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Christian Haller. *Der "AuslÖÂ¤ndereinsatz" in Pforzheim wÖÂ¤hrend des Zweiten Weltkrieges.* Heidelberg: Verlag Regionalkultur, 2004. 160 pp. EUR 14.90 (paper), ISBN 978-3-89735-262-9.

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Published on H-German (June, 2006)

Foreign Labor "From the Bottom Up"

Since Ulrich Herbert's pioneering 1985 study, and in particular after the establishment of the "Remembrance, Responsibility, and the Future" foundation in August 2000, which was set up to compensate survivors, numerous local and regional historical studies have addressed the deployment of the between seven and thirteen million foreign forced laborers in wartime Nazi Germany.[1] Christian Haller's monograph joins these local studies by considering the *Auslaender-Einsatz*, or "deployment of foreigners," in Pforzheim, a small city in Baden-WÃ¼rttemberg. Although a small proportion of these foreign laborers were volunteers, the vast majority of the over 6,000 foreigners "deployed" in Pforzheim were civilians deported from the occupied territories of both the East and the West, and prisoners of war, mainly from Poland, the Soviet Union, France, and later Italy.

Haller's study is organized into three main sections. The analysis opens with a statistical summary of the numbers, scope, national distribution, and survival rates among the foreign laborers in Pforzheim, making meticulous use of surviving archival records. Haller continues with a longer section that outlines the day-to-day reality of foreign forced labor in the wartime years. He begins by briefly describing the capture and deportation of foreign civilians to Germany, and their allocation to local farmers and businesses. Many, still in their teens, arrived in Germany with minimal clothing and were forced to live in overcrowded camps with only the barest sanitation. Compelled into working ten- to twelve-hour days and denied adequate food, clothing, and health care, the foreign workers suffered from poor hygiene, exhaustion, and disease. In addition, many were subjected to brutality and violence at the hands of camp guards and employers, harsh legal and administrative regulations, and severe, even deadly punishments for infractions.

Confirming Herbert's findings, Haller demonstrates that the living and working conditions were not uniform, and were determined by a host of factors, most prominently the worker's place within the Nazis' national hierarchy and his or her allocation to either agricultural or industrial work. The *Ostarbeiter* or Eastern workers, who were lowest on the hierarchy of foreign labor, were provided a starvation diet and often assigned the most difficult and dangerous work. More privileged were the Western laborers, who also worked under conditions of coercion and lived in camps, but who received wages and food rations closer to those of Germans. Haller also confirms Mark Spoerer's thesis that individual agents at the local level, whether public officials, camp supervisors, or employers, had a great deal of room to maneuver within the framework of Nazi regulations.[2] Thus, for example, Haller devotes a great deal of attention to the efforts of local employers and in particular Hermann KÃ¶nig, a leading administrator of the Pforzheim camps, to improve the lot of the forced laborers under their control. Individual employers, who valued the foreign laborers as productive workers, spent time and money to obtain food and other necessities on the black market. Surprisingly, this activity met with comparatively little interference on the part of the authorities, and only a few employers were

censured for their efforts. Haller also describes how the work and living conditions changed, both for better and for worse, over the course of the war. Toward the end of the war, as it became clear that Germany was losing, the treatment of foreign workers in Pforzheim tended to improve (p. 67). Also interesting is Haller's discussion of the manner in which the foreign workers made the most of limited resources to establish recreational activities. Finally, Haller chronicles the months following the end of the war, including the postwar gathering of Eastern workers into camps for displaced persons, a topic that has received comparatively little attention to date.

However, Haller's methodological approach is not without its problems. While Haller succeeds in organizing a disparate collection of material, including a meticulous use of surviving prison records, his sources are thin and patchy, as is true for the majority of similar studies. (Many records in Pforzheim were destroyed in the bombing of the city center on February 23, 1945, in which approximately 20,000 persons, including several hundred foreigners, died.) Haller's two key bodies of primary evidence are materials collected for the postwar denazification trials, and approximately 100 letters and numerous questionnaires collected from former Eastern workers during the recent compensation debates (pp. 10-11). The footnotes reveal that Haller assigns substantial quantitative and qualitative weight to quotations from the postwar materials collected for the denazification trials. Interestingly, while some of this testimony recounts the harsh conditions and the brutality under which the foreign laborers lived and worked, much of the trial evidence cited by Haller is favorable, even exculpatory in perspective. Because Haller does not discuss his methodology or contextualize his sources and describe their nature and relevance to his work, it is difficult to assess whether they accurately represent the historical reality of foreign labor in Pforzheim. Moreover, despite an extensive secondary bibliography, in his analysis Haller makes direct use of only a limited number of secondary sources. An overview of the secondary literature and a comparison to the history of forced labor in other German cities, which Haller promises in his introduction but then fails to undertake, would strengthen his analysis and serve to fill in the gaps in his account.

Haller's exploration of the attitudes of the German population in his brief third section is, in the end, equally questionable. Haller does describe the hostility among some Germans to foreign laborers who used public transportation and occupied places in air raid shelters, but largely avoids the larger question of German civilian complicity with the project of forced labor. To assess the attitudes of the German population via the scanty reportage on foreign laborers in the local newspaper, which functioned largely as an organ of propaganda, is a problematic undertaking, a fact that Haller himself notes in a brief aside at the end of the section (p. 98). Whether some Germans might have read between the lines of the reportage to arrive at a more accurate understanding of the daily reality of forced laborers in their midst, as he suggests, can be no more than conjecture. Moreover, while Haller mentions several times instances of Germans charged with friendship or fraternization with foreign laborers or POWs, he does not specify whether all of these court records, which might have been a fruitful source of information about the daily interaction of German civilians with forced laborers, were indeed destroyed during and following the war.

Finally, Haller's use of visual images, in particular photographs, is uneven. He includes a number of photographs of groups of foreign laborers that, while undoubtedly authentic, show the laborers relaxed and at leisure. More surprisingly, Haller includes several contemporary photographs of German workers, including one photograph of a shop floor depicting a row of ordinary German women, with the comment that these depict "everyday work life" in German agriculture and industry (p. 71). Presumably Haller was limited by the scarcity of surviving visual material, but he would nonetheless have been well advised to make cautious use of posed photographs that are suggestive of propaganda shots, and to avoid the implication that the work conditions of the forced laborers were no different than those of "ordinary" German workers.

As Haller demonstrates, due to the scarcity of sources and the vast disparity in living and work conditions, it is difficult to reach an overarching assessment of the deployment of foreign labor in wartime Germany, even in a municipality as small as Pforzheim. Nonetheless, his study succeeds in providing vivid detail and insight into the lives and conditions of foreign labor in one German city during the war. In the end, however, Haller's account raises as many questions as answers.

Notes

[1]. Ulrich Herbert's 1985 study has been reissued as *Hitler's Foreign Workers: Enforced Foreign Labor in Germany under the Third Reich*, tr. William Templer (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997). Since this initial account, Herbert has authored and edited numerous additional accounts that have greatly expanded the his-

torical understanding of the topic.

[2]. Mark Spoerer, *Zwangsarbeit unter dem Hakenkreuz. AuslÃ¤ndische Zivilarbeiter, Kriegsgefangene und HÃ¤ftlinge im Deutschen Reich und im besetzten Europa 1939-1945* (Stuttgart and Munich: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2001).

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Citation: Patricia Szobar. Review of Haller, Christian, *Der "AuslÖÂ¤ndereinsatz" in Pforzheim wÖÂ¤hrend des Zweiten Weltkrieges.* H-German, H-Net Reviews. June, 2006.

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