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## Only benign encounters? The Sami, Wehrmacht, the secret police services and Lebensborn in the North Calotte at war, 1940–1944

### **Introduction: historiography and social history of the Second World War**

In this article<sup>1</sup> I study the gaze upon the Sami on the part of the German-Austrian forces in Finland and Norway. The relations are studied in three areas, 1: within the cooperative scope of German Wehrmacht officers and Finnish administration, 2: the Gestapo and the Finnish state police, and 3: encounters with and the perception of Sami women in the context of the Lebensborn e.V.<sup>2</sup>. How were the Sami perceived and what kind of encounters took place in these institutional contexts? Which background factors and immediate aspects of the state of war guided relations towards the Sami? Were the relations only benign? The focus is solely on the German-Austrian gaze; the Sami point of view, or those of the other nationalities present in the area are not studied.

Wehrmacht, the regular armed forces of the Third Reich, earned their place in the article simply because of the numerous ponderings of the different folk-groups residing in the rear area. The choice of other institutions is made on the basis of uncovering glimpses of potentially more aggressive and eugenic-based relations. The State Police in Finland had the task of suppressing communist activity, preventing foreign espionage and controlling the foreign population. Its arsenal of repressive methods was not as considerable as that of the Gestapo (initially Geheimes Staatspolizeiamt, Gestapa; from 1934 onwards, Geheime Staatspolizei, led by Heinrich Müller; merged in 1936 as one section of Hauptamt Sicherheitspolizei, later Reichssicherheitshauptamt, RSHA, led by Heinrich Himmler). The two organizations cooperated in Lapland, sharing stringent anti-communism views, and a racial aversion to and suspicion of the Jews and the Russians, connected to the communist threat. The Gestapo had an organic relationship with the Nazi régime and was meant to protect the Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (NSDAP)

<sup>1</sup> This article was written under assignment to the research project In a World of Total War: Norway 1939–1945, financed by the Norwegian Research Council and led by Tom Kristiansen, the Department of Archaeology, History, Religious Studies and Theology at UiT – The Arctic University of Norway.

<sup>2</sup> The full name of the organization was Lebensborn eingetragener Verein.



and the “unified German folk” from numerous internal threats including communists and, from an early stage, the Jews. The Gestapo was a central instrument in the Nazi reign of terror and it gained a feared, omnipresent reputation early on. In Norway, the Gestapo reported to the Sicherheitspolizei (Sipo) and ultimately to the RSHA in Berlin and operated throughout Norway. The Gestapo, relying for some operations on the Wehrmacht and on a network of officials and informers, was mostly interested in communist activity and suppressing resistance movements. A potentially violent control régime keeping in check and arresting ideological and racial enemies, based on suspicion, was active in the Finnish rear area as well.<sup>3</sup> The racial aspect was more prominent in the practices of Lebensborn, introduced in detail later in this article. These institutions are studied in order to probe well-established “facts” regarding the mostly warm and friendly occupant/local population relations outlined in prior research of wartime in the North.<sup>4</sup>

Interpretations of the Norwegian history of war and occupation have had a solid foundation in victim representations, in the need to mark shared attitudes concerning the occupation and the tone set in the numerous “settlements” (“oppgjører”) against traitors. The national has framed the narrative produced of Nazi occupation and national resistance, which has resulted in a narrative of “heroes” and “traitors”. Moralizing tendencies were typical of the earlier studies, at a cost of understanding the choices of the various actors.<sup>5</sup> From the 1990s onwards, a new War and Society school of military history has emerged in Norway, where military historians have disengaged from depictions of strategy and battles, with relations between society and military systems becoming of interest instead. The background, experience, feelings and actions of the individual (occupant) soldiers and other groups in the society became of interest as well, following a larger-scale turn towards lower levels of society.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Terje Halvorsen, *Forfulgt, fordømt og fortiet. Historien om den kommunistiske motstanden i Norge 1940–1945*. Vigmostad & Bjørke, Bergen 2020, 171–172; Oula Silvennoinen, *Salaiset aseveljet – Suomen ja Saksan turvallisuuspoliisiyhteistyö 1933–1944*. Otava, Helsinki 2008, 45, 48, 69–76, 87–97.

