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German Labour Front

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The **German Labour Front** ([German](#): *Deutsche Arbeitsfront*, DAF) was the [National Socialist trade union organization](#) which replaced the various [trade unions](#) of the [Weimar Republic](#) after [Adolf Hitler's rise to power](#).

Its leader was [Robert Ley](#), who stated its aim was 'to create a [true social](#) and productive community' (Smelster, 1988).

Theoretically, DAF existed to act as a medium through which workers and owners could mutually represent their interests. Wages were set by the 12 DAF trustees. The employees were given relatively high set wages and security of employment, and dismissal was increasingly made difficult. Social security and leisure programmes were started, canteens, breaks, and regular working times were established, and German workers were generally satisfied by what the DAF gave them in repayment for their absolute loyalty.

Employment contracts created under the [Weimar Republic](#)



Flag of the DAF



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were abolished and renewed under new circumstances in the DAF. Employers could demand more of their workers, while at the same time workers were given increased security of work and increasingly enrolled into social security programmes for workers. The organisation, by its own definition, combated capitalism and liberalism, but also revolution against the factory owners and the National Socialist state. The DAF, however, did openly prefer to have large companies nationalised by the German state, instead of privately owned companies.

DAF membership was theoretically voluntary, but any workers in any area of German commerce or industry would have found it hard to get a job without being a member. Membership required a fee within the range of 15 pfennig to 3 Reichsmark, depending on the category a member fell into in a large scale of 20 membership groups.

A substantially large amount of income was raised through fees. In 1934, the total intake was 300,000,000 Reichsmark.

There were 2 main components of the DAF and these were:

- [Nationalsozialistische Betriebszellenorganisation](#) (NSBO; National Socialist Factory Organization)
- [Nationalsozialistische Handels- und Gewerbeorganisation](#) (NSHAGO; National Socialist Trade and Industry Organization)

Several other sub-organisations were set up:



A DAF Mützenabzeichen (hat badge).



A DAF Raute (diamond).

- **Kraft durch Freude** (KdF; Strength through Joy) – Organisation giving the workers cheap/free holidays in addition to subsidised sporting and leisure facilities.
- **Schönheit der Arbeit** (SdA; Beauty of Labour) – Aimed to make workplaces more enticing to workers (e.g., renovations of outdated factories, new canteens for workers, smoking-free rooms, cleaner working spaces etc.).
- **Reichsarbeitsdienst** (RAD; Reich Labour Service) – A solution to the unemployment crisis the Nazis inherited, it provided cheap labour for big state projects, such as the **Autobahns**. It provided work security to many unemployed people, and was made compulsory, in 1935, for unemployed men aged 16-25 years.

The Front also organised the **Reichsberufswettkampf**, a national vocational competition.

References [[edit](#)]

- McDonough, Frank (1999); Hitler and Nazi Germany (Cambridge Perspectives in History). Cambridge: **Cambridge University Press** ISBN 0-521-59502-9
- Smelser, Ronald M. (1988); Robert Ley, Hitler's Labour Front Leader. Oxford: Berg Publishers ISBN 0-85496-161-5

External links [[edit](#)]

- DAF, at feldgrau.com
- DAF information for AS Level History Unit 3 
- Information on the RAD, at www.angelfire.com
- **Deutsche Arbeitsfront (DAF)**  at *Lebendiges Museum Online*, in German.
- **Erste Verordnung des Führers und Reichskanzlers**



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über Wesen und Ziel der Deutschen Arbeitsfront vom 24. Oktober 1934 

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