



Juvenile Employment in Germany

The Policy of the Government

A series of articles published in the *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, including one by Mr. Franz Seldte, the German Minister of Labour himself, discusses and explains the situation in Germany of boys and girls leaving school, from the point of view of their choice of an occupation and the demand for juvenile labour, and the policy pursued by the Government to ensure that their occupational distribution will be in conformity with national requirements.¹

THE FLOW OF MALE JUVENILES INTO EMPLOYMENT

It is pointed out that the whole subject must be considered in the light of the complete reversal in the juvenile employment situation which has taken place since the National-Socialist Party seized power. In 1934, about 620,000 boys left school, but the number of vacancies open to them was about 155,700; in 1939, the corresponding figures were 530,000 and 582,000 respectively; in 1940, the number of vacancies fell slightly to 558,000, but in 1941 it rose sharply to 627,100, of which figure about 200,000 remained unfilled. The inevitable result of this new situation was that a kind of competition ensued as between the various occupations and undertakings in order to secure the available juvenile labour; and in this competition the prizes went to the occupations which happened to be most popular among boys leaving school (in particular, in metal working and in commercial offices).

This situation, if unchecked by State intervention, would have proved very injurious to the economy of the country. Accordingly, as early as 1 March 1938 measures were taken to make the

¹ Franz SELDT: "Deutsche Nachwuchspolitik", in *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, 25 Oct. 1941, pp. 527-529. Dr. STETS: "Die Lenkung des männlichen Berufsnachwuchses 1941 und 1942", *idem*, 5 Oct. 1941, pp. 492-497; "Gesichtspunkte für die Lenkung des weiblichen Berufsnachwuchses", *idem*, 25 Oct. 1941, pp. 540-541.

reporting of all juveniles leaving school compulsory, and it was further prescribed that apprentices, probationers, and learners might not be engaged without the approval of the competent employment office. The employment offices were at the same time empowered to call up young people about to choose an occupation, along with their parents, for an interview.

The authorities thus obtained an appropriate basis for working out a rational employment policy for boys. In coping with this task they had to take into account a further consideration: the fact that the number of boys leaving school will inevitably show a continual decline down to the year 1947 (figure for 1934, 620,000; estimate for 1947, 440,000). Consequently, it became all the more necessary to plan the allocation of juveniles to the different occupations, with a view not to the number of vacancies that each occupation *could* fill, but to the number of recruits that it ought to receive with due regard for the claims of other occupations and the interests of the national economy as a whole.

The Juvenile Employment Plan

The information obtained as a result of the measures instituted in 1938 enabled the Ministry of Labour to work out and gradually to apply a Juvenile Employment Plan. The Plan was put into full operation for the first time in the year 1941. It applies only to boys who do not mean to enter an academic career, the armed forces, or the civil service. Great stress is laid on the fact that the figures indicated in the Plan as desirable for the various occupations merely constitute an objective at which the employment offices are to aim. Any use of direct compulsion is disclaimed. The most important means at the present time of influencing a boy's choice of an occupation when he leaves school lies in the work of information and advice that the employment offices are enabled to carry out in virtue of their power to interview young persons leaving school and their parents. The offices have power to refuse permission to engage apprentices in a particular occupation, once the figure indicated in the Plan as desirable has been reached; juveniles are thus set free for other occupations, but the employment offices possess no power to force the young people into them. The work is done in close collaboration with the schools and with the Hitler Youth Movement. The national youth leaders, in particular, have assisted most effectively in the advisory work of the employment offices.

The main object of the employment offices was to discourage candidates from attempting to enter the occupations for which too many boys were applying (in particular, as already stated, the metal working trades and employment in commercial offices) and to persuade them to view with more favour the less popular groups (in particular, agriculture, mining, the stone and earth, textile, clothing, and building industries, and wholesale and retail trade). The following table shows, for each of these occupational groups, the number of boys indicating a preference for employment in the group, and compares the position at Easter 1941 with that in previous years.

