence the terms of state (or outside) influence by taking the initiative. Moreover, as several of the state reports indicated, the creation by the Nazis of strengthened employer organizations, even at the local level, significantly aided efforts to reach agreement with the vocational offices.⁷⁴ Such organizations were usually more committed than the individual employers to creating the collective good of universally recognized vocational skills. In addition to such centripetal forces of the new regime, its centrifugal tendencies also indirectly spurred such cooperation between employers' organizations and the vocational counseling offices. Just as at the national level, the threat of interference by the German Labor Front moved the Reich Estate of Industry and the Economics and Labor Ministries to form a defensive alliance, so too at the state and local level DAF activity inspired a reaction. Almost all of the state reports commented on friction between vocational counseling and the Labor Front over apprentice selection, which, given industry's own troubles with Ley's organization, created further bases for cooperation between vocational offices and firms.

As a result of the local agreements on trainee selection, the number of positions crafts and industry registered with the labor offices increased proportionately even faster than did the number of school-leavers using vocational counseling. While between 1932/33 and 1934/35 the number of visitors to vocational counseling increased by 115 percent, that of apprenticeships rose by 131 percent. If one wanted an apprenticeship—which ever more young people did—it was increasingly clear where one needed to turn.

Other factors, both of older and more recent origins, augmented the increased trust of parents, the desire of the young for skilled positions, and the cooperation between employers and vocational counseling offices. Most importantly, as the reports concurred, the schools were now cooperating fully with vocational

counseling. The turning point in the often contentious relationship had come with the 1930 agreement between the Reich Ministries of Labor and the Interior on the cooperation of the schools and vocational counseling offices, the effect of which was stymied in the short-term by the distortions of the Depression. By the mid 1930s, all of the state vocational offices reported that schools had ceased to “regard vocational counseling as a competitor, or at least as an annoying organization,” as the Berlin office had put it. Instead of performing their own apprenticeship placements, as many had previously done, schools now assisted vocational counseling, above all by delivering “entire classes” to the labor office.⁷⁵

Another, newer, organization also aided vocational counseling. The Hitler Youth and its female counterpart, the League of German Girls (*Bund Deutscher Mädel*), according to all of the state reports, were proving to be a valuable resource in a manner similar to that of the schools. The *Hitlerjugend* offices were eager to “deliver” youths to vocational counseling, as Saxony reported; they also supplied their own evaluations of the boys and girls. In some regards, the Hitler Youth proved more useful to vocational counseling than even the schools. With the former, vocational counseling often established direct and personal ties, as counselors frequently assumed responsibility for vocational matters within the new organization. Also, at least one state vocational office appreciated the particular value of the *Hitlerjugend's* reports on the children, since “especially the vocational wishes [can be] discussed in quite some depth in the rather free atmosphere of the HJ.”⁷⁶

The Four-Year Plan and the Deepening of the “Great Cooperative Endeavor”

Hitler's decisions in the summer and autumn of 1936 to promote Germany's autarky and mobilize its economic resources for a war in several years' time would ramify throughout all parts of its economy.⁷⁷ The Labor Administration, vocational counseling, and vocational training were no exceptions. Indeed, before the total war effort (1942–1945) made finding workers and soldiers per se the paramount challenge, the vocational system was deemed to play a vital role in Germany's war preparations. More directly than in the period of 1934/35, the regime now exerted influence over vocational matters, in particular by mandating *Totalerfassung* of all school-leavers and apprenticeship positions. Within the Labor Administration and within industry, however, satisfaction with developments most likely mingled with nervousness over the regime's dirigisme and long-term goals.⁷⁸ But the changes often only accelerated trends already underway, or implemented aspects of the Labor Administration program that were present earlier, if only in potential form.⁷⁹ As we saw, the project of creating a high-skilled workforce proved largely compatible with the Nazi regime's political aims, whether overcoming mass unemployment, promoting autarky, or leading the country into war.

Reflecting Hitler's decision in the summer of 1936 to accelerate the country's preparations for war, the Four-Year Plan redirected resources to create domestic capacities in supplies critical to war, in particular synthetic oil and rubber and metals. The head of the Four-Year Plan organization, Hermann Göring, rapidly became the dominant power in the economic realm. Typically for the regime's improvisational nature, which was nowhere so apparent as in economic policy, Göring appointed the president of the *Reichsanstalt*, Friedrich Syrup, and an influential state minister in the Labor Ministry, Werner Mansfeld, to lead the Four-Year Plan agency's "Labor Direction" office. The *Reichsanstalt* and Labor Ministry thus came to serve the Four-Year Plan, while also continuing to function outside it.⁸⁰

If the rearmament since 1934 already had contributed to shortages among some skilled workers,⁸¹ the much vaster military and autarky programs of the Four-Year Plan, at a time when the number of school-leavers was still declining, ensured that the scarcity of labor became a major and persistent problem for the regime and the economy. Throughout the period of war preparation (and during the war as well), the regime's primary response to this challenge was to impose ever-greater controls on the movement of labor, including on the entry of young people into vocations. It is telling that the first directives Göring's office issued for the implementation of the plan pertained to Germany's supply of skilled labor, obliging metal and construction firms with more than 10 employees to train a proportionate number of apprentices.⁸² In the short run, this directive, as well as others issued at the same time,⁸³ may have, in fact, restricted the freedoms of employers little, as they were "purposefully elastically" formulated, frequently not enforced by the overburdened labor offices, and, in any case, intended more as an "urgent appeal" to the employer's sense of duty than as real limitations.⁸⁴ Still, it is clear that the employers (and the *Reichsanstalt* and ministries) correctly interpreted the writing on the wall as indicating that in future, the regime would intervene more directly in firms' and individuals' decisions about vocation and work.

Recognizing the new state of affairs and anticipating the future, the Labor Administration and the employers' umbrella group, the Organization of the Producing Economy, almost immediately took steps to deepen their cooperation. As President Syrup explained to his state and local offices, the requirements of the Four-Year Plan now compelled the two organizations "to cooperate even more closely" than they had in the past on the *Arbeitseinsatz*, and especially on securing a sufficient supply of skilled workers.⁸⁵ All levels of the Labor Administration, Syrup instructed, should extend and deepen the already existing ties to the corresponding employers' groups.

Barely more than a month later, the highest representatives of the *Reichsanstalt* and industry gathered for two days to reach a more detailed understanding on their cooperation "regarding the selection and application of youths in industrial firms."⁸⁶ Almost certainly, a central purpose of the meeting was symbolic: by reviewing the organization and methods of vocational counseling, the composition of the German workforce, and the efforts of DATSCH to systematize vocational profiles and materials—all of which was assuredly known already to those pres-

ent—the participants reaffirmed the groups’ prior work and alliance. Now, more publicly than before, the leaders of the Labor Administration and employers’ groups sanctioned and promoted the cooperative endeavors undertaken, with less fanfare, in the previous three years. Of a piece with this demonstrative purpose were the repeated subtle repudiations of interference by the German Labor Front.

While the exigencies of adapting to the Four-Year Plan prompted the meeting, longer-term concerns imbued the discussions. This was evident not only in the reviewing of work done by the Labor Administration and DATSCH in the previous three years, or even since the mid 1920s, but also particularly in the presentation on the “Development of the Structure of the Labor Force in Industry” by Dr. Studders, a director of the Reich Group Industry. Beginning his analysis with handicrafts, Studders proceeded to explain why, contrary to expectations regarding the effects of the division of labor and mechanization, the “quality worker” had continued to play a central role in German industry. After his review of historical developments, Studders concluded by looking to the future: the creation of the means for securing a supply of skilled workers—the joint project of the Labor Administration’s vocational counseling and industry—was “only possible through careful work extending over long periods of time.”

This commitment in early 1937 by a representative of the Reich Group Industry to the long-term project of developing a high-skilled workforce, it should be noted, comports with analyses of employers’ reactions to the Four-Year Plan. Ever cautious about making long-term investments based on what appeared to be highly unpredictable political decisions, German industry did not make any significant reassessments of its production strategies in response to the *Vierjahresplan*.⁸⁷ In a published commentary on the January 1937 meeting, the director of vocational counseling at *Reichsanstalt* headquarters, Johannes Handrick, emphasized the long-term nature of the endeavor even more forcefully than had Studders. He placed the Four-Year Plan’s requirements in the context of the cooperation between the *Reichsanstalt* and employers that had been going on “for a long time.” In addition to the plans for promoting autarky, Germany’s limited number of young people entering the labor market meant that “the distribution of the youths must be undertaken with careful thought in the future.” A “further reason” for the cooperation of the two sides was the rebuilding, by industry, crafts, and trade, of the “entire vocational training system.” Handrick summarized the balance between short- and long-term considerations:

If for the moment it is largely a question of satisfying the demands of the Four-Year Plan, beyond the Four-Year Plan employers and the *Reichsanstalt*, perfectly in accord with the Commissioner of the Four-Year Plan, must strive to create a working population with which the new tasks, whatever they may be, can be mastered at any time without difficulty.⁸⁸

The January 1937 meeting, then, served the important function, during politically turbulent times, of signaling the mutual commitment of all parties to the long-term project of developing Germany’s skilled workforce.

As part of this reaffirmation, each side demonstrated its willingness to compromise in the interest of an even closer relationship. Building on the previous state and local agreements between employers' organizations and labor offices about the recruitment of apprentices and acknowledging the current trend toward more outright state control, the national industrial organization now "approved a total vocational counseling,"⁸⁹ i.e., making use of the service obligatory for all school-leavers. The employers insisted, however, that the firm must retain the ultimate decision about hiring. More generally, the employers repeatedly invoked the crucial importance of the businessman's trust in the vocational counselor's judgment. The lack, or weakness, of this confidence, they said, was largely responsible for whatever reservations still remained.

For its part, the *Reichsanstalt*, whose vocational counselors always had preferred gaining employers' confidence to resorting to compulsion, acknowledged the significance of this factor. Handrick concluded his remarks by expressing the hope "that the work of vocational counseling in all parts of the Reich may earn the unqualified trust of the German economy." As we shall see later, even after the regime did in fact apply to vocational counseling the "compulsion" that the employers had hoped to preempt, the *Reichsanstalt* continued to seek the employers' trust.

