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**REGIMENTING LABOUR IN NORWAY DURING  
NAZI GERMANY'S OCCUPATION**

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## Introduction

On the eve of the Second World War, there was still substantial unemployment in the Norwegian economy. But almost from the very moment the Norwegian armed forces finally capitulated on June 10, 1940, unemployment took a steep dive, and for the duration of the occupation the main problem for the Norwegian and German authorities was to provide enough labour to fulfill the ambitious German objectives to fortify the country and integrate it in the future *Großraumwirtschaft*. The approaches of the Wehrmacht and the *Reichskommissariat* to the enduring labour deficit, which often differed as the latter feared inflation, became more severe over time. After absorbing all available labour by 1941/1942 they relied ever more on compulsion directed against Norwegian and subsequently also against foreign workers.

As a part of the solution to the increasingly intractable problem of labour supply and management, Organisation Todt's *Einsatzgruppe Wiking* became the commanding presence in the Norwegian labour market after it fully established itself in the country in the spring of 1942. OT settled in the *Reichskommissariat* and brought with it German companies and foreign workers, German labour management practices, ideas and ideology. The OT itself often relied on incentives to attract voluntary foreign workers, but increasingly resorted to force to acquire manpower abroad as well as to manage it in Norway during the later stages of the war. This generated a post-war perception that the use of forced labour was a largely German undertaking that occurred in a realm that was practically, legally, and even morally separate from the Norwegian economy and society. This perception has only recently become the subject of historical scrutiny, and there is an ongoing effort to integrate the histories of forced labour into the prevailing master narratives of the occupation years.

## The labour market before and under the occupation

The structure of the Norwegian economy had a distinctly dual character in the interwar years. The export sector was dominated by shipping, fish, ores and minerals, lumber, and other raw materials. Confronted by increasing economic protectionism in foreign markets, employment shifted towards the home industries, which were based predominantly on agriculture. For heavy industry, which was highly unionized, unemployment persisted at high levels after the outbreak of the Great Depression. In an attempt to improve labour market conditions, *Hovedavtalen* (the Basic Agreement) of 1935 was a national arrangement between the trade unions and the federation of employers to strengthen collective bargaining as a step towards more consensual relations between labour and capital, and to reduce the number of working days lost to strikes and lock-outs. At the outbreak of war unemployment was still high, but across all sectors in the economy em-

ployment was rising, especially due to state-run infrastructure projects such as improvement of harbor facilities, roads and railroads.<sup>1</sup>

During the first two months of the occupation, the Wehrmacht needed workers for further infrastructure improvements to continue operations against Norwegian forces in Northern Norway, as well as to repair roads and bridges damaged during the campaigns in the southern parts of the country. Much of the economic activity in the country halted during the fighting, and afterwards it became a key priority for both German and Norwegian authorities to get the wheels going again. Evidence exists of German officials making direct threats of shootings and confiscations if Norwegian companies and workers did not enlist for their construction projects, but in general, the necessary cooperation was ensured through negotiations aided by the local authorities. Companies and workers quickly queued up to build airfields, barracks and bunkers, even before the Norwegian armed forces had officially capitulated.<sup>2</sup> Whereas the overall unemployment at the time of the invasion has been estimated at 5.3 %, registered unemployment among union members stood at a hefty 20 %.<sup>3</sup> The unionized workforce was concentrated around the cities, and therefore provided a large pool of manpower. Outside the cities a large part of the labour force, including many seasonal workers, faced underemployment in the primary sector. Under normal circumstances these groups represented a substantial source of reserve labour, but because of massive German demand, already by autumn 1940 Wehrmacht units complained that they faced difficulties attracting enough workers. In mid-June 1940 the *Reichskommissariat* also set up a construction department, *Abteilung Technik und Verkehr*, which ran *Oberbauleitungen* around the country. These undertook the building and repairing of roads in all areas of the country for military as well as civilian purposes.<sup>4</sup> Un- and underemployment largely disappeared by the spring 1941, and labour supply thereafter remained a continuous concern throughout the occupation years (see table 1).

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<sup>1</sup> Statistisk Sentralbyrå, Statistisk-økonomisk utsikt over året 1939, Oslo, 1940, p. 42.

<sup>2</sup> Torgeir Ekerholt Sæveraas, "Beton macht Geschichte". Organisation Todt og utbyggingen av Festung Norge, (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Trondheim: Norwegian University of Science and Technology, 2017), p. 213-285.

<sup>3</sup> Ola H. Grytten, An empirical analysis of the Norwegian labour market, 1918-1939: Norwegian interwar unemployment in international perspective (Unpublished Dr. Oecon. Dissertation, Bergen: Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration, 1994), p. 69.

<sup>4</sup> Abteilung Technik und Verkehr, Bericht der Abteilung Technik und Verkehr, 15 August 1940; Riksarkivets Forsvarsarkiv (RAFA) 2188, Arkivdel 2, B Kopibøker, Bb-Avskrifter og papirer fra RK, Abt Technik und Verkehr, 0008; Hans Otto Frøland and Gunnar Hatlehol, Organisation Todt and Forced Labour in Norway during the Occupation: Preliminary Remarks from an ongoing Research Project, in: Marek Jasinsky and Leiv Seim (eds.), Painful Heritage. Studies in the Cultural landscape of the Second World War, Trondheim 2015, p. 45-61, in particular p. 48-52.

| <b>Table 1: Official unemployment registered by the labour offices, 1940 – 1945, annual average<sup>5</sup></b> |              |             |             |             |             |               |
|---|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
|   | <b>1940*</b> | <b>1941</b> | <b>1942</b> | <b>1943</b> | <b>1944</b> | <b>1945**</b> |
| Men   | 30,853       | 15,627      | 3,537       | 282         | 160         | 7,968         |
| Women   | 5,949        | 4,537       | 1,598       | 186         | 87          | 449           |
| Total   | 36,802       | 20,164      | 5,135       | 486         | 247         | 8,417         |

\* Calculations are based on figures from after a special labour ordinance entered into force in October 1940

\*\* Figures for 1945 include the full year

In the first stage of the occupation the German strategy was based on voluntary collaboration spurred by positive incentives in the form of wages. The Wehrmacht had few inhibitions about spending money. Its purchases were credited to a special occupation account in *Norges Bank* (the Norwegian central bank), which for all practical purposes entailed Norwegian occupation tributes. Both contemporary reports and memoirs by workers at the building sites provide accounts of how the German armed forces greased every wheel with money straight from the presses of the central bank. As the prices and wages in other sectors were capped at pre-invasion levels, this provided another boon for workers who were already experiencing near-Klondike conditions at German construction sites.<sup>6</sup>