NUMBER OF BOYS GIVEN VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE CLASSIFIED BY
CHOICE OF OCCUPATIONAL GROUP

(in thousands)

Year	Agriculture	Mining	Stone and earth	Metal working	Textiles	Clothing	Building	Commerce and offices	
								Total	Sales assistants
1938	38.7	14.4	4.7	254.6	7.8	15.9	49.2	97.9	8.7
1939	53.9	8.2	4.7	280.3	6.9	14.8	50.6	104.3	8.7
1940	61.1	5.6	3.6	278.0	4.7	13.5	41.9	94.2	7.4
1941	71.2	7.2	3.4	280.1	4.2	17.3	42.3	92.4	13.2

These figures show, it is claimed, how the employment offices have succeeded in checking (though not in correcting) the excessive flow towards the metal working trades; in correcting the undesired flow towards commercial employment in general; and in increasing, to a very satisfactory extent, the flow towards certain relatively unpopular occupations: agriculture, mining, clothing, building, wholesale and retail trade. They did not succeed, however, in checking the decline in applications for vacancies in the stone and earth and the textile industries, though the rate of the decline was reduced.

Attention is drawn to a satisfactory increase in the number of vacancies for learners notified in semi-skilled occupations. The figure rose from 28,000-29,000 for 1939-40 to 41,250 in 1941. It is claimed that although these figures are relatively small and, in proportion to the number of vacancies notified in skilled occupations, by no means correspond to the relative importance of the semi-skilled occupations, they indicate that the undertakings are showing an increasing inclination to adapt themselves to the new industrial pattern, which involves the introduction of various new semi-skilled occupations.

Results of the Plan for 1941

Agriculture. The Plan provided for raising the number of juvenile entrants from 100,000 to 115,000. The number was in fact raised to 110,000. In view of the obstacles that had to be surmounted this result is regarded as very satisfactory.

Mining. The Plan aimed at increasing the number of juvenile entrants from 9,000 to 15,000, and thus counteracting the downward tendency of previous years. Efforts in this direction were unsuccessful and the figure dropped further to 7,000.¹

¹ The importance attached in German Government circles to maintaining the flow of German workers to hard manual occupations such as agriculture and mining is significant. In a broadcast address on problems connected with choosing an occupation, the Minister of Labour said, on 23 October 1940:

We must never reach a point where mining and agriculture, any more than any other occupations, become "occupations for foreign workers". Both agriculture and mining will remain in the future spheres in which the German worker is supreme, and our young people have every reason to look for training and advancement in these particular industries (*Reichsarbeitsblatt*, 25 Oct. 1940, Part V, p. 519).

Stone and earth industry. The increase for which the Plan provided was achieved. This result is considered particularly gratifying.

Metal working. The Plan aimed at choking off the flow into certain particularly popular, and therefore overcrowded, skilled trades, and at securing a corresponding increase in the number of entrants to certain less popular trades in the same group. About one-third of the planned reduction in the number of entrants to over-popular trades was achieved; the planned increase in the number of entrants was secured in some cases (*e.g.* to the trade of smith), but not in others (*e.g.* to the trade of moulder).

Chemical industry. A welcome and very necessary increase was secured.

Textile industry. An increase was secured in respect both of skilled and of semi-skilled occupations, despite a decline in the number of preferences expressed for such occupations (see table above).

Timber and woodworking trades. The Plan aimed at a slight reduction in the number of entrants, but efforts in this direction were unsuccessful and an unforeseen increase actually occurred.

Food, drink, etc., industry: Idem.

Clothing industry. The Plan provided for an increase, and this was secured in respect both of skilled and of semi-skilled branches. The increase in the number of entrants to previously unpopular trades such as boot and shoe making and tailoring is especially welcomed.

Hairdressing. The number of entrants has shown a surprising tendency to increase since 1939, and the Plan's efforts to check this increase failed.

Building. An increase in the number of entrants to the skilled trades was secured, though not on the scale contemplated in the Plan.