Over the course of the next year, the cooperation between the *Reichsanstalt* and the employers (and the Economics Ministry) did become "ever closer." Between 1 July 1936 and 30 June 1937, as the labor offices' already substantial access to school-leavers inched ever closer to "total inclusion,"⁹⁰ the number of apprenticeships registered at the offices soared by more than 25 percent, from 395,000 to 507,000.⁹¹

The parties to the vocational counseling/training compact sought to realize the terms of their cooperation. Instructions by the *Reichsanstalt* headquarters to its state and local offices and by the Economics Ministry to the Organization of the Economy defined the new framework: all firms were to obtain their apprentices through vocational counseling; the industrial examination boards were to include a member of vocational counseling; when the vocational counseling office had doubts or questions about the quality of training at particular firms, it should turn for advice to the local chamber of industry and trade.⁹² The arrangements necessary for this "deepened cooperation," however, could still vary considerably, as the reports by the various state and local organizations showed.⁹³ By the late summer, the *Reichsanstalt* and the employers' organization both were pushing for a uniform, binding regulation for the entire Reich.⁹⁴ For the employers, one of the most important concerns, as had already become clear in the January 1937 meeting, was the reliability of vocational counseling's selection of trainees. Thus, in a communication from the Reich Economic Chamber to the Economics Ministry on 28 May, the former wrote: "[We are] currently occupied with the task of making the cooperation between the Organization of the Economy and the *Reichsanstalt* as close as possible. Thereby we are especially paying attention to the question of the pre-selection [of apprentices] for entering a vocation. In connection with this, the suitability-tests of the vocational offices of the *Reich-*

sanstalt will ... also be gone into.”⁹⁵ When the Organization of the Economy and the *Reichsanstalt* planned their meeting on a binding national agreement, vocational counseling’s suitability tests were the sole specific item on the agenda. In addition to a general presentation by the *Reichsanstalt* on “principles of the labor allocation policy and its application to the steering of the vocational choice of the school-leaving youth,” the Labor Administration’s only other topic was to be: “Ways of determining the suitability-structure of the youths and matching them to the vocations.” The plan for the meeting spelled out in some detail what industry was interested in hearing from the Labor Administration: “From which source does the vocational counselor gain his knowledge for determining the vocational suitability in each individual case. The role of the suitability-examination. The gathering of such information demonstrated in practical examples. Consequences for the assignment to the vocations.”⁹⁶

The Nazi regime’s increasingly obvious willingness to employ coercive measures to prepare the labor force for war and the tightening supply of workers inspired some of the main forces behind the projects to optimize the German workforce, including the Labor Administration and employers’ organizations, to deepen their already substantial cooperation. Even with the prospect of an increased legal mandate, the Labor Administration showed itself solicitous of industry’s demands for securing suitable workers.

The Laws of *Totalerfassung*

The ever more critical bottleneck in the supply of entrants to the labor market in 1937/38 inspired a number of responses, including laws granting vocational counseling truly “total inclusion” for the first time and statistical plans for the national distribution across vocations, but they also included a recognition of the need to shift the emphasis away from “quantitative” to “qualitative” vocational policies.

Ever since 1934/35, when the number of unemployed had begun rapidly to drop and the first cases of regional shortages of skilled workers appeared, concern had mounted over Germany’s dearth of workers. The sense of urgency became suddenly sharper in the winter of 1937/38—like the *Gestalt*-switch of the mid 1920s, another case in which *perceptions* about the workforce underwent rapid change. For the first time, the number of apprenticeship positions reported by firms to the labor offices may have equaled, or even exceeded, the number of suitable candidates, leaving no reserves.⁹⁷ By mid 1938, according to an estimate in the *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, Germany already was missing half a million workers.⁹⁸ Compounding the problem, numerous “fashionable vocations”—particularly in the metal industries—drew excessive numbers of applicants, while less glamorous, but vital, occupations suffered recruitment shortfalls.⁹⁹ The signs of a growing scarcity of young skilled workers in the winter of 1937/38 propelled the Labor Administration to attempt to gain more direct control of the labor force, according to Walter Stets’ later account.¹⁰⁰

Two important decrees of 1 March 1938 recast the *Reichsanstalt's* role in matching young workers and apprentices with employers, though not as radically as it first might appear. The “Order Regarding the Registering of School-leavers” made it mandatory for all youths leaving school to register with their local labor office. The second decree obliged employers to obtain approval for all apprenticeships.¹⁰¹ With these decrees, vocational counseling achieved what it had sought since its beginnings though by other, non-compulsory, means: the “total inclusion” of both young workers and apprenticeship-offering employers. Compared to 1937/38, when 70 percent of all school-leavers immediately had visited vocational counseling, in the first year after the decrees came into effect, 86 percent did.¹⁰² The number of trainee positions for males that firms registered with the labor offices jumped in the same period by nearly one-third.¹⁰³ Beyond these quantitative indices, the ethos and self-perception within the *Reichsanstalt* changed as well. “The task of the previous vocational counseling,” Walter Stets explained later, “was transformed into steering young workers.” Previously, when many more apprenticeship positions than youths existed, vocational counseling mainly had “advised and helped” individuals; now the emphasis would be on “securing young workers for the individual vocations” as part of a “total steering of young workers.”¹⁰⁴ The latter phrase—*Nachwuchslenkung*—tended to replace the term vocational counseling, if never exclusively or officially.

Yet we must not exaggerate the rupture caused by the March 1938 decrees. A *Totalerfassung* of all youths and all apprenticeships always had been the goal of the vocational counseling movement. It is true that for the faction of vocational counseling that had insisted that the service *earn* the trust of its users, the creation of a legal compulsion must have seemed regrettable. However, well before 1938 or even 1933, the same advocates of vocational counseling’s triumph by virtue of its superior quality had banned competition by commercial agencies and used other, softer forms of coercion, most notably the agreements with the schools on “delivering” students to vocational counseling, to approach *Totalerfassung*. Others in vocational counseling always had favored legal mandates.¹⁰⁵

Nor was the shift in the declared mission of vocational counseling—from advising and helping to steering—unprecedented or particularly radical. From the beginning, proponents of vocational counseling had insisted on a harmony between the two aspects: helping the individual find the place for which he was best-suited, and consequently where he would be happiest and most productive, was to promote the advantage of the economy. Conversely, by seeking macroeconomic balance, and hence by steering less suitable applicants away from crowded vocations and toward other fields, vocational counseling also would be protecting the individual from a lifetime of disappointment. Stets noted that the change was more gradual than fundamental: “Both tasks were always present; the emphasis shifts, however, from the one side to the other.”¹⁰⁶

The achievement, as a matter of fact, of a (near) *Totalerfassung* also was not due solely to the decrees of 1938. In the previous five years, several factors boosted the proportions both of the school-leavers and the employers using vocational

Table 5.1 The Growth of Vocational Counseling in the 1920s and 1930s

Year	# of School-Leavers	# of SL visiting VC	Total # visiting VC	# of Skilled/ Semi-Skilled Positions Reported to VC	# Placed by VC
1922/23			235,000	138,000 (89,000 for males)	94,000
1923/24	421,000	140,000	251,000	134,000 (89,000 for males)	96,000
1924/25	602,000	194,000	307,000	179,000 (127,000 for males)	130,000
1925/26			375,000	172,000 (123,000 for males)	132,000
1926/27			426,000	207,000 (144,000 for males)	156,000
1927/28			438,000	254,000 (179,000 for males)	176,000
1928/29			390,000	213,000 (144,000 for males)	147,000
1929/30		315,000	399,000	197,000 (137,000 for males)	134,000
1930/31		298,000	406,000	163,000 (111,000 for males)	119,000
1931/32	606,000	283,000	387,000	124,000 (83,000 for males)	98,000
1932/33	677,000	303,000	394,000	128,000 (86,000 for males)	102,000
1933/34	1,109,000 (620,000 males)	508,000	601,000	219,000 (156,000 for males)	184,000
1934/35	1,128,000 (620,000 males)	739,000	848,000	296,000 (212,000 for males)	260,000
1935/36	1,133,000 (580,000 males)	942,000	1,078,000	395,000 (282,000 for males)	356,000
1936/37	1,095,000 (565,000 males)	650,000	1,184,000	507,000 (366,000 for males)	440,000
1937/38	1,063,000 (550,000 males)	744,000	1,263,000	599,000 (441,000 for males)	489,000
1938/39	1,011,000 (555,000 males)	871,000	1,425,000	803,000 (583,000 for males)	430,000 (males)
1939/40	1,194,000 (550,000 males)	1,035,000	1,744,000	861,000 (558,000 for males)	
1940/41	1,244,000 (530,000 males)	1,112,000	1,993,000	1,043,000 (627,000 for males)	429,000 (males)
1941/42	525,000 (males)			653,000 (males)	426,000 (males)

Sources: Reichsarbeitsblatt, 1926, nr. 21, 367-9; Reichsanstalt, Zehn Jahre, 39-40; Reichsarbeitsblatt, II, 1937, nr. 36, 401; Reichsarbeitsblatt, Nichtamt. Beilage: Achter Bericht der Reichsanstalt für die Zeit vom 1 April 1935 bis zum 31 März 1936, 36f.; Reichsarbeitsblatt, V, 1940, nr. 28, 482-3; Reichsarbeitsblatt, V, 1942, nr. 29, 542; Reichsarbeitsblatt, II, 1939, nr. 34, 442f.; Reichsarbeitsblatt, 1939, nr. 8

counseling—especially the employers’ establishment of uniform standards of training, which dramatically increased their willingness to train apprentices, and the ever-closer cooperation of employers and vocational counseling. In the three years before the new rules came into effect, the percentage of students consulting with vocational counseling immediately upon leaving school had already risen from 48 to 70 percent.¹⁰⁷ Even without the help of legal obligations, in the next few years vocational counseling might well have approached “total inclusion” of all youths, even if more slowly.

The proportion of employers who registered their apprenticeships with vocational counseling also had risen steeply before 1938, as reflected, at least partly, in the total number of trainee-positions listed.¹⁰⁸ Indeed, relations between the Labor Administration and the employers demonstrated more clearly than anything else that the decrees of March 1938 did not represent a fundamental rupture. The role of the employers in promulgating the legislation remains unclear. On the one hand, given their dislike of unilateral state intervention, they might have disapproved of the nature of the orders, preferring an agreement between the two sides. On the substantive issue, however, the employers would have found little to criticize. The newly forged vocational system presupposed such coordination, something the employers trusted the Labor Administration to provide. Political threats to employers’ control of their workforces, whether emanating from the German Labor Front or the Four-Year Plan, and the economic disadvantages of having to compete for labor in an increasingly tight market made cooperation with a friendly public agency increasingly appealing.

