

## Adidas connections to Nazi Germany and Xinjiang Region, China – July 2022 update

*“Forced labour is such an integral part of the government’s plan for total control that all products coming from the Uyghur Region, from cotton to solar panels, must be assumed to be tainted by forced and prison labour”.* (Nury Turkel, Chairman of the Board, Uyghur Human Rights Project, 2019)

### 2022 Xinjiang (Uyghur Region):

- Recent [reports](#) have suggested more than half a million people from minority ethnic groups such as the Uyghurs have been coerced into picking cotton in Xinjiang, which provides more than 80% of China’s and a fifth of the global production of cotton.
- Researchers say they have found traces of [Xinjiang](#) cotton in shirts and T-shirts made by Adidas and Puma appearing to contradict the German clothing companies’ promises to revise their supply chains after allegations of widespread forced labour in the region.
- Puma stated in 2020 it had [“no direct or indirect business relationship](#) with any manufacturer in Xinjiang”, while Adidas [said](#) the same year it had no contractual relationship with any Xinjiang supplier but had instructed its fabric suppliers not to source yarn from the region in the wake of reports about human rights violations.
- However, researchers at the Agrosolab in Jülich and the Hochschule Niederrhein University of Applied Sciences, both in western [Germany](#), say an isotope analysis has found traces of Xinjiang cotton in Puma and Adidas T-shirts,
- In one case, a batch of “graduates” from a so-called vocational training centre in south Xinjiang were transferred directly to a factory in the eastern Anhui province, according to a government report. The factory, Haoyuanpeng Clothing Manufacturing Co. Ltd (HYP), lists Adidas and Puma among its clients.



HYP’s factory in Xinjiang, which as a large Adidas billboard on its façade.

### 1930s and 1940s Nazi Germany:

- Adidas (and Puma) both started by the brothers Rudolf and Adolf (Adi) Dassler when in 1924 they created the Dassler Brothers Shoe Factory (*Gebrüder Dassler Schuhfabrik*) and for a while, the brothers were the only ones in Germany who produced sports shoes.
- The Dassler brothers both joined the Nazi Party prior to the war, and Adi supplied shoes to the Hitler Youth movement. Their shoes were also used as the official sports shoes for the German teams during the 1936 Berlin Summer Olympics.
- During the war the brothers continued to work with the Nazi government leading both to join the Nazi party.
- The Dassler factory was forcefully converted to produce military equipment for the Nazi’s initially focusing on producing the Panzershrek, a shoulder-launched anti-tank rocket based on the American bazooka, and it would continue to produce equipment for the Wehrmacht using Russian prisoners of war the factory since there was a labour shortage due to the war effort.
- After the end of the war, the brothers’ co-operation would be stifled by the American denazification programme and the persecution of high-level Nazi party members. Rudolf was suspected to be part of this group of high-level Nazis, and Adolf was declared to be a *Belasteter*, the name given to a category of those who profiteered of the Nazi regime.