<sup>4</sup> Knut Einar Eriksen and Terje Halvorsen, *Frigjøring*. Volume 8 in *Norge i krig. Fremmedåk og frihetskamp 1940–1945*. Edited by Magne Skodvin. Aschehoug, Oslo 1987, 26, 47, 51, 64–65; Marianne Junila, *Kotirintaman aseveljeyttä. Suomalaisen siviiliväestön ja saksalaisen sotaväen rinnakkainelo Pohjois-Suomessa 1941–1944*. SKS, Helsinki 2000, passim; Maria Lähteenmäki, *Jänkijääkäreitä ja parakkipiikojä. Lappilaisten sotakokemuksia 1939–1945*. Suomen Historiallinen Seura, Helsinki 1999, passim.

<sup>5</sup> Terje Emberland and Matthew Kott, *Himmlers Norge. Nordmenn i det storgermanske prosjekt*. Aschehoug, Oslo 2013, 492; Marianne Neerland Soleim, *Sovjetiske krigsfanger i Norge 1941–1945. Antall, organisering og repatriering*. Spartacus, Oslo 2009, 203–204.

<sup>6</sup> Sigurd Sørli, *Solkors eller hakekors. Nordmenn i Waffen-SS 1941–1945*. Dreyer, Oslo 2015, 18, 21–22.

In Finnish historiography, the “old” traditional military history, concentrating on battles and strategy, was criticized by a new generation of researchers, launching numerous studies of New Military History from the turn of the millennium onwards. A new set of actors and methods has been brought into focus, and various aspects of providing meaning to the war experience were studied. After initial enthusiasm, Finnish research into the Second World War has begun to criticize the concept of “New Military History” as not necessarily “new” and a continuation of the existing tradition of studying the social history of war. Finnish historians of war prefer the term “Social and Cultural History of War” as a genre disengaging from conventional military history and broadening the scope of inquiry into society at war.<sup>7</sup>

Regarding the preconditions of the encounters studied, researchers have recently been engaged in debate as to whether racial ideology alone was the driving force among the German troops during the war, especially in the war crimes committed.<sup>8</sup> The denial of the significance of Nazi ideology in a groundbreaking study by Neitzel and Welzel<sup>9</sup> has been criticized<sup>10</sup>. Dr. Sevasti Trubeta, in her critique of race-centered explanations of Nazi ideologies, has pointed to the significance of readily-existing stereotypes of the socio-economic and socio-cultural “faults” possessed by various folk groups in Nazi imageries and societies. Biological / physiological aspects never appeared in isolation in any historical racial discourse, but collective socio-cultural behaviour patterns and race frequently complemented one another, with varying and even equally-determining weight. These faults could be racialized, and many times were, but the physical presence of these groups intensified the alarmist racial discourse and made it more topical. These ideological and political contexts justified persecution and liquidation. They related to groups with a long presence in Europe,

<sup>7</sup> On new military history, see Tiina Kinnunen and Ville Kivimäki, “Johdatus koettuun sotaan”. *Ihminen sodassa. Suomalaisen kokemuksia talvi- ja jatkosodassa*. Edited by Tiina Kinnunen and Ville Kivimäki. Minerva Kustannus Oy, Jyväskylä 2006, 10ff; on its criticism, see Tiina Kinnunen and Ville Kivimäki, “Sota sosiaalisena ja kulttuurisena ilmiönä. Toinen maailmansota ja uusi sotahistoria suomalaisissa väitöstutkimuksissa”. *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja*, Volume CXVI, Number 1, 2018, passim; Ilari Taskinen, “Kokemuksista yllirajaisuuteen. Sotahistorian uudet virtaukset ja kansainväliset keskustelut 1990-luvulta tähän päivään”. *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja*, Volume CXVI, Number 1, 2018, 385–386; Ruth Sindt, *Alltag für Soldaten? Kriegserinnerungen und soldatischer Alltag in der Varangerregion 1940–1944*. VDM Verlag, Saarbrücken 2008, 11–12.