For years, the employers’ organization had encouraged agreements between its local and state branches with the labor offices on trainee placements. In the fall of 1937, they had sought a binding national agreement guaranteeing the comprehensive reporting now mandated. In an internal memorandum on the “Basic Principles of the Cooperation between the [Employers’ Organization] and the *Reichsanstalt*,” which circulated within their organization just a month before the March decrees, the employers called for a “planned, complete steering of all the vocations of the producing economy.” For the purpose of a “reasonable selection among the youths and a corresponding regulation of the vocational deployment,” the memo called for “the registering by firms with the vocational counseling offices of the entire demand for youths for apprenticeships.”¹⁰⁹ It is not unreasonable to think that this memo, and any negotiations with the Labor Administration that grew out of it, may have played a role in preparing the decrees promulgated three weeks later.

While the orders obliged all youths to visit the local vocational counseling office, they did not create “compulsory vocations,” by compelling the youths to accept the office’s suggestion of a vocation and offer of a trainee position. As Stets went to some length to emphasize, in contrast to the labor conscription of adults, the training of youths would have such long-term consequences for their lives that the ultimate decision had to be left to “the responsibility of the youths and their parents.”¹¹⁰ The relations between vocational offices and youths remained,

then, much as they had been before March 1938: while the Labor Administration abjured “direct compulsion,” as Stets revealingly put it, its recommendations carried great weight. Vocational counseling, intent on gaining its clients’ willing cooperation, had worked over the years to earn their trust. More importantly, its control—more comprehensive now than ever before—over access to the coveted apprenticeships could give vocational counseling a kind of “indirect compulsion,” if it chose to apply it.

Again, however, it was the relation between the employers and the *Reichsanstalt* that demonstrated the greatest continuity. “Recent discussions,” the employers’ organization wrote to the *Reichsanstalt* shortly after publication of the decrees, had produced “agreement that in the practical carrying-out of the [order on firms’ demands for apprentices] the existing agreements on cooperation between the [two sides] shall for now not be changed or replaced by new ones.”¹¹¹ Firms, like the youths interested in apprenticeships, though compelled to report all openings for apprentices to the labor offices, retained ultimate authority to accept or reject the labor office’s candidates. For the employers, more than for the youths, this freedom existed not only on paper, but also, to some extent at least, in practice. The most telling evidence of continuity in the relation between the *Reichsanstalt* and the employers after March 1938, however, was the fact that the Labor Administration—at least partly for the sake of earning the trust of the employers—continued and even expanded its efforts to improve and standardize its methods of selecting workers.

Two kinds of vocational strategy, one quantitative and one qualitative, followed from the “total inclusion” achieved after March 1938. First, total registration permitted the *Reichsanstalt* for the first time to attempt the quantitative planning of distribution across the vocations. In a confidential memo to the state offices on 31 October 1938, President Syrup announced the implementation of the first national vocational plan. Because in 1938 the “distribution of apprentices and young workers had not matched national-political requirements,” access to vocations with less significance in this regard would have to be reduced and youths would have to be steered into the most important vocations. For a number of “vocational groups,” the memo provided national guidelines in the form of precise figures expressing the percentage of current workers to be hired as apprentices. When the test run of 1938/39 suggested to the *Reichsanstalt* that such measures were “feasible,”¹¹² the Administration prepared a full-scale plan for 1940.

The onset of war in September 1939, though, forced the postponement of its implementation, and the state and local offices continued to rely “in a practical manner” on the preliminary plan of 1938 and its results. In 1941, when the *Reichsanstalt* finally implemented, and made public, a full-scale national plan, the Labor Administration itself claimed only moderate success: it had basically succeeded in “coming closer to the goal” of the plan, with only one “complete failure,” in mining. However, the director of vocational counseling tried to dampen expectations (or concerns), emphasizing the “limits of such a plan:”

Fundamentally, it must be remembered ... that such a quantitative plan of distribution for apprentices and young workers can only provide guidelines.... The purpose of the plan can thus not be to determine the need for apprentices and young workers with mathematical precision, but rather it must place the need in relation to the available number and thereby pay attention to what is achievable.

The main purpose of the plan could be achieved not in a single year, but only over “longer periods of time”; it applied not to single vocations but to vocational groups; monitoring the “line of development,” not inevitable shorter-term variations, was the point.¹¹³ Publication of the plan even had sparked “various critiques and fears,” inspiring the Minister of Labor himself to emphasize the merely general, long-term, and non-compulsory nature of the quantitative targets.¹¹⁴ The hope of implementing a planned distribution of apprentices to the different industries and vocations met, then, with only limited success.

Along with *quantitative* planning, the other vocational strategy consciously promoted once “total registration” was achieved with the March 1938 decrees aimed to improve the *quality* of vocational measures. Allocation and quality, of course, had been seen as the central—and complementary—elements of vocational reform ever since the seminal Prussian edict of 1919. Now augmented by its new legal mandates in the midst of ever-tighter labor markets, the Labor Administration pursued both goals with a new boldness. Its official goals became the “securing of a quantitatively appropriate supply of apprentices and young workers for the individual vocations,” and “securing the quality of the training in the individual skilled and semi-skilled vocations” as well as “securing the preconditions in the person of the young person who is to be trained.”¹¹⁵ Even before the various limits to precise quantitative planning had become evident, however, the qualitative aspects were becoming increasingly important.

As early as 1937, when the possible dimensions of Germany’s future shortfall in manpower became clearer, it was already a commonplace notion that the nation would have to compensate for the missing workers by qualitative measures. At the meeting of industry and the *Reichsanstalt* in January 1937, the head of vocational counseling characterized the belief that Germany had unlimited reserves of youth as a “fateful error.” The already quite limited numbers would “sink steadily in the next few years.” As a result, but also because the talents were not at all evenly distributed, the “allocation of youths must in future be carefully undertaken.”¹¹⁶ In his preview of the first year of full-scale implementation of the national vocational plan—thus, even before the *Reichsanstalt* dampened expectations of the quantitative side—Walter Stets underscored the mounting significance of one of the qualitative aspects: “Especially in light of the decline in numbers of youths, determination of the vocational suitability gains a greater significance than ever before. Only by taking suitability into account can the necessary productivity increase be achieved.”¹¹⁷

The efforts to improve the quality of the vocational system, we have noted, were intended to include two facets: along with the monitoring of the suitability of apprentices there was the goal of securing thorough, high-quality training in

the firms. As for the latter, the role of the Labor Administration, which had no relevant expertise, remained quite limited—the labor offices relied on the recommendation of the local chambers of industry and trade, when deciding on firms' requests for apprentices.¹¹⁸ Vocational counseling's efforts concentrated on the other aspect: assuring the suitability of the apprenticeship candidates. Two strong currents moved the Labor Administration to expand its efforts in this regard: its aim to gain or secure the complete cooperation of private industry, which remained a predominant motive for the *Reichsanstalt* even after it had obtained the legal mandates of "total inclusion," and the needs of the regime for optimal use of Germany's quantitatively limited manpower resources for its own strategic purposes. These currents led to a joint effort by the Labor Administration and industry, which, by 1939, produced Germany's first system of psychological profiles of vocations and first uniform series of psychological tests.¹¹⁹ The "great cooperative endeavor" continued to flourish even during the years of mandated *Totalerfassung*.

Continuity in the Vocational System During the Phase of Blitzkrieg, 1939–1941

When one is considering the German economy and homefront, even to distinguish the first years of the war from the rest and to characterize them as part of the Blitzkrieg-phase may seem to be taking sides in the historiographic debate about Germany's mobilization.¹²⁰ In the sphere of vocational counseling and training, at least, the original thesis of a Blitzkrieg-economy seems to apply: remarkably little changed after the outbreak of war in September 1939. Of course, as we noted earlier, the Labor Administration did play a central role in recruiting and distributing foreign civilian workers, slave laborers, and POW-workers. Indirectly, the importation of something on the order of 10 million foreign workers,¹²¹ who performed almost exclusively unskilled work, allowed German workers to concentrate on skilled work and hence was crucial to maintaining the program of creating a skilled workforce even under the exceptional circumstances of the war. However, the advocates and administrators of vocational counseling and training had no direct involvement with these programs.

Within several weeks of the invasion of Poland, the *Reichsanstalt* and the employers' Reich Economic Chamber, together with the Ministry of Economics, issued decrees ordering that vocational training also continue even during wartime. On September 25, the Labor Administration/Ministry¹²² instructed its offices that while wartime demanded some concessions, "vocational training will be maintained during the present situation as well. The development of highly qualified young workers remains necessary, should be promoted even more for the great state-political economic realms. Correspondingly, steering the school-leaving youth into the vocations is of great significance under current conditions as well."¹²³

Only a few days later, the Reich Chamber of the Economy issued similar guidelines, which were expressly approved by a decree of the Economics Ministry. “Fundamentally,” they said, “the war economy must not lead to a reduced hiring of apprentices for skilled or semi-skilled positions.”

In these decisions, the lessons of the previous war—lessons about the long-term effects of short-term calculations—loomed large. The explanations by officials were full of references to the dire postwar results of the failure to train workers properly during that earlier conflict.¹²⁴ Industrial interests echoed the appeals of the ministries:

Such a fundamental orientation of our vocational youth-training [i.e., one oriented to “state-political goals” above and beyond the interests of individual firms] means that its development must be kept apart from all changes of narrow economic, but also of war-economic, considerations.... Vocational training is planning for the long-term.¹²⁵

Published in the now semi-official flagship journal of the vocational training movement, such a reminder was a rallying call for industrial firms to stay the course.

The long-term orientation did not just mean that vocational counseling and training would continue more or less as before. As the *Reichsinstitut* explained, the great project of organizing and standardizing vocational materials, such as vocational profiles, training plans, completion exams, and suitability requirement profiles, would continue as well.¹²⁶ The committee on suitability requirements continued to meet regularly; by February 1940, the requirements for a further thirteen vocations had been determined, bringing the total to 78.¹²⁷ In April, the committee agreed on eight more profiles,¹²⁸ and in June on another five.¹²⁹

A Nazi Economic *Neuordnung*?