Hotels and restaurants. An increase in the number of entrants to the chief skilled occupations (waiter and cook) was secured. The increase in the number of communal restaurants makes an increase in the number of apprentice cooks particularly desirable.

Commerce and offices. The efforts contemplated in the Plan to reduce the number of entrants to this over-popular branch as a whole, while increasing the number in respect of its unpopular branches (wholesale and retail trade), were successful.

Thus when the results secured in the various occupational branches are compared, the Plan is considered as having, on the whole, achieved its essential objectives. The failure in respect of mining is, however, regarded as serious, and it is intended in the future to tackle the underlying causes which are impeding the flow of juvenile entrants to this occupation.

EMPLOYMENT POLICY FOR GIRLS

The Juvenile Employment Plan does not apply to girls, for various reasons.

The decline in the number of girls leaving school attains the same proportions as that in the number of boys and youths. On the other hand the number of vacancies notified in skilled and semi-skilled occupations is less than half the number of girls leaving school (the proportion in 1939 was 221,025 to 535,000). This does not mean, however, that the problem of finding juvenile recruits for the various occupations exists only in respect of males. It must be borne in mind that, in the case of girls, a very large proportion enter occupational life, not through some system of technical training, but by way of work in the capacity of unskilled "help" or as members of a family group. The technical training of girls is by no means as thoroughly organised as that of boys and such provisions as do exist are much less strictly applied. Moreover, entrance to two of the main occupations in which women are active—agriculture and domestic service—takes place for the most part directly, without an intervening period of training, and in these occupational groups girls are very often employed as members of a family. The truth is that the situation as regards the securing of an adequate flow of juvenile entrants is as strained in the case of girls as in that of boys, though the available statistical information is much less adequate for the former than for the latter.

There have been considerable fluctuations in the total number of women gainfully employed during the last decade. In the period immediately after the seizure of power by the National-Socialist Party, the prevailing tendency was to discourage the employment of women in order to absorb the male unemployed. This downward tendency was reversed with the introduction of the second Four-Year Plan. The war has now further disturbed the statistical picture. Consequently it is difficult to fix any basic figures upon which to build up a plan for guiding the flow of girls leaving school into employment. Moreover, the uncertainty that exists as to the length of time for which a woman will remain in employment (*e.g.* before she gets married) is a further complication.

The figures compiled on the basis of the work books for 1940 show that girls under 18 years of age were principally employed in the following occupational groups:

Agriculture (excluding girls working in their own families) . .	126,000
Domestic work (excluding girls working in their own families)	368,000
Commerce and offices	232,000
Clothing	59,000
Textiles	30,000
Miscellaneous unskilled occupations	58,000
"Workers without any fixed occupation"	233,000

It should be noted that the above list does not take into account such predominantly feminine occupations as teaching, social work, and nursing, for the reason that entry into these occupations normally takes place at a higher age than 18.

The figures showing for the same year and the same occupations the preferences declared by the girls leaving school are as follows (the compilation of these figures was complicated by the fact that so many girls did not go straight into ordinary gainful employment immediately on leaving school, but either performed their year of compulsory service or remained for some time at home):

Agriculture.....	53,000
Domestic work.....	128,000
Commerce and offices.....	296,000
Clothing.....	64,000
Textiles.....	12,000
"Unskilled work".....	29,000
"No specific occupation".....	128,000
And in addition:	
Health and nursing work.....	67,000
Education.....	23,000

These figures, it is pointed out, show a somewhat sounder situation among the girls than among the boys, for they do not provide any parallel to the outstandingly unpopular occupations among the boys (mining, building, etc.). But even among the girls, the rush to employment in commerce and offices is regarded as very unsound. (A comparison of the tables shows that the number of girls wishing to enter this occupational group in a single year was nearly 300,000, whereas the total number of girls aged 14—18 years actually employed in it was only 232,000, and the number of vacancies for recruits 100,000.) On the other hand, the flow of entrants to agriculture and the textile industry, and also, although to a lesser degree, to the food, drink, etc. group, is definitely insufficient. The number of girls showing no preference for any specific occupation (128,000) is considered as indicative of the uncertain way in which many girls and their parents still face the problem of the choice of an employment.