From 1941 onwards the *Reichskommissariat* forcefully intervened to restrain the wage bonanza. An important tool in that regard was the introduction of a national tariff agreement for Norwegian workers on German construction sites, which was concluded between the federation of employers and the labour union in April 1941. The *Rikstariffavtale* (National Master Tariff Agreement) of 1941 carefully specified not only wages, but also the working hours and the working conditions more generally.<sup>7</sup> However, as a restrictive measure designed to put a lid on the wages, the Master Agreement rapidly became unpopular. The *Reichskommissariat* naturally worried about protests but speculated that the problems in the sector arose mainly from the lack of a proper attitude on the part of the workers, and that the existing regulations for wages were of secondary importance in this regard. The tariff agreement proved to be at once too rigid to spur on workers facing especially difficult conditions, e.g. tunnel building in Northern Norway, yet insufficiently stringent to keep the wage growth in check. The *Reichskommissariat's* labour and welfare department (*Abteilung Arbeit und Sozialwesen [ASo]*) therefore wanted a new agreement, which would further promote the use of piece work to incentivize productivity, as well as more regulation tai-

<sup>5</sup> Direktoratet for arbeidsløshetsstrygd, Beretning: Arbeidsformidling og arbeidsløshetsstrygd i Norge inntil 7. mai 1945, arbeidsløshetsstrygden fra 7. mai 1945 til 1. juli 1947, Oslo 1948, p. 58-59.

<sup>6</sup> Harald Espeli, Incentive Structures and State Regulations of the Norwegian Economy, in: Hans Otto Frøland, Mats Ingulstad and Jonas Scherner (eds), *Industrial Collaboration in Nazi-Occupied Europe: Norway in Context*, Basingstoke 2016, 245-261.

<sup>7</sup> Reichstarifvertrag betreffend Lohn- und Arbeitsbedingungen bei den militärischen Bauarbeiten, RA (Riksarkivet, Oslo), RAFA-2188, 2, Hca, L0001.

lored in accordance with the German *Reichstarif* for construction work.<sup>8</sup> The *Generalbevollmächtigte für die Regelung der Bauwirtschaft in Norwegen*, who was also the leader of Einsatzgruppe Wiking, established specific guidelines for piecework rates in earthworks, cement and reinforced concrete.<sup>9</sup> The reliance on revised versions of the prewar Master Agreement on tariffs also enabled stricter German control over the working conditions for Norwegian civilian labourers, which became increasingly important as the pressure on the labour market mounted.

### **The forms of labour administration under the occupation**

Throughout the entire occupation period, the Norwegian authorities retained the overarching responsibility for Norwegian workers through a system of local labour offices. Municipal labour offices had existed since 1897 and their operations were codified by national legislation in 1906. As of 1916, they were subordinated to a directorate under the Ministry of Social Affairs, which from 1939 was named *Direktoratet for arbeidsformidling og arbeidsledighetstrygd* (Directorate for labour placement and unemployment benefits). German occupation led to a further expansion of this system. A new regional level was created with the establishment of district offices in all counties to direct, oversee, and coordinate the municipal offices that comprised the lowest level. Some of the local offices covered several municipalities, usually a city and the surrounding areas. If no offices existed, a special ombudsman for labour placement (*ombudsmann for arbeidsformidlingen*) was appointed.<sup>10</sup>

This three-tier wartime system rested on a special ordinance on labour placement dated 8 October 1940, which required all unemployed persons to register at their local labour offices. In accordance with the prewar law on unemployment insurance, personal attendance was required, twice weekly. The ordinance also made labour placement obligatory as the employers could not hire workers without having them assigned and expressly approved by the labour office. When the shortage of workers in different sectors became more acute, the powers of the labour offices were expanded through a series of ordinances described in more detail in the next section. The offices were meant to serve as precision instruments for directing the labour force, whether by filling vacancies, forcibly retaining people within certain occupations, or even to transfer them to new jobs in different parts of the country for shorter or longer periods of time.

The wartime expansion of the labour management system also enabled the authorities to gather statistics on unemployment and labour shortages to a hitherto unprecedented extent. The dis-

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<sup>8</sup> Bech, Reichskommissariat Abt. Arbeit und Sozialwesen to the Ministry of Social Affairs, 13 November 1942, Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-1579, Dc, L0003.

<sup>9</sup> Generalbevollmächtigter für die Regelung der Bauwirtschaft, Richtlinien, 31 August 1944, RA, RAFA-2188, 2, Hca, L0001.

<sup>10</sup> Direktoratet for arbeidsløshetstrygd (note 5).

appearance of unemployment is readily apparent from the annual averages in table 1, but the statistics also showed monthly totals that enabled the German planners to account for seasonal variations. In June 1944 there were a grand total of 86 unemployed men and women registered across the entire country. The labour offices also kept track of job openings, and starting from June 1941 the labour offices could report a lack of male workers to fill vacancies, starting an almost uninterrupted deficit streak that ran until May 1945. The shortage of female workers manifested itself somewhat later, in May 1942. Table 2 shows that the Norwegian labour market was in a state of crisis by 1943, with more than 30,000 unfilled jobs on average, exceeding 40,000 in the spring and summer months. However, we must keep in mind that being registered entailed the risk of being transferred to different parts of the country or even conscripted for certain types of work in the forests, fields or mines. It is likely that a sizeable group of unemployed evaded registration by various means.

| <b>Table 2: Labour surpluses and deficits registered by the labour offices, annual averages<sup>11</sup></b> |              |             |             |             |             |               |
|--|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
|  | <b>1940*</b> | <b>1941</b> | <b>1942</b> | <b>1943</b> | <b>1944</b> | <b>1945**</b> |
| Men  | 28,970       | 1,452       | -11,857     | -23,789     | -14,649     | 1,017         |
| Women  | 6,052        | 12,602      | -250        | -6,500      | -5,893      | -4,580        |
| Total  | 35,022       | 1,405       | -12,107     | -30,289     | -20,542     | -3,563        |

\* Calculations are based on figures from after the time when the ordinance came into force in October 1940

\*\* Figures for 1945 include the full year

While the German occupation drove the expansion of the Norwegian system, the corresponding German apparatus was relatively small. The most important actor was the *Reichskommissariat's* ASo department. The main responsibility of this division was to keep oversight over the Norwegian government and its labour management, and to communicate German requirements for allocations of labour. Many of the initiatives of the Norwegian authorities, whether by the Ministry or the Directorate, responded to demands originating with the *Reichskommissariat*.<sup>12</sup> In practice it also assumed responsibility for overseeing the conditions for Norwegian and foreign workers in the employ of German firms in Norway.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, the occupation administration also intervened with the management of the local Norwegian labour offices and occasionally installed faithful members of *Nasjonal Samling* to secure their cooperation.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 60-61.