If anything might have permanently redirected the thrust of work on the German vocational system, it was not the limited war-economy of 1939/40, but the prospect of a “New Order” of the European economy opened up by Germany’s dramatic triumphs in the spring of 1940. After the territorial gains of 1938 and 1939 in Central Europe, the swift conquest of the Benelux countries, Denmark, Norway, and—most importantly—the “arch enemy” France made the Nazis masters of an imperium stretching from the Pyrenees to the Arctic Circle and the edge of the Baltic region. In the flush of victory, Göring commissioned Economics Minister Funk to draw up an overall blueprint for the *Neuordnung*; even as circumstances delayed the development of this single plan, numerous Party and state offices, leaders of the economic organizations, and individual firms prepared formal plans for the new German-dominated Europe, or at least reassessed their options.¹³⁰ For many, no doubt, as Peter Hayes suggested about I.G. Farben, Nazi economic policies now assumed for the first time “an air of permanence.”¹³¹

What impact did the prospect of a Nazi *Neuordnung* of Europe have on the ministries’ and employers’ thinking about the vocational system—which de-

pendent, given the necessary investments of time and resources, on assessments of *longer-term* conditions? Since the mid 1920s, a consensus on the value of Germany's human capital had held sway, despite apparent variations in the economic outlook. Now, at the apparent dawn of a Europe dominated by Greater Germany, how did the prospects of a *Neuordnung*—in particular, of a potentially vast, unified market suitable for mass production and hence unskilled work—affect the vocational project?

Contrary to the wishes of Party advocates of a continental, race, and war-centered autarky, Hitler had granted supporters of at least some form of reintegration of the “Greater German Economic Sphere” with world trade the leading roles in planning.¹³² The Economics Minister had entrusted the task to the former head of export-promotion, who enjoyed close ties to industry.¹³³ Without commenting on the likely future state of the *Grossraumwirtschaft* or its relations to the rest of the world, the Minister of Labor and the Labor Administration's head of vocational counseling reiterated the argument that, in light of Germany's long-term shortage of workers, vocational training remained of paramount importance.¹³⁴ In this, they were supported by a frequent rival, the German Labor Front, which regarded Germany's small (and shrinking) labor force as the economy's main problem, concluding that “the development of human labor power” was “one of the most urgent investment tasks.”¹³⁵ Nor did the Labor Front's, nor even Adolf Hitler's, occasional advocacy of mass consumption as a means of spurring greater productivity or as a vehicle for social integration prompt any significant measures to introduce mass production throughout the economy,¹³⁶ which might have led to a reevaluation of the German vocational system.

Among some leaders of the economic self-administration, however, the possibilities of the Greater German Economic Sphere appeared to encourage speculation, if only temporarily, about new forms of production. At a speech to industrialists in Dusseldorf in early December 1941 (i.e., when it still appeared that Germany would shortly control a vast region extending to Moscow and even the Urals), Herr Frenz, one of the Organization of the Producing Economy's experts on vocational training, drew a direct link between the potential market's size, new production methods, and workers' qualifications:

The greater European area provides the German economy with relief in obtaining raw materials, and in the conditions of production and distribution. It allows many firms the possibility of a greater specialization, of mass production and sales and thereby of a previously unknown increase of their productivity and competitiveness.... Vocational training should not be understood to mean *simply the training of skilled or semi-skilled workers*. Especially in the past few years, this area has expanded considerably. The question of the *simplest, shortest and most purposeful training* for the other categories of young workers as well, the training and rapid schooling of low-skilled workers, will have to be considered precisely in regard to the changes in production methods that result from the Greater Economic Sphere. These [changes] will bring about shifts in many firms from one-piece and skilled work, as has been the case until now, to mass, semi-skilled, and unskilled production. As a result, a *corresponding shift* in the need for workers will occur.¹³⁷

We cannot know whether Frenz' views would have become commonplace among businessmen (not to mention the ministerial advocates of vocational training), if the Red Army had not stopped the *Wehrmacht* before Moscow in those very days, thereby ending the Blitzkrieg and enveloping the outcome of the war—and hence the future of the Greater Economic Sphere—in uncertainty. We do know, however, that even at the apogee of Nazi military success, most businessmen still took a far more cautious view of future changes than Frenz' comments implied.

As recent studies of company behavior during the Third Reich have shown, industrial leaders by and large maintained their earlier reserve, born of their uncertainty over the Nazis' long-term intentions, even into 1940/41. Neil Gregor's description of Daimler-Benz' unwillingness to make major decisions based on the prospect of a vast new domestic market can stand in for numerous other studies:

[D]espite the adoption of an expansionist policy [into production of military equipment]—which in the context of the war economy was the result of unavoidable political pressure as much as long-term strategic planning—the company's successive responses to the changing military and economic situation were still characterized by a high degree of caution and uncertainty, and by a reluctance to commit itself to long-term decisions in a war in which short-term events could very rapidly change the position of the Reich and with it the company.¹³⁸

The most compelling evidence, however, for German firms' ongoing commitment to vocational training was their persistently high, even rising, demand for apprentices. In 1940, the demand for male skilled and semi-skilled trainees had, admittedly, declined slightly, compared to the previous year, from 582,600 to 558,000. Given the fighting and concomitant disruptions in April and May 1940, when the new class of apprentices entered service, the fall-off was not surprising. In 1940, as in 1939, the number of apprentices requested by firms still outnumbered the available school-leavers by 150,000. The next year, though, German employers asked for 627,100 male trainees for skilled and semi-skilled positions, more than a 10 percent increase over the previous year. Two hundred thousand positions—virtually one-third of the requests—could not be filled. As German armies appeared to conquer a vast new empire in the east, the Labor Administration could comment with evident satisfaction on the employers' "great willingness to train."¹³⁹

The Vocational System in the Period of Total War: Disrupted, not Disabled

After the end of the Blitzkrieg outside Moscow in late 1941, the Nazi regime had to fight a different war. Its attempts to remold its military, but in particular its economy, for a war of attrition as well as the growing specter of defeat exacerbated fissiparous tendencies within the regime and cost it support among important social groups.

A vastly increased production of war materiel was the key to the new strategy. To achieve this, the regime had to mobilize untapped reserves of labor—which the military also needed for its new units—or make current workers more productive. The corresponding measures and the encroachment of the war on German territory, especially in 1944 and 1945, could not but affect the German vocational system. Conscription into the army and into other tasks in production drew down the vocational system's own personnel; especially in the final year of the war, Allied bombing and the dispersal of production (and hence training) facilities made the normal routines of vocational placement and training more onerous. Beyond these debilitating effects, the “rationalization” of production encouraged by Fritz Todt and then Albert Speer, the powerful ministers in charge of armaments production,¹⁴⁰ aimed, in part, to introduce mass production methods, which would require far fewer skilled workers.

The first sort of effect, whether due to the withdrawal of personnel or the immediate consequences of Allied actions, was, of course, a serious disruption, but its impact would not necessarily last long past the war's end. The rationalization of production, involving significant investment in machinery for mass production, on the other hand, might have meant a more permanent shift in German production methods—and hence in the vocational system. In fact, several countervailing pressures mitigated the degree of conversion by German industry. These pressures came from within the Nazi Party and within the state ministries. Resistance to change came also from German industry. In the period of total war, the German vocational system was disrupted, but not transformed.

The military crisis of the winter of 1941/42 convinced Hitler to agree, with a decisiveness and consistency he demonstrated increasingly rarely, to a major reorganization of the German war economy. In February 1942, he approved an unprecedented centralization of control in the hands first of Fritz Todt and then of Albert Speer.¹⁴¹ The reforms introduced by Todt and Speer included, most importantly for our purposes, efforts to simplify and standardize weapons systems; awarding contracts to the most efficient producers; and measures to improve productivity at the factory level, including the increased use of mass production methods.¹⁴²

There can be little doubt that Speer's reforms contributed to the significant increases in the German economy's arms output from 1942 to 1944.¹⁴³ However, a number of factors continued to limit the impact of Speer's efforts to reform the economy, especially the expansion of mass production. Though Todt and Speer had achieved an unparalleled centralization of control of the war economy, that command was never complete, nor unequivocally supported by the *Führer*. “A defining quality of German labor policy in the war,” Walter Naasner argues, was the leadership's reluctance to demand maximal sacrifices of the workers. Concerns for domestic peace may explain why “only halfhearted attempts” in this direction were made.¹⁴⁴ The decisions in February and March 1942, precisely when Speer was launching his program of rationalization, to utilize Soviet civilian labor extensively beguiled the Nazi leaders with the possibility of resolving their labor

and production problems without imposing significant burdens on the German people. By comparison, other forms of labor policy, including transforming German production methods, now seemed less urgent.¹⁴⁵

Further impediments to Speer's program of rationalization came from the *Wehrmacht*, from within the Party, and from still potent state ministries. A key precondition for the mass production of weapons was to reduce both the number of variations of each type of weapon or support system and their quality. Considerable progress was made in this regard, yet even Richard Overly admits that many of these changes were implemented only very slowly. Not only did the armed forces resist the reduction and simplification of their weapons and in fact continue to interrupt production runs with frequent design changes,¹⁴⁶ many armaments firms did as well, as Lutz Budrass has shown for the airplane industry.¹⁴⁷

The Nazis' regional satraps, the *Gauleiter*, blocked or at least slowed some aspects of the rationalization. As part of the effort to mobilize all remaining resources, the Nazi leadership in March 1942 had established yet another labor-related office, the General Plenipotentiary for Labor Deployment (*Arbeitseinsatz*), which was occupied by Fritz Sauckel. In July 1943, Sauckel combined the functions of the regional Reich Labor Guardians and those of the *Land* labor offices in new *Gau* labor offices.¹⁴⁸ The new position strengthened the hand of the *Gauleiter*, whose power bases were at least partly local, in resisting any closings of smaller, less efficient firms ordered by Speer's organization.¹⁴⁹

Finally, as a growing number of studies of companies' perspectives and behavior during these years suggests, to a considerable extent firms continued to resist significant interference in their production methods. Even under conditions of total war, businesses had to weigh and balance short-term opportunities and dangers against their assessments of the likely future conditions in which they would be operating. Especially in regard to investments in capital, including human capital, firms oriented themselves particularly according to their assessments of mid- to long-range conditions, which by 1942 or 1943 included the growing likelihood of a future without the Nazis.¹⁵⁰ Detailed studies of the machine tools and airplane industries confirm that, even when faced with pressures to turn to mass production, firms largely continued their long-term strategies of combining skilled work and automation for the sake of flexibility in future markets.¹⁵¹ Especially toward the end of the war, companies "hoarded supplies and skilled workers without any inhibitions."¹⁵²