Girls and their parents are still asking themselves the fundamental question: ought a girl to undergo a course of technical training? The question that the managers of undertakings are still putting to themselves runs: do we need a regular supply of technically trained girls, or should we merely employ women, including girls leaving school, as a labour reserve to be used when the supply of men runs out? The Ministry of Labour has no doubt whatever as to the answer, which is that girls as well as boys should enter gainful employment only after they have undergone a regular course of vocational training.

For obvious reasons there is a tendency on the part of the girls and their parents to reduce such training as the girls receive to the briefest possible period. Apart, however, from other considerations, the authorities see a considerable advantage in extending the general educational benefits of a proper technical training to as many girls as possible. For this reason they have, for instance, instituted a new semi-skilled occupational category termed "female office assistant". The work in question used to be performed by girls who had received only an extremely brief training (in many cases only a few weeks' training in shorthand and typing). The

shortage of labour induced businesses and administrative offices to engage girls for such work after very inadequate training, although a very much smaller staff might yield the same output if it were better trained. Experience in the unemployment crisis before 1933 showed that it was these very inadequately trained office workers who were the first to be sacrificed on account of their relative inefficiency. If all office workers had to possess the qualifications required for the new occupational category of "female office assistant", the number of workers required in the offices would be very much smaller than it is at present.

From the standpoint of National-Socialist theory, the occupations in which women should be employed may be grouped in three categories. In the first place there are the typically feminine occupations—domestic work, nursing, teaching, etc. It so happens that there is a definite shortage of workers in these fields so that the requirements of National-Socialist doctrine and of the economic system in its present emergency coincide. Secondly, there is typically feminine work in trade, industry and administration—occupations in which women have been employed for decades past, as saleswomen, stenographers and secretaries, clothing and textile workers, and workers in the food and catering trades. In the third place there are occupations which in normal times are carried on mainly by men, but in which in wartime it is advantageous to replace the men by women—e.g. hairdressing, occupations in the hotel and restaurant trade, and a number of occupations in the textile and clothing industries and in offices.

In order to direct an adequate flow of girls to these occupations, it does not appear to the authorities necessary, for the present at least, to institute a plan such as that adopted for boys. It is, however, considered particularly important to make the occupations in question as *attractive* as possible to girls leaving school; and the first condition to be fulfilled in this sense is to institute adequate systems of vocational training. In the long run a girl will only find her occupation attractive if she enters it after undergoing such training as will enable her to do her job properly and in a way that will be satisfactory to her own pride and self-respect. If girls are pitchforked into employment without adequate preparation, they will probably become disgusted with it and leave it as soon as possible. Other steps must also be taken, such as the provision of outfits for domestic workers in families with many children.¹ Great care must be taken also in choosing a girl's first place of employment. It is obvious, for instance, that if the statutory year of compulsory service is regarded merely as a means of securing so much extra labour, and therefore 14-year old girls immediately on leaving school are placed as domestic servants in families with many children, the only result will be to disgust them for the rest of their lives with domestic work. The year of compulsory service must on the contrary be regarded as a means of training, and households to which the girls are sent must be carefully selected with that end in view. The same arguments apply *mutatis mutandis* to other occupations.

¹ Cf. *International Labour Review*, Vol. XLIV, No. 6, Dec. 1941, p. 649.

Thus the principles applicable to the placing in employment of girls leaving school are the same as those which apply in the case of boys. However, in the case of the girls the basic problem of guiding those girls who are at present pouring into jobs without any properly regulated training has still to be solved. The ultimate aim of juvenile employment policy in Germany remains, in the words of the Minister of Labour, "that every young person in our midst should enter an occupation corresponding to his or her capacities, and should receive an education appropriate to that occupation".