<sup>12</sup> Robert Bohn, *Reichskommissariat Norwegen. "Nationalsozialistische Neuordnung" und Kriegswirtschaft*, München 2000.

<sup>13</sup> Gunnar D. Hatlehol, "Norwegeneinsatz" 1940–1945. *Organisation Todts arbeidere i Norge og gradene av tvang* (Unpubl. Phd Dissertation, Trondheim: Norwegian University of Science and Technology, 2015), p. 130.

## From voluntary recruitment to formal compulsion of Norwegian citizens

The building boom driven by the Wehrmacht and *Reichskommissariat* absorbed much of the unemployed labour force already by the summer of 1940. Simultaneously, the two German institutions were beginning to divert the underemployed manpower from fisheries and agriculture. Due to rising concerns about the flow of workers drawn from the primary sectors to German construction sites by high wages, the ordinance of October 8, 1940 explicitly stated that workers in agriculture, forestry, shipping, or fisheries could not be directed to take up other kinds of work.<sup>14</sup> But overall, the first substantial reform of the pre-war apparatus for labour mobilization occurred in the spring of 1941, when a rapid succession of temporary and permanent ordinances from the Ministry of Social Affairs singled out a few sectors of ‘decisive societal importance’, for which Norwegian workers could be directed to take up employment. Furthermore, the Ministry drew up lists of branches, institutions and firms for which permission from the local labour office was required in order to terminate employment.<sup>15</sup> These sectors included mining, construction, the German expansion projects in the light metals sector, and a submarine bunker in Trondheim to be built by Organisation Todt, which arrived with a small advance party in spring 1941. The preferred sectors were later expanded to include also shipping, fisheries and fish processing, as well as emergency road building.<sup>16</sup>

In addition to this incremental regimentation of the domestic labour force, from 1941 onwards Norwegians were directly conscripted for work through two separate measures. The first, *Arbeidstjenesten* (Labour Service), was organized by *Administrasjonsrådet* (Administrative Council), which was established as a Norwegian civilian authority after the King, Cabinet, and many members of parliament had fled Oslo. On 25 September 1940 *Reichskommissar* Josef Terboven disbanded the Administrative Council and appointed his own *Kommissarische Staatsräte*, and the Labour Service was embedded in a new Ministry for Labour Service and Sport, led by Nasjonal Samling politician Axel Stang. One of his first actions was to introduce a law that made labour service compulsory, in order to “raise the Norwegian youth in Norwegian national spirit.”<sup>17</sup> From April 1941 the Labour Service was obligatory for all young men who would otherwise have served in the Norwegian armed forces. The goal was to bring 18,000 men into the service, spread over three three-month contingents.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Forordning om Arbeidsformidling av 8. oktober 1940, Paragraph 5, in i Direktoratet for arbeidsformidling og arbeidsløshetsstrygd, Lov, Forordninger og Forskrifter vedrørende Arbeidsformidlingen, med kommentarer, Oslo 1944.

<sup>15</sup> Forordning om begrensinger i retten til å bringe arbeidsforhold til opphør av 7 mars 1941, Sosialdepartementets tilleggsforordninger, I, *ibid*.

<sup>16</sup> Midlertidig forordning om arbeidshjelp til særlig samfunnsviktige oppgaver av 9 juli 1941, *ibid*.

<sup>17</sup> Forordning om arbeidstjeneste, 17. april 1941. It was later superseded by the Lov om arbeidstjeneste, 25. mars 1943.

<sup>18</sup> Sozialpolitische Weltrundschau, vol. 2 no. 2 (1941), p. 27.



While originally presented as apolitical and voluntary, the Labour Service was gradually Nazi-fied to follow the example of the *Reichsarbeitsdienst*.<sup>19</sup> Through annual drafts the organization came to embody the increasing willingness of the occupier to mobilize domestic labour through compulsion. The first cohort was drafted in May 1941 for a three-month period, but starting in 1943 the service was extended to six months, at a time when roughly 6,000 Norwegians were serving at any given moment. The Labour Service deployed approximately 40,000 Norwegians over the course of the occupation, but these workers were seldom used on German construction sites or for identifiably German purposes. Rather, the aim was to use it for simple physical labour, rather than the type of skilled tasks required in construction. Over the summer of 1941 73.8 per cent of the Labour Service engagement was in agricultural work, 4.5 per cent in forestry, 3.4 per cent for roads, and the remainder in various types of relief work.<sup>20</sup> This emphasis on agricultural work was also predominant in the voluntary *Kvinnelig Arbeidstjeneste* (Women's Labour Service), which from 1942 gradually took on more characteristics of an obligatory service, including the establishment of camps with fixed service periods.<sup>21</sup>

The second measure of compulsion was introduced after the German defeat at Stalingrad, when the Quisling government, in office since February 1942, decided to show its solidarity with the Reich by mobilizing more workers on its behalf. A new law was enacted on 22 February 1943 which enabled the Government to order Norwegians through the local labour offices to work for the Germans for an indefinite period of time. This form of service on behalf of the occupying power was dubbed *Nasjonal Arbeidsinnsats* (National Work Effort). Unlike the Labour Service, it was a part of the portfolio of the Ministry of Social Affairs. Large-scale mobilization of workers soon ensued, but the entire project enjoyed only limited success. Of the 30,000 workers drafted, less than 3000 were eventually sent to German building sites. The following year, on 19 May 1944, the government again tried to mobilize all Norwegian men born in the years 1921 to 1923. This ambitious plan ended in resounding failure. Only 773 of the 70,000 eligible workers registered at their local labour offices. Of the registered, only 480 could actually be deployed.<sup>22</sup> A part of the explanation was that the Norwegian resistance movement after the spring of 1943 had made the National Work Effort one of its high-profile targets.<sup>23</sup> The Quisling government made some attempts to round up workers who had failed to register, but eventually gave up the entire project.

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<sup>19</sup> Lars Borgersrud, *Like gode nordmenn? Den norske militærfascismens historie*, Vol. 2, Oslo 2012, p. 325.

<sup>20</sup> *Arbeitseinsatz des norwegischen Arbeitsdienstes*, n.d. RA, RAFA-2184, *Der Beauftragte des Reichsarbeitsführers beim Reichskommissar, Binder 3; Das Werk des männl. Arbeitsdienst im Sommerhalbjahr 1941*, n.d, *ibid*.