Firms' interest in preserving their core resources, despite the short-term allure of unskilled mass production for the total war effort, manifested itself in their persistently high willingness to engage in apprenticeship training. The number of positions offered in 1941 had risen by more than 10 percent compared with the previous year; even in 1942, the first year of serious efforts to increase output of materiel, employers offered more positions than ever before.¹⁵³ It was only in 1943 that the overall number of apprenticeships on offer declined for the first time, and then only marginally. The number of apprenticeships for semi-skilled positions, in fact, still climbed. In terms of occupied positions, the year 1943 saw

just a 1.8 percent decline in skilled apprenticeships, but a 6.9 percent increase in semi-skilled positions.¹⁵⁴ Reports solicited by the Reich Economic Chamber in the fall of 1944 about the state of vocational counseling throughout the country revealed the debilitating effects of the war, but also the continuation of training virtually until the very end. “The number of male apprentices has been reduced due to the early call-ups, as has that of examiners due to induction into the *Wehrmacht* and the *Volkssturm*,” the summary concluded matter-of-factly. Allied bombings reduced work intensity; in regions near the front, the loss of territory had reduced the area to be tended to and the necessary work of bringing equipment to safety made regular training and exams “seldom possible.” Still, “the chambers and firms in these areas are trying everything in order to carry on with vocational training.” In areas less affected by the fighting, “basic apprenticeship training is being performed according to plan.”¹⁵⁵

All along, official policy had been to uphold vocational training no matter what the fortunes of war or the state of the war economy. In March 1943, the head of the *Arbeitseinsatz*, Fritz Sauckel, had reiterated the regime’s support for the apprenticeship system. The order exempted trainees from the January edict mobilizing further labor reserves for the total war. Its language and stipulations suggest that it belonged to the measures meant to reassure the German middle classes made uneasy by the January edict and the ensuing closings of firms. “Vocational training is necessary for securing the needed supply of *Facharbeiter*, who will be urgently required both today and in the future.” The labor offices were to find new positions for those apprentices affected by firm closings.¹⁵⁶ Throughout 1943 and 1944, the Reich Economics Ministry urged firms to maintain apprenticeship training.¹⁵⁷

Not only did companies try to maintain their training, to the extent that was possible; the work on standardizing the vocational materials also continued into the period of total war. In February 1942, the *Reichsinstitut* (DATSCH) had agreed, upon the suggestion of Reich Group Industry, to restrict its work to materials “important for the war,” and primarily to training plans.¹⁵⁸ In May of that year, however, a report showed that between 1 June 1941 and 30 April 1942, the *Reichsinstitut* had completed twenty-seven suitability profiles and still had four “in progress.”¹⁵⁹ By early 1943, just as Sauckel was issuing the edict on general mobilization, the Economics Ministry reinvigorated the *Reichsinstitut*, commissioning it to revise all vocational training plans for all sectors with the exception of *Handwerk*.¹⁶⁰ At the end of the year, an air raid on Leipzig destroyed all of the publisher’s stock of vocational materials, which thereafter effectively limited the work of the *Reichsinstitut*.¹⁶¹ Still, in April 1944, there were reported to be “311 recognized *Lehrberufe* and 249 recognized *Anlernberufe*,” with eight and fifteen more vocational profiles, respectively, “in progress.”¹⁶² It was only in October 1944—when US and British forces already were driving far into France and the Russians were breaching Germany’s eastern borders—that the Economics Ministry finally ordered the “basic halt” of all work by the *Reichsinstitut*, in light of the “total war effort.”¹⁶³

Between May and July 1944, Kurt Bernhard of the *Reichsgruppe Industrie* widely circulated a paper, which obviously dealt with the postwar situation: “Suggestions for the Alteration of the Distribution of Youths to Industrial Vocations as well as of the Training and Examining Procedures used until now.” In language that echoed numerous appeals made throughout the entire interwar period, and indeed since the late nineteenth century, Bernhard urged that quality had to compensate for missing quantity. “It must always be recalled that the youths *are our most valuable good*, which we must treat with exceptional *care*.” Even the untrained should be turned into semi-skilled workers. Old-fashioned training methods, deriving from a time in which unlimited numbers of youths were available, must be altered, Bernhard urged, apparently more forcefully struck by the desiderata of the actual training (and perhaps the disarray at the end of the war) than by the previous work ordering and standardizing the vocational system.¹⁶⁴

In December 1944, in the first of a series of discussions with regional industrialists, Bernhard consulted with Berlin employers about the shape of the postwar vocational system. The questions he posed suggest both the issues that remained unresolved or newly opened, after the dislocations of total war, but also the broad agreement that persisted through it:

- 1) Do you consider the current numerous division of vocations (at present circa 300 *Lehrberufe* and 250 *Anlernberufe*) to be appropriate, or do you think a reduction in number is possible and appropriate?
- 2) Do you think the separation of skilled and semi-skilled vocations is at all right, or should there in future only be *Lehrberufe*? ...
- 3) Do you think that for the majority of skilled vocations a long apprenticeship (3–4 years) is generally appropriate, or does a training period of generally 2 years suffice?
- 4) How do you picture the future training and education of those youths characterized until now as “untrained?”¹⁶⁵

Neither the Depression nor the accession to power of the National Socialists ultimately derailed the projects of developing a high-skilled workforce. Their militaristic style of politics and untroubled resort to coercive measures to combat mass unemployment diverged from the spirit of the earlier Labor Administration, but the break was not nearly as sharp as some scholars have suggested.

Developments of ultimately greater importance for the long-term future of the projects to optimize the workforce took place independent of direct action by the Nazis. In the first years after the Depression and the change of power, decisive steps were taken to revive, consolidate, and complete important human economies. Employers, in cooperation with state ministries and the Labor Administration, resumed and expanded their work, begun the previous decade, to create standardized vocational profiles and other materials as the bases of a national system of skilled labor: the “great cooperative endeavor.” The success of these efforts led firms to offer ever more apprenticeships. The *Reichsanstalt’s* vocational counseling participated in the work to standardize vocational materials, which

became the bases of its own work and served to bind the Labor Administration and private employers more closely to each other. As a result of their control of an increasing share of the apprenticeships offered by private industry, the number of which was climbing rapidly, the vocational counseling offices now attracted a proportion of all school-leavers that was rapidly approaching “total inclusion.”

Both new and old elements inspired this work on the optimization projects. The new elements—most importantly, a political climate that encouraged greater discipline and initiatives to preempt outside interference; more unified employers’ organizations; threats from other claimants to leadership in vocational matters—certainly contributed to the remarkable *speed* of the organizational work. It was the older elements, however—namely, the employers’ organizations’ and vocational counseling’s jointly held goal of creating a high-skilled workforce on a national scale, and (primarily) the latter’s aim of steering every young person into the most suitable vocation—that accounted for the underlying *philosophy and direction* of the work in the mid 1930s.

The “great cooperative endeavor” of officials in the Labor Administration and Economics Ministry and employers’ organizations to create a unified vocational system continued—and even accelerated—in the shadow of war after 1936. The legal establishment of *Totalerfassung* in March 1938 did not mean that the Labor Administration cared any less about gaining the confidence of employers. These, in turn, had learned to appreciate the Labor Administration’s efforts—and also knew they must accommodate themselves to the coercive politics of the day. In 1934/35, the focus of work in the human economies had been on establishing standards for vocational training, the success of which had led to rapidly increasing numbers of industrial trainees—and visitors to the vocational counseling offices. After 1936, when the tightening labor markets put a premium on qualitative measures for improving the vocational economies, the focus of the cooperative endeavor shifted to vocational counseling.

The work to standardize—and hence permit the completion of—the vocational system in the mid to late 1930s represented a revival and extension of the work begun in the decade after World War I. This time, the employers clearly took the initiative—not only in standardizing vocational training, but also in pushing for an effective, nationwide system of vocational counseling. The Labor Administration and Economics Ministry were happy to cooperate with such an eager partner for a goal they too shared.

Compared to the oftentimes contentious and unsteady progress of the optimization projects made in the 1920s, the consolidation of the vocational system beginning in the mid 1930s came about quite rapidly. Politically, the climate created by the Nazi regime conduced (thanks to both its centripetal and centrifugal forces) to bring the employers, the Economics Ministry, the *Reichsanstalt*, and the Labor Ministry together even more closely than previously. Economically and demographically, the rapid return to full and even over-employment put a premium on the optimal employment of each worker—by placing him according to his talents and by developing the latter. In this, the Nazis, on the one hand,

and the Reich ministries and employers, on the other, could agree—even if their ultimate aims differed in significant ways.

As had the Depression a dozen years before, the period of total war from 1942 to 1945 disrupted, but did not fundamentally transfigure, the German vocational system. If anything, the war, by its very destructiveness, would make that system seem all the more necessary. At the end of this World War, the Germans would face a situation very similar to the one in 1918: it was easy for them to believe that they had little on which to rely but their own talents.

Notes

1. All figures were drawn from Reichsanstalt, *Zehn Jahre*, 19.
2. In fact, ever since Bismarck's social insurance schemes, the argument that the risk of unemployment was not calculable—and hence not insurable—long had been one of the impediments to national insurance. See Führer, *Arbeitslosigkeit*, 37–92.
3. Reichsanstalt, *Zehn Jahre*, 72.
4. *Jugend und Beruf*, vol. 10 (October 1931): 229. *Jugend und Beruf*, edited by Richard Liebenberg, the head of vocational counseling in the state labor office in Berlin, was the most important forum for exchanges among the leading advocates of vocational counseling.
5. *Ibid.*, vol. 7 (July 1930): 158.
6. *Ibid.*, vol. 10 (October 1931): 229.
7. Originally in the *Kölnische Zeitung* from 25 June 1930, summarized in *Jugend und Beruf*, vol. 10 (October 1930): 244.
8. *Ibid.*, vol. 7 (July 1930): 158. The disaffection of these *Verwaltungsrat* members for the *Reichsanstalt's* vocational counseling arose out of a range of short-term conflicts and, perhaps, simple confusion. As a subsequent clarification by the social-democratic Free Trade Union insisted, the unions still stood firmly behind the vocational counseling project. (See the reprint of the clarification in *Jugend und Beruf*, vol. 10 (October 1930): 243–44).
9. GStA PK, I. HA Rep. 120 Ministerium für Handel und Gewerbe, E I Spez., Fach 1, Nr. 61, vol. 7, 23 January 1932.
10. Reichsanstalt, *Zehn Jahre*, 39.
11. Figures calculated from *ibid.*, 39.
12. *Technische Erziehung*, nr. 9 (September 1931): 72.
13. *Ibid.*, nr. 1 (January 1932): 1.
14. BAB, R 4901/ 6703, 14 November 1932.
15. On the following, see Toozee, *The Wages of Destruction*; Avraham Barkai, *Nazi Economics: Ideology, Theory and Policy* (New Haven, 1990); James, *The German Slump*; Hayes, *Industry and Ideology*; Dan P. Silverman, *Hitler's Economy. Nazi Work Creation Programs, 1933–1936* (Cambridge, 1998); Richard Overby, *War and Economy in the Third Reich* (Oxford, 1994); Ludolf Herbst, *Der Totale Krieg und die Ordnung der Wirtschaft: Die Kriegswirtschaft im Spannungsfeld von Politik, Ideologie und Propaganda, 1939–1945* (Stuttgart, 1982); Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation* (New York, 2000), ch. 4: Hitler: “Master in the Third Reich” or “Weak Dictator”?; Lothar Gall and Manfred Pohl, eds., *Unternehmen im Nationalsozialismus* (München, 1998); and Paul Erker, *Industrieeliten in der NS-Zeit: Anpassungsbereitschaft und Eigeninteresse von Unternehmern in der Rüstungs- und Kriegswirtschaft, 1936–1945* (Passau, 1994).