THE GOVERNMENT'S "BACK TO THE LAND" POLICY

The *Reichsarbeitsblatt* publishes a special note on "Land Work as an Occupation".¹ The National-Socialist authorities are urgently concerned with the problem of stemming the rural exodus and restoring a proper balance between town and country activities. "Work on the land is the occupation above all others by which Germany's future must be secured. The solution of the problem of keeping the youth of the countryside in the countryside, and of provoking an outward flow of young persons from the city to the country is definitely a matter of eminently political and social significance." The worst dangers, it is said, have been warded off since 1933 by a series of important measures, such as the creation of the National Food Corporation, the Farm Entail Law, and the regulation of the market. Nevertheless, the rural exodus continues, and steps must be taken to make the German people realise better the importance of land work for the national destiny.

Now, since the reincorporation of the Eastern Territories in the Greater German Reich, and since the recovery of traditional German "settlement space", a new and far higher appreciation of land work is all the more necessary. If we do not succeed in settling these territories with Germans, if we do not succeed in having the work of the German soldier carried on and completed by the German farmer and peasant, then we shall not be able to keep the land that we have won by the sword. For history teaches us that every people that deserts the land, every people that leaves the tilling of its own soil to foreign races, will sooner or later have to yield place to a race of peasants, for only a race of peasants can outlast a foreign domination. And this also indicates that the present large-scale employment of foreign workers in our agriculture can only be an emergency measure that must never be allowed to become a permanent state of affairs. After the war the most that could be allowed would be for foreigners to be employed in compact groups on large estates, in building or on specific industrial jobs. The employment of such workers in family undertakings and on entailed farms must be ruled out.²

In order to evoke the necessary response from German youth, the National Youth Leader has instructed the leaders of the Hitler Youth Movement to encourage young people to take up employment on the land. A promising start has been made, as is

¹ "Landarbeit als Beruf", in *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, 25 Oct. 1941, Part V, pp. 540-541.

² See also above footnote ¹ p. 514.

shown by the latest figures on the Hitler Youth Movement's Land Service. The purpose of this Service is to bring a proportion of the healthy young people of the cities back to the land, and it is intended that those young people of both sexes who have most distinguished themselves in the Land Service should be settled in the colonisation territories of the East. Hitherto some 100,000 young people of both sexes have passed through the Land Service and have given voluntary help for one year to the farmers. Of those who have been employed in the Wartheland District (former Polish territory), 80 per cent. are remaining permanently in the East and are prepared to become settlers on the land or to enter an agricultural occupation. Hitherto 3,000 land service workers have found employment in the East.

It is not intended, however, that the Land Service of the Hitler Youth Movement should be merely a means of bringing extra workers into employment. One of its main objects is to supply vocational training. Whereas during the earlier years groups of land service workers were placed only on the large estates, the main emphasis is now being laid on employment in village groups, and the number of young people employed in such groups now represents 90 per cent. of the total. Work in the Land Service is taken fully into account in computing the time spent in apprenticeship to agricultural work or to domestic work on the land. It thus offers the young people a possibility of taking the first steps towards their technical education. As a result nearly 30 per cent. of the young people who passed through the Service in 1940 have remained on the land, and the proportion is expected to increase in future years. Great progress has therefore been made in the direction of bringing young workers from the cities back to the land.

Practical efforts are also said to have been made to solve the other part of the problem—that of retaining the young people of the country districts on the land. A careful regulation of occupational training and occupational organisation is expected to contribute to this, because as a result the countryside will offer a variety of interesting jobs and plentiful possibilities of rising in the world. The essential occupations are those of peasant, farmer, and agricultural worker; and there are in addition a number of skilled country occupations such as those connected with stock raising, the processing of agricultural products, horticulture, forestry, as well as technical occupations and handicrafts. There are also plentiful openings in the higher occupations (agronomists, teachers in agricultural colleges, veterinary surgeons, etc.).

A solution has still to be found to the important question of the adequate remuneration of agricultural workers; but the competent authorities, in particular, the Ministry of Labour, declare they are determined to solve this problem and are already discussing what may prove to be a satisfactory solution; a whole series of other measures are contemplated with a view to rendering life in the country more attractive.