<sup>21</sup> Ragna Prag Magelssen (ed.), *Også vi når det blir krevet: Innlegg fra norske kvinner om den nasjonale, moralske og politiske gjenfødelse i Norges skjebnetime*, Oslo 1942, p. 147; *Norges arbeidstjeneste*, Pressekontoret, *Hva er Kvinnelig Arbeidstjeneste*, Oslo 1943; *Fritt Folk*, 23 March 1945.

<sup>22</sup> Stein Ugelvik Larsen et al. (ed.), *Meldungen aus Norwegen. 1940-1945*, Vol. 3, Munich 2008, p. 1298.

<sup>23</sup> Arnfinn Moland, *Kampen mot mobiliseringstrusselen i Norge, 1943-1944*, Oslo 1987.

## Demand for and deployment of female and male workers

The German deployment of labour in Norway was shaped by clearly defined gender roles. German employers in Norway initially showed little interest in female Norwegian labour. To meet German as well as Norwegian labour demands a Norwegian law of 22 February 1943 provided for extensive conscription of women. The use of female workers was a difficult point with the collaborationist Quisling government. Eilif Guldberg, the Norwegian national socialist in charge of labour placement, steadfastly insisted on his right to control conscription of Norwegians, including women. Special rules were put in place for women under the law for labour conscription. The age limit was set to 21 years or over, which was higher than for men. Younger women between the ages and 17 and 21 were instead directed to the Women's Labour Service.<sup>24</sup> To protect the reputation of these young women became a high priority.

A camp song about forays into the women's camps with 'hug and kiss'-tactics, made its way all the way up to the head of the Labour Service and even reached the ministerial level.<sup>25</sup> Local labour offices could, on their own initiative, transfer women to the Wehrmacht, but then the women would have to be at least 25 years of age. These rules also encompassed the group of female volunteers.<sup>26</sup> The statistics compiled by the municipal social insurance schemes also show many Norwegian women employed by the Wehrmacht in kitchens and bakeries, or as cleaners. A very limited number of Norwegian women were drafted for employment with other German institutions.

However, from 1943 onwards there was a growing interest to replace male workers in less immediately war-related firms and undertakings with women, in order to free up more labour for the National Work Effort. The *Reichskommissariat* was the driving force behind the plan, but the political responsibility rested with the Norwegian Ministry for Social Affairs, which ultimately was in charge of labour deployment.<sup>27</sup> This effort would intentionally render male labour available for use on German work sites, and therefore in 1944 the Norwegian resistance movement cautioned both Norwegian firms and agencies against such substitution.<sup>28</sup> Several attempts to increase substitution were largely unsuccessful.<sup>29</sup> This was due to a mixture of political and economic causes, as there was also a growing shortage of female workers (table 2 above). While Organisation Todt optimistically hoped to mobilize that 15,000 Norwegian men for work through substitution by

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<sup>24</sup> RK Abt. Arbeit und. Sozialwesen, Bericht über die Durchführung des Gesetzes über den nationalen Arbeitseinsatz, 13 May 1943. RA, RAFA-2200, Document Section, F, L0050.

<sup>25</sup> Tordis Bergquist to Fuglesang, 6 June 1944, Idem to Frølich Hanssen, June 2 1944, RA, L-sak Frølich Hanssen.

<sup>26</sup> Rundskriv E. Guldberg til distriktskontorene, 11.5.1943. RA, Sosialdepartementet, 1. sosialkontor A, Dc, L0512.

<sup>27</sup> Brev DAA til Sosialdepartementet, 24.9.1943. RA, Sosialdepartementet, 1. sosialkontor A, Dc, L0512.

<sup>28</sup> Stopp arbeidsinnsatsen, 13.6.1944. NHM, Erik T. Poulssons privatarkiv (NHM 53).

<sup>29</sup> Distriktskontoret for arbeidsformidling og arbeidsløshetsstrygd Oslo til DAA, 16.4.1944. RA, S-2945, Df, L0255.

women, by January 1945 OT had mustered only 950 women.<sup>30</sup> When Prime Minister Vidkun Quisling refused after late 1944 to consider further deployment of Norwegian women, it was just another nail in the coffin for this undertaking.<sup>31</sup>

In addition to Norwegian women the German institutions also had at their disposal conscripted women from abroad, mainly the USSR and Poland. Already in 1941 the Reichskommissariat brought in Ukrainian women to work in the fishery industry, and in one single plant in Hammerfest as many as 350 young Ukrainian women were deployed.<sup>32</sup> Civilian Soviet citizens started arriving in larger numbers only in 1943. Of the 21 nationalities represented in the workforce of Organisation Todt's *Einsatzgruppe Wiking* in Norway the Soviet group was distinguished through the large share of women. For instance, among 1,483 Soviet workers deployed on Luftwaffe air fields in 1944, 229 were women.<sup>33</sup> These women, some of whom had been arrested in so-called anti-partisan operations, were frequently placed in the roles of servants, with their assignments including cleaning and cooking. Their workdays could last from 04.00 to 20.00, and was characterized by harsh discipline, far harsher indeed than for Norwegian women.<sup>34</sup> Men and women were usually kept separated within the camps.

### Conflicts between “Reichseinsatz” and local needs: Norwegians for the Reich?

Unlike in other occupied areas the *Generalbevollmächtigter für den Arbeitseinsatz* (GBA), Fritz Sauckel, had no established presence in Norway, whether in the form of a representative or a field office.<sup>35</sup> The simple explanation for this apparent omission is that no Norwegian workers were conscripted for forced labour in the Reich, although such ideas were briefly entertained. However, some Norwegian workers were recruited voluntarily during the first year of occupation.<sup>36</sup> Recruitment followed from discussions between the *Reichskommissariat's* ASO department, the *Deutsche Arbeitsfront* (DAF) and the Norwegian Directorate of Labour Placement and Unemployment Insurance. These were based on statistical figures indicating that 25,000 workers remained unemployed in the fall of 1940, but that the number might increase to 75,000 as winter approached. Consequently, recruitment to work in Germany could mitigate the anticipated seasonal unemployment. A low-key recruitment drive yielded meager results. This does not seem to have bothered the

<sup>30</sup> Stabspersonal und Arbeiter insgesamt, 25.8.1944. RA, RAFA-2188, 2, Hh, L0002; Hedwig Singer (red.): Quellen zur Geschichte der Organisation Todt. Handbook of the Organisation Todt, Osnabrück 1992, p. 171.

<sup>31</sup> Note EW Abt. Arbeitseinsatz, 8.11.1944. RA, RAFA-2188, 1, E, E3g, L0027.

<sup>32</sup> Bjørn-Petter Finstad, The Norwegian Fishing Sector during the German Occupation: Continuity or Change?, in: Frøland/Ingulstad/Scherner (note 6), p. 407.