16. Schmuhl, *Arbeitsmarktpolitik*, 223; Uhlig, *Arbeit—amtlich*, 267.
17. Schmuhl, *Arbeitsmarktpolitik*, 227.
18. These included Hellmuth Bogen, head of vocational psychology in the *Landesarbeitsamt* Berlin (for his socialist background); Richard Liebenberg, chief of vocational counseling in Brandenburg, and Richard Langenberg, the head of vocational counseling in the Rhineland (both for being Jewish).
19. These included Walter Poppelreuter, perhaps the most influential vocational psychologist of all; Fritz Giese, the chief of vocational psychology for Baden and Württemberg; Albert Huth, in charge of vocational psychology for Bavaria; Wilhelm Hische, head of vocational counseling in Lower Saxony.
20. *Neue Leipziger Tages-Zeitung*, nr. 221, 9 August 1941, in BAB, R 3903/ Berufskundliches Archiv B1/133/11.
21. BAB, R 3903, B1/133/7, Berlin—Annual Report on Vocational Counseling, 1 November 1935.
22. See Reichsanstalt, *Zehn Jahre*. Also the reports from the Nordmark, Mitteldeutschland, Bavaria, and Hesse, all in BAB, R 3903, B1/ 133.
23. Campbell, *Joy in Work*, 312–75.
24. BAB, R 3903/ 350, directive of President of the *Reichsanstalt* to the Presidents of the *Landesarbeitsämter*, 20 May 1935.
25. Of course, a major exception must be noted. The characterization does not apply to the Labor Administration's role during the war in the recruitment of foreign civilian, forced, and prison laborers. The Labor Administration was centrally involved in these programs. Yet they were part of the *Reichsanstalt's* job placement wing and affected neither the day-to-day operations of vocational counseling or training nor, more importantly for our purposes, the work to standardize the “vocational system.” See Schmuhl, *Arbeitsmarktpolitik*, 295–308; Ulrich Herbert, *Fremdarbeiter: Politik und Praxis des “Ausländer-Einsatzes” in der Kriegswirtschaft des Dritten Reiches* (Berlin, 1985), 77. For the complicated details of these programs and the power struggles over these sources of labor, see Herbert, *Fremdarbeiter*, 173–82 and passim, and Walter Naasner, *Neue Machtzentren in der deutschen Kriegswirtschaft, 1942–1945: Die Wirtschaftsorganisation der SS, das Amt des Generalbevollmächtigten für den Arbeitseinsatz und das Reichsministerium für Bewaffnung und Munition/ Reichsministerium für Rüstung und Kriegsproduktion im nationalsozialistischen Herrschaftssystem* (Boppard am Rhein, 1994).
26. See Lotte Zumppe, *Wirtschaft und Staat in Deutschland, 1933 bis 1945* (Vadoz, 1980), 123–34, for the details of these reorganizations.
27. While John Gillingham, *Industry and Politics in the Third Reich: Ruhr Coal, Hitler, and Europe* (Stuttgart, 1985), argues that the *Gleichschaltung* “greatly strengthened” the employers (Gillingham, *Industry and Politics*, 34), Hayes, *Industry and Ideology*, citing David Schoenbaum, suggests the merger actually fragmented and vitiated industry (Hayes, *Industry and Ideology*, 76).
28. See the announcement, with a militaristic photo of Feder, in the August 1933 issue of *Technische Erziehung*.
29. “Gegenwartsaufgaben des Deutschen Ausschusses,” in *Technische Erziehung*, August 1933: 58–60; “Berufserziehung,” in *Technische Erziehung*, September 1933: 65–66.
30. Figures in Silverman, *Hitler's Economy*, appendix, 251.
31. Friedrich Syrup, “Das Gesetz zur Regelung des Arbeitseinsatzes,” in *Reichsarbeitsblatt* (Nichtamtlicher Teil), nr. 15, 25 May 1934: 175.
32. Syrup's explanation of these measures explicitly referred not only to the immediate purpose of improving the situation in the cities, but also to the long-term need to redress the “current distribution of the population induced by an exaggerated industrialization.” (*Reichsarbeitsblatt*, (Nichtamtlicher Teil), nr. 25, 5 September 1934: 333).
33. Schmuhl, *Arbeitsmarktpolitik*, 245.
34. See Syrup's comments, *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, II, nr. 25, 5 September 1934: 334, which include a statement from the Economics Ministry to this effect. Also, see Syrup, *Hundert Jahre*, 407.

35. See the text of the law in *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, I, nr. 32, 1935.
36. *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, II, nr. 25, 5 September 1934: 335.
37. The introduction of workbooks represented a return to a practice common in the Kaiserreich.
38. The state and Party would recur repeatedly to legal restrictions on movement and punitive measures, as well as, particularly during the war, to “sweeps” through the plants to uncover unauthorized workers. In addition to such “sticks,” however, the authorities also resorted to “carrots” to keep workers generally loyal to, or at least tolerant of, the regime, as well as, secondarily, to tie them to their places of work. On the prominent role of various forms of “social welfare,” especially by the Labor Front, including measures to improve worker health, housing, and pensions, see Marie-Luise Recker, *Nationalsozialistische Sozialpolitik im Zweiten Weltkrieg* (München, 1985); Smelser, *Robert Ley*, 201–17. Despite the general wage freeze imposed in 1936, companies used new forms of performance pay to motivate and keep workers. See Recker, *Nationalsozialistische Sozialpolitik*, 223–49; Rüdiger Hachtmann, “*Industriearbeit*” in *Dritten Reich* (Göttingen, 1989), 161–223.
39. By the spring and summer of 1934, employers were beginning to discuss measures to combat the pending shortages. See, for example, the report on a meeting of the industrialists’ organization in April to address this problem, in *Technische Erziehung*, nr. 7, July 1934: 81–82; also the Statement of the President of the Reich Estate of German Industry Dr. Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach on the Question of the Shortage of Skilled Workers and Apprenticeship Training, in *Technische Erziehung*, nr. 5, May 1934: 56–57.
40. *Technische Erziehung*, nr. 7, July 1938: 127.
41. *Technische Erziehung*, nr. 5, May 1934: 56–57.
42. *Technische Erziehung*, nr. 7, July 1934: 81–82.
43. “Der Bedarf an technischem Nachwuchs und Berufsberatung,” in *Technische Erziehung*, nr. 7, July 1934: 74–75. In fact, such a demand on the part of industry was not new. According to Theo Wolsing, *Untersuchungen zur Berufsausbildung im Dritten Reich* (Kastellaun, 1977), 186, the employers in 1930 had urged the development of such plans. Clearly, several years later, the conditions were more propitious.
44. “Zentral gesteuerte Berufsberatung,” in *Technische Erziehung*, nr. 8, August 1934: 85–87.
45. *Technische Erziehung*, nr. 12, December 1934: 143.
46. “Der Bedarf der deutschen Wirtschaft an technischem Nachwuchs und die Problematik der statistischen Berufsforschung,” in *Technische Erziehung*, nr. 2, February 1935: 17–19.
47. “Das Berufsbild,” in *Technische Erziehung*, nr. 2, February 1935: 13–14.
48. *Technische Erziehung*, nr. 4, April 1935: 46–47. These were for machine mechanic, toolmaker, fine mechanic, corer, steel former, iron former, metal former, model carpenter, iron mechanic, and high-voltage electrician.
49. See the frequent reports “From the work of the special groups,” in the now expanded *Technische Erziehung*.
50. See the list of the vocations in *Technische Erziehung*, nr. 5, May 1936: 53.
51. See the explanation of the first set of vocational profiles in *Technische Erziehung*, nr. 4, April 1935: 46–47, which said that the “necessary knowledge and qualities, which are to be seen as preconditions for the apprenticeship training,” would be enumerated separately in DATSCH training materials.
52. See the text of the agreement in BAB, R 12 I/ 307, *Reichswirtschaftskammer* to the *Reichsgruppe Industrie*, 17 Juli 1944 [sic]. The latter requested a copy after its own had been destroyed in an air raid. The precise origins of the agreement have not been explored.
53. Dieter Langewiesche and Heinz-Elmar Tenorth, eds., *Handbuch der deutschen Bildungsgeschichte, vol. V, 1918–1945* (München, 1989), 276; as Kathleen Thelen puts it, this measure united industry’s standardization with the accreditation system handicrafts had enjoyed since 1897 (Thelen, *How Institutions*, 237–38).
54. Ley and the DAF repeatedly have attracted scholarly attention. See Smelser, *Robert Ley*; Recker, *Nationalsozialistische Sozialpolitik*; Timothy W. Mason, *Social Policy in the Third Reich: the*

