

15 Forced Labour and "Racial War"

Demographic measures against fremdvölkische (alien) laborers and their children
Foreign forced laborers, whose numbers kept increasing in the course of war, were considered a medical and demographic threat by the regime. The medical care for these "Fremdvölkische" was guided by two principles: maintenance of the workforce at minimal cost and protection of the German population against infectious diseases. Furthermore, in accordance with their racist agenda, Nazi authorities tried to control the reproductive behavior of the forced laborers. Because they posed a threat to the projected ethnic homogenization of the German Reich, concrete measures were mainly directed against pregnant forced laborers. In Vienna, a special barracks for carrying out abortions on Eastern European forced laborers was installed on the premises of the Wilhelminen Hospital in 1943. Subsequently, to confront "racial infiltration" of Germany, in Vienna alone hundreds of women were forced to undergo abortions. But even when women were allowed to give birth, their children's survival chances were rather limited since they were exposed to starvation, infectious diseases, and systematic neglect in special "foster institutions for foreign children."

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