<sup>33</sup> Ostarbeitereinsatz bei der Luftwaffe, enclosure to note by H. Wöhr, 26 June 1944, RA, RAFA-2174, Eci, L0042.

<sup>34</sup> Marianne Neerland Soleim, Sovjetiske krigsfanger i Norge 1941-1945. Antall, organisering og repatriering, Oslo p. 159.

<sup>35</sup> Ute Simon (ed.), Findbücher zu Beständen des Bundesarchivs. Band 36. Reichsarbeitsministeriums Bestand R41, Koblenz 1991, p. XXVII.

<sup>36</sup> RK Abt. Arbeit u. Sozialwesen to F. Seldte, 20.11.1940, RA, RAFA-2174, Eci, L0082.

*Reichskommissariat* unduly, because already by January 1941 its planners realized that they would actually face shortages of workers in the months ahead. Their new estimates called for at least 100,000 more workers in Norway, including 40,000 for fisheries and forestry and 20,000 for construction sites designated as militarily important.<sup>37</sup> Even while the *Reichskommissariat* was fretting over its lack of workers, the Reich Ministry of Labour in Berlin persisted in its pursuit of Norwegian labour in the spring of 1941. The ministry informed Terboven that while they had reconciled themselves with the receiving fewer workers from Norway than from other occupied territories, they still hoped for between 5,000 and 10,000 workers as “a valuable contribution.”<sup>38</sup>

The transfer of manpower from Norway to the Reich envisioned by the German Labour Department never occurred. From winter 1941 the *Reichskommissariat* made every effort to block it, and instead sought to secure the return of the few Norwegians who had already left voluntarily for Germany. This state of affairs persisted for the rest of the war. Recruitment and conscription of Norwegian workers for Germany were ruled out due to the pressing situation in the Norwegian labour market, as well as fears that conscription by itself could spark social unrest. According to a *Reichskommissariat* official with a background in the *Reichsarbeitsministerium*, at some point the GBA asked for a token contribution from Norway, since it was the only occupied territory that had not sent any workers to the Reich. Yet Sauckel was rebuffed. The policy initiated by the *Reichskommissariat* also barred the transfer of Norwegian volunteers even at later stages in the war. When one Norwegian worker employed by the Organisation Todt asked to be transferred to Germany in 1944, the opinion of the labour planners in *Einsatzgruppe Wiking* was clear and unambiguous: “No. Deny. We need everybody in the country.”<sup>39</sup> In total, the number of Norwegian workers who at some point were deployed in the Reich did not rise above a mere 1040.

The refusal of the *Reichskommissariat* to ship Norwegian workers out of the country was not limited to transfers to the Reich alone and to the requests from the GBA. It was a blanket refusal that suggests that non-cooperation cannot be ascribed to political intrigue and polycratic rivalry, but should be seen above all as a straightforward consequence of the unsurmountable labour shortage. When the *Reichsführer-SS* Heinrich Himmler in November 1941 asked for a contingent of ‘politically reliable’ Norwegian civilian workers for German-occupied territories in the Soviet Union, the *Reichskommissariat* in Oslo again replied that it had no men to spare. It pointed to the fact that it had already brought 5,000 Danish workers into Norway. Instead, it suggested that more Soviet POWs should be imported to address the critical shortage of labour in the country.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> RK Abt Arbeit u. Sozialwesen to the Directorate of Labor placement and Unemployment Insurance, 6.6.1941, RA, RAFA-2174, E, Ec, Eci, L0082.

<sup>38</sup> F. Syrup to J. Terboven, 15 April 1941, RA, RAFA-2174, Eci, L0082.

<sup>39</sup> E. Wilberg to EW, 5 February 1944. RA, RAFA-2188, 1, E3j, L0041.

<sup>40</sup> RK Abt Arbeit u. Sozialwesen to Ergänzungsstelle Nord der Waffen-SS, 22 November 1941. RA, RAFA-2174, Eci, L0082.

## Importing foreign forced labour to meet German demand

During the initial stages of the occupation, the various German building organisations largely employed Norwegian workers, but already in 1940 the first Danish and German workers were recruited. The majority of these workers were *Stammarbeiter* following their firms as these received contracts in Norway. Their numbers were modest, a few thousand at the most. In the spring of 1941 the German *Reichsarbeitsdienst* (RAD) arrived in Norway. By the summer they were at maximum strength, numbering around 6000 men. Until they withdrew from Norway in July 1942, the RAD was engaged in construction and maintenance of roads, including snow clearing and assistance in the construction of coastal fortifications.<sup>41</sup> However, their numbers were never large enough to cover the massive labour deficit that had arisen by that time.

Within the *Reichskommissariat*, too, the supply of foreign forced labour was on the agenda as early as March 1941.<sup>42</sup> In July, about a month after the attack on the Soviet Union, the Wehrmacht in Norway indicated that Soviet POWs should be brought in to alleviate the precarious labour situation.<sup>43</sup> In August, Hermann Göring, as head of the Four Year Plan, decided to send 20,000 Soviet POWs.<sup>44</sup> The first group arrived in Norway that very same month.<sup>45</sup> By the summer of 1942 their number had swelled to about 7000. At that point in time a small number of Polish POWs had also arrived in the country.<sup>46</sup> So had a couple of thousand Yugoslav prisoners who were regarded as partisans and were not formally recognized as POWs. Whereas the two former groups were brought in by the Wehrmacht, the civilian authorities procured the latter.

It was Hitler's "Wiking Befehl" of 13 May 1942 that led to the introduction of foreign forced labour on a large scale. The decree ordered intensified fortification and building of various infrastructure and industry in Norway, often referred to as the *Wiking-Programm*. The assignment was given to Albert Speer in his function as GB Bau and head of Organisation Todt. Its newly established Scandinavian branch, *Einsatzgruppe (EG) Wiking*, had already been set up in Oslo a month before and soon would have the largest demand for labour in the country. Its first estimate showed that in order to complete these massive undertakings, an additional 76.500 workers were

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<sup>41</sup> Interrogation of Herbert Bormann, 30 January 1946, RAFA-3915, FO, Db, L0004; AOK Norwegen O.Qu/Qu: Tätigkeitsbericht für März 1941, 1.4.1941, Bundesarchiv (BArch) RW/39/123.

<sup>42</sup> Note Rudolph Kasper to Carlo Otte, 7 March 1941, Bundesarchiv Berlin, R 83/77860.

<sup>43</sup> Letter Reichskommissariat Technik to Reichskommissariat Dienststelle Alta, 31 July 1941, RA, RAFA-2188, 2, He, L0004.

<sup>44</sup> Telegram Eberhard Neukirch to Rudolph Kasper, 5 August 1941, RA, RAFA-2200, FD 5328/45, L0050

<sup>45</sup> Soleim (note 34), p. 44.