- Working Class and the "National Community"* (Providence, 1993); Tilla Siegel, *Leistung und Lohn in der Nationalsozialistischen "Ordnung der Arbeit"* (Opladen, 1989); Matthias Frese, *Betriebspolitik im "Dritten Reich": Deutsche Arbeitsfront, Unternehmer und Staatsbürokratie in der westdeutschen Grossindustrie, 1933–1939* (Paderborn, 1991); Hachtmann, "Industriearbeit."
55. Carola Sachse et al., *Angst, Belohnung, Zucht und Ordnung: Herrschaftsmechanismen im Nationalsozialismus* (Opladen, 1982), 59–91.
 56. Frese, *Betriebspolitik*, 252–58.
 57. See the announcement in *Technische Erziehung*, nr. 10, October 1935: 119.
 58. See BAB, R 3101/10220, letter of the Reich Institute for Vocational Training to Dr. Eberhard Köhler in the Economics Ministry, 16 November 1939. The Reich Institute included a chart comparing its own work on these materials with that of the DAF in great detail.
 59. Frese, *Betriebspolitik*, 263–64. The Reich Institute did accept the DAF as a constituent member, but the latter only played a supporting role.
 60. All numbers were taken from Reichsanstalt, *Zehn Jahre*, 39. For a chart showing the growing number of apprenticeships offered by the Labor Administration, see below.
 61. As one sign of this cooperation, in April 1935, the Reich Group Industry named representatives in each state to work with the *Land* vocational offices.
 62. *Technische Erziehung*, nr. 7, July 1936: 78.
 63. BAB, R 3903 (Alt R 163)/ 57, letter of the President of the *Reichsanstalt* to the Presidents of the *Land* offices, 4 October 1934.
 64. Reichsanstalt, *Zehn Jahre*, 39.
 65. See, for example, the reports of the Berlin (Brandenburg) and Mitteldeutschland offices, in BAB, R 3903 (Berufskundliches Archiv)/ B1/133/7 and BAB, R 3903 (Berufskundliches Archiv)/B1/133/11, respectively.
 66. *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, (Nichtamtlicher Teil), nr. 34, Beilage: Achter Bericht der Reichsanstalt für Arbeitsvermittlung und Arbeitslosenversicherung, 5 December 1936: 36. Of the 848,000 visitors in 1934/35, 109,000—or roughly 12 percent—were "older counsel seekers." Since the statistics do not reveal how many of these older people were repeat visitors, we cannot say for sure what proportion of each school-class eventually went to vocational counseling.
 67. See the reports of Saxony (BAB, R 3903/B1/133/11); Hessen (BAB, R 3903/B1/133/10); and Bavaria (BAB, R 3903/B1/133/10).
 68. BAB, R 3903/B1/133/12, report of the *Land* office for South-West Germany.
 69. BAB, R 3903/B1/133/12; also the Saxony office, in BAB, R 3903/B1/133/11.
 70. BAB, R 3903/B1/133/12; the Middle-German office reported that its local counselors were combating the "one-sided" desire among school-leavers to obtain a position in the metal industry, which accounted for as much as 40 percent of the cases (BAB, R 3903/B1/133/11); in Saxony, as many as 20 percent of the visitors to vocational counseling wanted to become auto mechanics (BAB, R 3903/B1/133/11).
 71. BAB, R 3903/B1/133/12.
 72. The chamber of industry and trade and the industrialists' organization in Saxony, for example, seem to have been particularly active in forging and supporting cooperation.
 73. The relation of handicrafts to vocational counseling, as we have seen earlier, had been uneven. It depended fundamentally on crafts' sense of its own fortunes, especially vis-à-vis industry, in attracting apprentices. By the mid 1930s, the craft branch's hopes for support from the new regime were giving way to pessimism again, as the incipient rearmament (and later the Four-Year Plan) favored industry. This explains the somewhat greater support by crafts, than by industry, for binding agreements with vocational counseling.
 74. See, for example, the report of the Berlin office (BAB, R 3903 (Berufskundliches Archiv)/ B1/133/7), claiming that "the new organization of the manufacturing economy makes it possible today to a greater extent to work on the closest terms with industry." Numerous other offices reported on the generally greater cooperativeness of the chambers and organizations of crafts and industry compared with that of some individual employers.

75. Reichsanstalt, *Zehn Jahre*, 40. This practice was reported in Hessen, Bavaria, and Saxony.
76. Report of the *Landesarbeitsamt* Nordmark, R 3903/ Berufskundliches Archiv B1/133/8.
77. Dietmar Petzina, *Autarkiepolitik im Dritten Reich: Der Nationalsozialistische Vierjahresplan* (Stuttgart, 1968).
78. Unfortunately, until now the growing literature on employers' behavior and attitudes during the Third Reich has paid almost no attention to these questions of the vocational system. More generally, on employers' unease over growing Nazi interference in the economy after 1936 (which was by no means universal and did not preclude their benefiting from preparations for war), see Henry A. Turner, "Unternehmen unter dem Hakenkreuz," in Pohl, *Unternehmen*, 18; Gillingham, *Industry*; Hayes, *Industry*, 163ff. For attitudes within the leadership of the *Reichsanstalt*, we have to rely on accounts published after the war, though written during it (Syrup), and on the postwar reports of colleagues (on Stets). See, Syrup, *Hundert Jahre*, 403; see the article by Wilhelm Witte on Stets, in Bundesanstalt für Arbeitsvermittlung und Arbeitslosenversicherung, *Berufsberatung—gestern, heute, morgen* (1959). Given what we know of these men's philosophies and life's work before 1933, which was motivated by a vision of Germany's long-term economic success and domestic stability, the claims in these works that they regarded the regime with some suspicion rings true.
79. This overall continuity is invariably missed in the literature on Nazi labor and vocational policies, which insists on a sharp break from the previous policies. See Volker Herrmann, *Vom Arbeitsmarkt zum Arbeitseinsatz: Zur Geschichte der Reichsanstalt für Arbeitsvermittlung und Arbeitslosenversicherung, 1929–1939* (Frankfurt, 1993); Anje Lepold, *Der gelenkte Lehrling: Industrielle Berufsausbildung von 1933–1939* (Frankfurt, 1998); Petzina, *Autarkiepolitik*, 158.
80. See Petzina, *Autarkiepolitik*, for details on the administration of the plan.
81. When the *Vierjahresplan* was first announced in the fall of 1936, the unemployment rate stood at just over 5 percent. In key sectors such as iron and metal and construction, however, unemployment already had sunk below 3.5 percent. See H.M. Flügge, "Arbeitseinsatz im Vierjahresplan," in *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, II, nr. 33, 25 November 1936: 472.
82. Cited in Petzina, *Autarkiepolitik*, 159.
83. The second directive made the hiring of additional skilled workers in these sectors dependent on the approval of the labor office, while the third compelled firms to return skilled metal and construction workers, who had been redeployed, to those fields.
84. Hachtmann, *Industriearbeit*, 44. The first citation comes from Flügge, "Arbeitseinsatz im Vierjahresplan," and the second from Syrup in "Der Vierjahresplan," 16.
85. BAB, R11/ 1216, letter from Syrup to the *Landesarbeitsämter* and *Arbeitsämter*, 10 December 1936. Syrup noted that the groups have "already until now maintained close relations in carrying out the *Arbeitseinsatz*."
86. See the report on the meeting, which took place on 28–29 January 1937, in *Technische Erziehung*, nr. 2, February 1937: 21–25.
87. Tilla Siegel and Thomas von Freyberg, *Industrielle Rationalisierung unter dem Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt, 1991), 274–77; according to Heidrun Homburg (*Rationalisierung*, 495–96), the *Vierjahresplan* had virtually no effect on Siemens' production strategies, which still assumed Germany's integration into world markets; Hayes, *Industry*, 175–211, comes to a similar conclusion about the firm whose leaders helped to design and implement the Four-Year Plan, the chemicals giant I.G. Farben.
88. Johannes Handrick, "Die Zusammenarbeit der Reichsanstalt für Arbeitsvermittlung und Arbeitslosenversicherung mit den Organisationen der gewerblichen Wirtschaft beim Arbeitseinsatz der deutschen Jugend," in *Technische Erziehung*, nr. 5, May 1937: 49–52.
89. In addition to the report in *Technische Erziehung* on the January 28–29 (nr. 5, May 1937: 49–52) meeting, see the four-page draft of a proposal for the cooperation between industry and the *Reichsanstalt*, sent by the employers' Reich Chamber of the Economy to the Economics Ministry on 21 January 1937, in BAB, R11/1216, letter from Küch to Krause. One of the suggestions was that all "organizations of the economy shall take it upon themselves to seek to

- have all apprenticeship-masters use the vocational counseling offices when filling their trainee-positions.”
90. In this period, the number of visitors to the vocational counseling offices, including “older counsel seekers,” rose from 1.078 to 1.18 million, which for the first time surpassed the number of students leaving school.
 91. Erich Schulz, “Berufswünsche und Berufseintritt,” *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, II, nr. 36, 25 December 1937: 401.
 92. See the texts of the instructions in BAB, R 11/1217.
 93. See these in *ibid.*
 94. See the letter from the *Reichswirtschaftskammer* to the *Reichsanstalt*, on 21 August 1937, in *ibid.*
 95. BAB, R 3101/10219, 28 May 1937.
 96. BAB, R 11/1217, letter from the *Reichswirtschaftskammer* to the *Reichsanstalt*, 21 August 1937.
 97. See the figures in Walter Stets, “Nachwuchspolitik in Krieg und Frieden,” in *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, II, nr. 34, 5 December 1939: 443. In 1938, 441,400 apprenticeships were available for 464,000 male school-leavers (the figures are restricted to these). If one could subtract those who went on to *Gymnasium*, military service or unskilled work, one almost certainly would find a deficit of trainees. By 1939, in any case, there were at most 555,000 male school-leavers for 583,000 male apprenticeships. See *Reichsarbeitsblatt* V, nr. 28, 5 October 1940: 482–83. Brandsch, “Nachwuchs und Wirtschaft,” in *Technische Erziehung*, nr. 4, April 1938: 53–59, also suggests that 1937/38 was a turning point.
 98. Hans Herdegen, “Der Berufswechsel,” in *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, II, nr. 25, 25 July 1938: 221.
 99. See Erich Schulz, “Berufswünsche und Berufseintritt,” in *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, II, nr. 36, 25 December 1937: 401. As the *Reichsanstalt*’s annual internal report for 1937 pointed out, the regime’s own directives for fulfilling the Four-Year Plan were in no small measure responsible for these imbalances.
 100. Walter Stets, “Zur Nachwuchsplanung 1941,” in *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, V, nr. 28, 5 October 1940: 483.
 101. For the texts of these decrees, see *Deutscher Reichsanzeiger und Preussischer Staatsanzeiger*, nr. 51, 1938.
 102. Erich Schulz, “Ergebnisse aus der Berufsnachwuchslenkungstätigkeit der Arbeitsämter im Grossdeutschen Reich im Krieg,” in *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, V, nr. 16, 5 June 1942: 291. The remaining youths would have worked on family farms, entered the *Reichsarbeitsdienst* or *Wehrmacht*, or gone on to *Gymnasium*. If one included the considerable number of “older counsel seekers,” the figure for the earlier year already surpassed 100 percent.
 103. Walter Stets, “Nachwuchspolitik in Krieg und Frieden,” in *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, II, nr. 34, 5 December 1939: 443. The figure for 1938 was 441,400 and for the following year 582,600.
 104. Walter Stets, “Zur Nachwuchsplanung 1941,” in *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, V, nr. 28, 5 October 1940: 483.
 105. See the debates within vocational counseling toward the end of World War I and in the early 1920s in chapter 3.
 106. Walter Stets, “Zur Nachwuchsplanung 1941,” in *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, V, nr. 28, 5 October 1940: 483.
 107. Erich Schulz, “Ergebnisse aus der Berufsnachwuchslenkungstätigkeit der Arbeitsämter im Grossdeutschen Reich im Kriege,” in *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, V, nr. 16, 5 June 1942: 291.
 108. From a nadir of 83,000 in 1931/32, the number of positions for men had risen to 441,000 in 1937/38.
 109. BAB, R 11/1217, “Die Gesichtspunkte zur Zusammenarbeit der Reichswirtschaftskammer bzw. Organisation der gewerblichen Wirtschaft mit der Reichsanstalt für Arbeitsvermittlung und Arbeitslosenversicherung,” 10 February 1938.
 110. Walter Stets, “Zur Nachwuchsplanung 1941,” in *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, V, nr. 28, 5 October 1940: 483.