<sup>46</sup> Emilia Denkiewicz-Szczepaniak, Polske OT-tvangsarbeidere og krigsfanger i Norge under andre verdenskrig, in: Historisk Tidsskrift 2 (1997), p. 268-28.

needed.<sup>47</sup> By spring 1943 the estimate had been revised upwards to 94,000 workers, and by autumn that year it had increased even further to 106,000 workers at the most.<sup>48</sup>

EG *Wiking* exploited forced labour on a massive scale. At its peak it controlled about 90,000 workers.<sup>49</sup> Whereas almost 20,000 were conscripted Norwegians, a heterogeneous group of foreign forced labour made up almost 60,000 persons.<sup>50</sup> Adding the number of forced labourers working for the *Wehrmacht*, the *Reichskommissariat* and various German or German-controlled companies like Nordag, Nordisk Lettmetall, Vertilo and Frostfilet, we estimate that the total influx of foreign forced labour during the occupation totaled around 130,000 persons. This exceptionally high figure amounted to around ten per cent of the indigenous workforce of approximately 1.3 million. When it is considered that the number of *Wehrmacht* troops stationed in the country at times exceeded ten per cent of a total population numbering three million people, it is very clear that the German occupation for a few short years substantially altered the ethnic composition of a hitherto very homogenous population.<sup>51</sup>

The huge demand for skilled labour proved a permanent problem. Organisation Todt would use the POWs mainly for unskilled work operations. Moreover, few Norwegian skilled workers were available. Consequently, EG *Wiking* worked hard to recruit skilled workers from the Reich to play key roles as supervisors and professionals on the building sites. However, already by the end of 1942 it was evident to the staff in Oslo that it would receive fewer skilled workers than it called for. Organisation Todt therefore started to bring in civilian forced labour from other European countries. In the beginning, the organization preferred to recruit civilian workers from Western Europe using as little force as possible. Nonetheless, as the prospects of success appeared bleak, EG *Wiking* asked for support from the GBA in rounding up qualified workers. Already in May 1942 the OT headquarters in Berlin had established a *Sondertreibhänder der Arbeit für die OT* in Fritz Sauckel's office, and started recruiting civilians by force from February 1943.<sup>52</sup> Sauckel worked systematically to supply forced labour to EG *Wiking* through the OT headquarters.<sup>53</sup>

In quantitative terms the German Army was more important for Einsatzgruppe Wiking's labour program than the GBA. Through its cooperation with the OT the *Wehrmacht* High Com-

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<sup>47</sup> Note F. Janssen, 29 May 1942, RA, RAFA-2188, 2, Fba, L0007.

<sup>48</sup> Note M. E. Feuchtinger, 15 March 1943; note Einsatzgruppe Wiking, Hauptreferat Arbeitseinsatz, 21 September 1943, both in RA, RAFA-2188, 1, E3g, L0027.

<sup>49</sup> Hatlehol (note 13), p. 105.

<sup>50</sup> The names of around 25 000 are to be found in the index card system set up by OT, though the total number of Norwegians was obviously higher, as this system was established only in late 1942. Cards located in RAFA-2188, OT1, O6, L0001-L0028.

<sup>51</sup> Espen Søybe, *Folkemengdens bevegelse 1735–2014: En tabellstudie*, Oslo 2014.

<sup>52</sup> Hatlehol (note 13), p. 299.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109.

mand supplied *EG Wiking* with Soviet POWs already as it settled in Norway in April 1942.<sup>54</sup> Hitler called for 30,000 new Soviet POWs in August that year to implement the *Wiking Befehl*. Shortly after, the Wehrmacht decided to set up the office of a regional POW commandant in Norway to coordinate the allocation of foreign POWs to *Einsatzgruppe Wiking* and the *Wehrmacht*.<sup>55</sup> The POW commandant started operations in October 1942. Hence in retrospect, Willi Henne, the leader of *Einsatzgruppe Wiking*, distinguished between “*OT-Russen*” working for the *Einsatzgruppe Wiking* and “*Stalag-Russen*” working for the Wehrmacht in Norway.<sup>56</sup>

The Soviet POWs alone made up about half of *Einsatzgruppe Wiking*'s work force. From autumn 1942 around 50,000 Soviet POWs were brought from Germany to Norway to work for *EG Wiking*. Another 40,000 worked for the Wehrmacht, thereby bringing the combined total of Soviet POWs doing forced labour in Norway up to about 90,000. The supply of Soviet POWs from Germany ended in June 1944. However, as the *Wehrmacht*'s Lapland Army retreated into northern Norway during autumn 1944, it brought along a captive labour force consisting of around 20,000 Soviet POWs. It seems, though, that half of these POWs were further transferred to Germany, thereby keeping the number of Soviet POWs doing forced labour in Norway to about 90,000.<sup>57</sup>

It took some months before the OT and the Wehrmacht fully agreed on how to divide responsibility with regard to the exploitation of POWs. The first foreign groups to arrive for *EG Wiking* were neither POWs nor of Soviet origin. During the summer of 1942 about 2,000 Yugoslav prisoners and 2,000 German prisoners were provided.<sup>58</sup> Between June 1942 and September 1943 about 4500 captured partisans were brought from Serbia to work for *EG Wiking*.<sup>59</sup> They were not formally recognized as POWs, but were regarded as *Häftlinge*. They were guarded by the SS, and a Norwegian guard battalion also participated. Mortality rates in these camps were extremely high as long as the SS was in charge, and dropped significantly only after the *Wehrmacht* took over the security and surveillance of the Yugoslav camps in March 1943.<sup>60</sup> The German prisoners were under the custody of the Ministry of Justice.<sup>61</sup> In addition, 450 Norwegian political prisoners from the Norwegian internment camp Grini were forced into work for a few

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<sup>54</sup> Note by Ewald Diemer-Willroda, 20.8.1942, BArch R 3901/20172.

<sup>55</sup> Hatlehol (note 13), p. 215-216.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 217.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 214.

<sup>58</sup> Führerinformation 1942, nr. 6, 5 June 1942. BArch R 3001/24089; Ljubo Mladenović, *Pod šifrom Viking*, Belgrade 1991, p. 20.

<sup>59</sup> Martin Seckendorf, *Die Okkupationspolitik des deutschen Faschismus in Jugoslawien, Griechenland, Albanien, Italien und Ungarn (1941–1945)*, Berlin 1992, p. 195; Tomislav Dulic, ‘De plågade oss som om de villa döda oss’. Jugoslaviska fångar i Norge under andra världskriget i ljuset av nytt källmaterial, in: *Historisk Tidskrift* (Sweden) 131: 4 (2011), pp. 745-771.

<sup>60</sup> Hatlehol (note 13), p. 283-286.

<sup>61</sup> Note OKW/Wfst, ”Bezug: Bericht des Generalfeldmarschall List”, 3 April 1942. Institut für Zeitgeschichte, MA 268, bl. 4839-4841.

months in the second half of 1942, which further blurred the lines between forced labour and penal labour.<sup>62</sup>

### **Ethnicity and race as determinants of labour mobilization policies**

When the German armed forces invaded Norway, they encountered a highly homogenous society. Beyond a small Jewish community counting less than 2,000 citizens, there were only relatively small minority groups like the Sámi or different groups of Finns (Kvens).<sup>63</sup> The *EG Wiking* on the other hand brought with it a distinctly multi-ethnic workforce, as it introduced forced labourers and POWs from a large number of European nations. Norwegian territory thereby became something of a microcosm of Hitler-dominated Europe, even if some of the larger ethnic groups of foreign workers that were transported to Germany did not make much of an appearance in Norway, such as Spanish or Greek workers. All in all, at least 21 different nationalities were represented in Norway, even though the totals for some of the nationalities were less than one hundred workers.

In Nazi racial ideology, there was a clear separation between the Germanic peoples and the non-Germanic, which encompassed the designated Romanic and Slavic peoples. The workers assigned to Organisation Todt received widely varying treatment, housing, and provisions, depending not only on their legal status as either civilians or POWs, but also based on their ethnicity.<sup>64</sup> In many respects the workers recruited in Western Europe, working under *Ausland Bantarif Nord*, enjoyed working conditions that resembled those of free labour. Admittedly under structural constraints, many of them had more or less voluntarily signed contracts with the Organisation Todt. It was only subsequently that they lacked the possibility to terminate their employment of their own free will. They often discovered that their contract periods were unilaterally extended by *EG Wiking*. Consequently, their conditions became the same as for conscript labour from their home territories. Among them there were both German conscripted workers as well as personnel linked to individual German firms that were incorporated into the *EG Wiking*. There were also large a contingent of Danish workers lured to Norway by the promise of high wages.

The large group of Eastern European civilians was on the whole treated less favorably than their western European counterparts. There were, however, also substantial variations within this

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<sup>62</sup> Übersicht über die Tätigkeit der O.Qu. Abteilung AOK Norwegen zugleich für O.Qu. Skandinavien für Monat August 1942, BA-MA, RW/39/166.

<sup>63</sup> Søybe (note 51), pp. 241-259.

<sup>64</sup> Mark Spoerer, *Zwangsarbeit unter dem Hakenkreuz. Ausländische Zivilarbeiter, Kriegsgefangene und Häftlinge im Deutschen Reich und im besetzten Europa 1939–1945*, Stuttgart 2001; Hatlehol (note 13); Hans Otto Frøland and Anders Lervold, *Forced Labour in Norway during German Occupation: French and Soviet Workers in the Light Metal Program*, in: *Revue d'histoire Nordique* 17 (2013), pp. 71-100.



group.<sup>65</sup> Czech workers were supposed to receive the same terms and conditions as German nationals, although in practice their conditions seem to have been worse. Many Polish workers signed up voluntarily, although in many cases employment with Organisation Todt represented the only available opportunity to earn a living wage. Following the *Polen-Erlassen* of March 1940 in the Reich, the Poles in Norway received lower wages and shorter holidays than their western counterparts did. Civilian workers from the Soviet Union, the so-called *Ostarbeiter*, were even worse off. Following a decree from Berlin, the *Reichskommissariat* published an order on 25 September 1942, which placed workers of non-German nationality from the Eastern occupied territories – Ukraine, Weißruthenien, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia – exclusively under German law. A special ordinance regulated their work and living conditions. They did not pay taxes, but a special fee (*Ostarbeiterabgabe*) was deducted from their pay.<sup>66</sup> They tended to face higher risk of corporal punishment, were paid less, and suffered higher mortality rates.<sup>67</sup> However, following another decree from Berlin their conditions were subsequently raised to a level that was equivalent to those of the Poles.<sup>68</sup> Whether this really was implemented as provisions became increasingly scarce, remains unanswered.<sup>69</sup>

Nevertheless, various groups of prisoners suffered much worse treatment. Around 13,700 of the Soviet POWs died, of whom 10,700 on perished on land and 3000 died during transport at sea.<sup>70</sup> The conditions were better for the much fewer Polish POWs, since they generally received treatment equal to that of POWs from western countries. In contrast to Soviet POWs, they were paid for their work, and their mortality rate was only one per cent.<sup>71</sup> In the case of the Yugoslav prisoners from spring 1942 to spring 1943, and the German prisoners during the whole occupation, the conditions to which they were subjected were similar to concentration camps. For example, only 27 per cent of the Yugoslav prisoners in northern Norway survived the first year of captivity.<sup>72</sup> Whereas conditions for the Yugoslav prisoners improved after the Wehrmacht took over and they were acknowledged as POWs, brutality remained a common experience for the German prisoners throughout the war.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Hatlehol (note 13), pp. 323-361.

<sup>66</sup> Verordnung über die Einsatzbedingungen der Ostarbeiter in Norwegen, in: Verordnungsblatt für die besetzten norwegischen Gebiete, 30 November 1942, University Library, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim.

<sup>67</sup> Hatlehol (note 13), p. 243.

<sup>68</sup> Zweite Verordnung über die Einsatzbedingungen der Ostarbeiter in Norwegen, in: Verordnungsblatt für die besetzten norwegischen Gebiete, 30 January 1944, University Library, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim.

<sup>69</sup> Frøland/Lervold (note 64), pp. 88-95.

<sup>70</sup> Soleim, Sovjetiske krigsfanger (note 34), pp. 164-165; Hatlehol (note 13), pp. 243, 251.

<sup>71</sup> Hatlehol (note 13), pp. 244-250.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., pp. 257-292, particularly p. 282.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., pp. 266-276.