111. BAB, R 11/ 1217, letter from the *Reichswirtschaftskammer* to the *Reichsanstalt*, 22 March 1938.
112. Walter Stets, “Zur Nachwuchsplanung 1941,” in *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, V, nr. 28, 5 October 1940: 484.
113. Walter Stets, “Die Lenkung des männlichen Berufsnachwuchses 1941 und 1942,” in *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, V, nr. 28, 5 October 1941: 492–97.
114. Franz Seldte, “Deutsche Nachwuchspolitik,” in *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, V, nr. 30, 25 October 1941: 527–29. Seldte had parents in mind when he insisted that no compulsion would be applied. His insistence that the plan was part of a functioning national economy, and not of a war economy, was meant to reassure those parts of industry and *Handwerk* that had complained about the plan’s excessive emphasis on the metal and mining sectors. By and large, the employers’ organization expressed its general approval of the need for planning, while individual employers and sectors were dissatisfied with the distribution. See Wolsing, *Untersuchungen*, 195.
115. Walter Stets, “Zur Sicherstellung des beruflichen Nachwuchses,” in *Technische Erziehung*, nr. 7, July 1938: 128.
116. *Technische Erziehung*, nr. 5, May 1937: 50.
117. Walter Stets, “Zur Nachwuchsplanung 1941,” in *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, V, nr. 28, 5 October 1940: 485.
118. Wolsing, *Berufsausbildung*, 175–86.
119. For a detailed account of these efforts, see Meskill, *Human Economies*, 352–73.
120. Rolf-Dieter Müller, “Die Mobilisierung der deutschen Wirtschaft für Hitlers Kriegführung,” in *Organisation und Mobilisierung des Deutschen Machtbereichs, Erster Halbband: Kriegsverwaltung, Wirtschaft und Personelle Ressourcen 1939–1941*, eds. B. Kroener, R.D. Müller, and H. Umbreit (Stuttgart, 1988), 349–692, is the only author in these debates who has examined not only the policies issued from above, but also the responses and initiatives coming from industrial firms. He offers the most convincing account: the Nazis, indeed, were planning and preparing for a longer war and fuller mobilization; their sensitivity to the resistance among the populace, Party members, and industry to these measures, however, compelled the regime within a month of the outbreak of war to retreat from its original plans; later, the polycentric nature of the regime stymied efforts at greater mobilization and—most crucially—the apparently easy victories over Poland and France and even in the opening weeks of the Russian campaign instilled in the leadership a “victor’s hubris” and false sense of strength.
121. Schmuhl, *Arbeitsmarktpolitik*, 297.
122. For the sake of simplicity, I will continue to refer to the Labor Administration and *Reichsanstalt*, even though they were subsumed under the Labor Ministry.
123. *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, I, nr. 29, 15 October 1939: 468.
124. See the interview with Labor Minister Seldte, in *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, II, nr. 30, 25 October 1939: 377; Walter Stets, “Nachwuchspolitik im Krieg und Frieden,” in *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, II, nr. 34, 5 December 1939: 441–46.
125. “Berufsausbildung im Kriege,” in *Berufsausbildung in Handel und Gewerbe (Technische Erziehung)*, nr. 10, November 1939: 281. In early 1939, the Reich Economics Ministry had assumed a more direct role in DATSCH, which it had sponsored and protected (from the German Labor Front) since 1935. As part of the reorganization, DATSCH was renamed the Reich Institute for Vocational Training in Commerce and Industry (*Reichsinstitut für Berufsausbildung in Handel und Gewerbe*) and *Technische Erziehung* became *Berufsausbildung in Handel und Gewerbe*. Again, for the sake of clarity, in the text I will refer to the organization and its journal interchangeably as DATSCH or the Reichsinstitut and *Technische Erziehung* or *Berufsausbildung in Handel und Gewerbe*.
126. “Berufsausbildung im Kriege,” in *Berufsausbildung in Handel und Gewerbe (Technische Erziehung)*, nr. 10, November 1939: 282. For a sense of the scale of work throughout 1940, see the impressive list of vocational materials in the table of contents to the bound volume of *Berufsausbildung in Handel und Gewerbe* for 1940, I–VII.

127. BAB, R 11/ 955, report on the “Fundamental Discussion of the Working Committee on Vocational Suitability-Requirements,” 28 February 1940.
128. See the brief report on the meeting in *Berufsausbildung in Handel und Gewerbe*, June 1940: 267.
129. *Berufsausbildung in Handel und Gewerbe*, July 1940: 319.
130. See Herbst, *Der Totale Krieg*, 150–67; Müller, “Die Mobilisierung,” 491–97; Recker, *Nationalsozialistische Sozialpolitik*, 82–154.
131. Hayes, *Industry*, 268.
132. Müller, “Die Mobilisierung,” 493.
133. *Ibid.*, 493.
134. “Reichsarbeitsminister Seldte über die Berufswahl,” in *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, V, nr. 30, 25 October 1940: 519; Walter Stets, “Zur Nachwuchsplanung 1941,” *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, V, nr. 28, 5 October 1940: 482–87.
135. Quoted in Herbst, *Der Totale Krieg*, 151.
136. On Hitler’s and the DAF’s ideas about encouraging mass consumption, see Herbst, *Der Totale Krieg*, 324–27. On the project of a “mass motorization,” see Hans Mommsen and Manfred Grieger, *Das Volkswagenwerk und seine Arbeiter im Dritten Reich* (Düsseldorf, 1996), 177–202.
137. BAB, R 11/ 1085, letter from Frenz to Erdmann containing a copy of the talk he would hold on 5 December, 3 December 1941.
138. Neil Gregor, *Daimler-Benz in the Third Reich* (New Haven, 1998), 78; for similar assessments, see on Siemens, Erker, *Industrieeliten in der NS-Zeit*, 46, 49, and Siegel and Freyberg, *Industrielle Rationalisierung*, 349; on I.G. Farben, Hayes, *Industry*, 268; on the machine-tool industry, Siegel and Freyberg, *Industrielle Rationalisierung*, 172–73, 274; generally, Müller, “Die Mobilisierung,” 496.
139. Quotation and figures in Walter Stets, “Die Lenkung des männlichen Berufsnachwuchses 1941 und 1942,” in *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, V, nr. 28, 5 October 1941: 492–97. The number of female apprenticeships followed a similar pattern, though at lower levels.
140. The official designations of the offices were the *Reichsministerium für Bewaffung und Munition* and, from September 1943, the *Reichsministerium für Rüstung und Kriegsproduktion*.
141. Müller, “Die Mobilisierung,” passim, and, on the transition to Todt/Speer, 630–92.
142. See Overy, *War and Economy*, for a concise summary of the reforms.
143. See *ibid.*, 366–74, for some indices of the higher output and greater productivity.
144. Walter Naasner, *Neue Machtzentren*, 27; Overy, *War and Economy*, 353–54.
145. Naasner, *Neue Machtzentren*, 29.
146. Overy, *War and Economy*, 362–63.
147. Lutz Budrass, *Flugzeugindustrie und Luftrüstung in Deutschland 1918–1945* (Düsseldorf, 1998), 818, 822.
148. Naasner, *Neue Machtzentren*, 36.
149. Overy, *War and Economy*, 372–73; Herbst, *Der Totale Krieg*, 198–275.
150. Hans Mommsen, in “Podiumsdiskussion,” in Gall and Pohl, *Unternehmen im Nationalsozialismus*, 126; Erker, *Industrieeliten*, 67.
151. See Siegel/Freyberg, *Industrielle Rationalisierung*, and Budrass, *Flugzeugindustrie*, respectively.
152. Erker, *Industrieeliten*, 70, with reference to Daimler-Benz; Herbst, *Der Totale Krieg*, 405, comes to the same conclusion.
153. *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, V, nr. 29, 15 October 1942: 542.
154. *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, V, nr. 32, 15 November 1943: 510.
155. BAB, R 12 I/ 310, *Reichswirtschaftskammer* to various addressees, 10 January 1945.
156. *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, I, nr. 10, 5 April 1943: 288.
157. See, for example, the report of the Ministry’s order to this effect, in a letter from Kurt Bernhard of the *Reichs Gruppe Industrie* to Max Ihn of the Krupp company, in BAB, R 12I/ 308, 10 October 1944.

158. BAB, R 11/ 695, 6 March 1942.
159. BAB, R 11/1253, 8 May 1942.
160. See the report on the Ministry's decision from 11 January 1943, in BAB, R11/ 187, Reich Economics Chamber to the Reich Groups and *Arbeitsgemeinschaft Verkehr*, 6 February 1943.
161. BAB, R 11/ 1253, 22 December 1943.
162. BAB, R 12/ 308, 22 April 1944.
163. BAB, R 12I/ 310, 14 October 1944.
164. BAB, R 12 I/ 301, May 1944.
165. BAB, R 12 I/ 310, 29 December 1944. The second meeting was scheduled for 16 January 1945 in Dresden. It is unknown whether it took place.