## The forced labour issue after 1945

The substantial economic contributions made by forced foreign labour to the Norwegian economy were conveniently forgotten by national policymakers after the war. This was in part due to fears of demands for compensation from the Soviet Union.<sup>74</sup> Instead, the installations that the German occupiers had built with the forced workers' physical labour, whether fortifications, infrastructure, or industrial plants, were not considered when the costs of the occupation were accounted for after the war.<sup>75</sup> Instead they were accounted for as economic liabilities, despite the fact that the state confiscated these considerable assets after the German capitulation.<sup>76</sup> Subsequently the Cold War overshadowed and tended to mask the misery and brutal conditions endured by the Soviet POWs and *Ostarbeiter*. A low point in this regard was reached with the exhumation of 8000 bodies of Soviet dead and their subsequent re-burial in a single war cemetery at Tjøtta. One argument advanced for this operation was that it would reduce risk of Soviet spies traipsing around the country under the pretense of tending to the graves.<sup>77</sup> The measure engendered massive resistance in many local communities, whose inhabitants had established friendly relations with the foreigners who had eked out a miserable camp life in close proximity to Norwegian villages. After the repatriation of nearly 87,000 Soviet workers after the war, almost all contacts ceased between them and the Norwegian communities.<sup>78</sup> But memories lingered, and a trickle of books, memoirs and local histories in the years since have recounted the fate of some of the foreign workers. A joint Norwegian-Yugoslavian film titled *Blodveien/Krvavi put* (The Road of Blood) was released in 1955, revealing the sufferings of the Yugoslav prisoners forced to build the road under harsh climatic conditions.

In the first years after the war, despite *Blodveien* and contemporary sociological research into the conditions at the camps that showed participation by malevolent Norwegian collaborators, the history of the forced labourers appeared as a German atrocity that merely took place on Norwegian soil.<sup>79</sup> In the decades afterwards, the history of forced labour deployment in Norway remained a marginal topic within the field of historical enquiry. There are several possible explanations for this: Firstly, Norwegian collaboration and direct participation in the abuse collided within the dominant master narratives of a pervasive, almost monolithic resistance to the Ger-

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<sup>74</sup> Marianne Neerland Soleim, "Operasjon Asfalt" – kald krig og krigsgraver, Oslo 2016.

<sup>75</sup> Preliminary Statement of the Royal Norwegian Government's Reparation Claim against Germany, Oslo 1945.

<sup>76</sup> Odd Aukrust and Petter Bjerve, *Hva krigen kostet Norge* Oslo 1945, particularly p. 49.

<sup>77</sup> Halvor Fjermeros, *Med lik i lasten; historien om operasjon asfalt*, Oslo 2013; Soleim, "Operasjon Asfalt" (note 74).

<sup>78</sup> Marianne Neerland Soleim, *Female Forced Labourers from the "East" – A forgotten part of Norwegian war history*, in: Kjersti Ericsson (ed.), *Women in War. Examples from Norway and Beyond*, London 2015.

<sup>79</sup> Jon Reitan, *The nazi camps in the Norwegian historical culture*, in: Helle Bjerg, Claudia Lenz and Erik Torsteinsen (eds.), *Historicizing the uses of the past: Scandinavian perspectives on history culture, historical consciousness and didactics of history related to World War II*, Bielefeld 2011.

man invaders. Secondly, the presence of a large group of foreign workers did not easily fit into the largely national framework of interpretation of the wartime history.<sup>80</sup> Third, the return of many of these workers to their home countries, mostly in territory beyond the Iron Curtain, reduced the salience of their histories and experiences.

This constellation of geopolitical, social, economic, and historiographical factors ensured that forced labourers hardly figured in the post-war historiography of the occupation years, even as the memories lived on at the local level. This resulted in what historian Marianne Soleim has described as a “limited memory” of forced labour, in which there was a local awareness of the workers, but which left them without a place in the broader historical consciousness.<sup>81</sup> This is now changing, with several projects highlighting the collaborative culpability of Norwegian authorities,<sup>82</sup> historical inquiries into the use of forced labour in local communities, and the individual fates of former forced labourers.<sup>83</sup> The research project from which this working paper derives has produced doctoral dissertations on the role of Wehrmacht, Organisation Todt and German firms in abusing forced labour in the Norwegian wartime economy.<sup>84</sup> Based on the findings of this research project, in February 2017 a large exhibition opened at the Norwegian Museum of Science and Technology in Oslo. This brings the history of the massive exploitation of foreign forced labour during Nazi Germany’s occupation to the attention of the wider public.<sup>85</sup>

## Conclusion

Norwegian labourers were neither unemployed, under-employed, nor re-deployed to Germany during the war. The German construction projects, as well as the structural economic pressure generated by the presence of the Wehrmacht, created a chronic shortage of labourers. These problems were addressed in different ways: in the opening phase of the occupation, the Wehrmacht attempted to attract labourers to its massive construction programmes by offering substantially higher wages than any competing sectors. As this threatened to unbalance the entire economy, the German *Reichskommissariat* and the Norwegian Quisling government responded

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<sup>80</sup> Odd-Bjørn Fure, Norsk okkupasjonshistorie. Konsensus, berøringsangst og tabuisering, in: Stein Ugelvik Larsen (ed.), *I krigens kjølvann: Nye sider ved norsk krigshistorie og etterkrigstid*, Oslo 1999.

<sup>81</sup> Marianne Neerland Soleim, *Prisoners of war and forced labour: Histories of war and occupation*, Cambridge 2010.

<sup>82</sup> Bjørn Westlie, *Fangene som forsvant. NSB og slavearbeiderne som forsvant*, Oslo 2015); Pål Nygaard, *Store drømmer og harde realiteter: Veibygging og biltrafikk i Norge, 1912–1960*, Oslo 2014.

<sup>83</sup> Michael Stokke og Atle Skarstein, *Blod og tårer: historien om sovjetiske krigsfanger og sivile tvangsarbeidere i Rogaland 1941–1945*, Sandnes 2010); Einar Kristian Steffenak, *Russerfangene. Sovjetiske krigsfanger i Norge og deres skjebne*, Oslo 2008; Magne Haugland, ”Do svidanija – på gjensyn!”: Dokumentarberetninger om sovjetiske krigsfanger, Sandnes 2008; Harald Sodal, *Bare en kom tilbake. Russiske krigsfanger på Sørlandet*, Kristiansand 2006.

<sup>84</sup> Hatlehol (note 13); Severaas (note 2); Simon Gogl will complete his dissertation, *Laying the Foundations of Occupation. Organisation Todt and the German Building Industry in Occupied Norway*, in 2018.

<sup>85</sup> See <https://www.tekniskmuseum.no/grossraum>.

with an imposition of stricter regulations on the deployment and remuneration of Norwegian labour. Two separate measures were introduced to conscript civilian Norwegians, the Labour Service (*Arbeidstjeneste*) was made compulsory in 1941, and National Work Effort (*Nasjonal Arbeidsinnsats*) in 1943. These measures failed to meet expectations. During the last half of the occupation, Norway was even more tightly integrated in the European-wide Nazi maelstrom of violence, oppression and racism, with introduction of large contingents of foreign POWs and civilian forced labourers through Organisation Todt. Their contribution to Norwegian infrastructure built during the occupation was largely neglected after the war.