<sup>8</sup> A recent reply in the debate on race as a prime mover in wartime Germany, Johann Chapoutot, *The law of blood: thinking and acting as a Nazi*. The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Ma., 2018, passim.

<sup>9</sup> Sönke Neitzel and Harald Welzer. *Soldater. Beretninger om krig, drap og død*. Forlaget Press, Oslo 2012, passim.

<sup>10</sup> Sørli writes that a turn towards race as an explanatory factor has taken place in recent studies in Germany as well. Sørli 2015, 23–24, referring to Felix Römer.

such as the Roma<sup>11</sup>, and definitely the Jews. A particular emphasis in what follows is laid on the extent to which, and how decisively, race – amongst other factors – was a factor in determining the position of the Sami in occupant mental geography.

The German presence in Lapland has already been studied by Maria Lähteenmäki<sup>12</sup>, and particularly by Marianne Junila.<sup>13</sup> Cooperation between the State police and the Gestapo in the North has been studied by Oula Silvennoinen.<sup>14</sup> Ruth Sindt has studied the everyday life of the German troops and their relations with local people in Kirkenes/Kirkkoniemi in great depth and theoretical stringency.<sup>15</sup> The topic of the Sami and the Second World War has been studied by Bjørg Evjen and Veli-Pekka Lehtola<sup>16</sup>, but there has been no focused study on German-Austrian perceptions and opinions on the Sami.<sup>17</sup>

The geographical area is delimited by the Sami and the German-Austrian presence. Formally, the rear area of the Liza-front (also called “Arsch der Welt” by the German soldiers<sup>18</sup>) was a resource and military administrative area, Rückwärtiges Armeegebiet, for AOK Norwegen, for a German-Soviet front section reaching from south-east Lapland to the Arctic Ocean, where the German-Austrian troops had a strategical goal of reaching Murmansk and cut the supplies from the allies to Soviet Union. The commandant of the region had responsibility for securing the rear area, guarding prisoners of war (POWs), control of the troops and anti-partisan activity.<sup>19</sup> The domicile of the Sami, aside from parts of the Kola Peninsula and the Sami areas of Sweden, was under German occupation or military responsibility from 1940/1941 onwards. The third factor delimiting the geographical scope of this article is the

<sup>11</sup> Sevasti Trubeta, “‘Gypsiness’, Racial Discourse and Persecution: Balkan Roma during the Second World War”. *Nationalities Papers*, Volume XXXI, Number 4, 2003, 495–514 et passim.

<sup>12</sup> Lähteenmäki 1999, passim.

<sup>13</sup> Junila 2000, passim.

<sup>14</sup> Silvennoinen 2008, passim.

<sup>15</sup> Sindt 2008, passim.

<sup>16</sup> Bjørg Evjen and Veli-Pekka Lehtola, “*Mo birget soadis* (how to cope with war), Strategies of Sámi resilience during the German influence, Adaptation and resistance in Sámi relations to Germans in wartime Sápmi, Norway and Finland 1940–1944”. *Scandinavian Journal of History*, Volume XXXV, Number 1, 2019, 25–47; Veli-Pekka Lehtola, *Surviving the Upheaval of Arctic War. Evacuation and Return of the Sámi People in Sápmi and Finland During and After the Second World War*. Inari, Puntsi Publisher 2019, passim.

<sup>17</sup> On “literary encounters”, see Jukka Nyysönen, “German and Austrian occupant literature on the Sami in Norway and Lapland – ‘Harmless’ minority, a resource, and well-off ‘reindeer kings’”. *J@rgonia*, Volume XVIII, Number 35, 2020. <http://urn.fi/URN:NBN:fi:juu-202006234344>.

<sup>18</sup> Finn Fløtten, *Festung Kirkenes: okkupasjon og frigjøring av Sør-Varanger*. Kirsten Jochimsen, Bjørnevattn 1993, 16.

<sup>19</sup> Silvennoinen 2008, 229; Sindt 2008, 3.

availability of sources: some regions, especially Petsamo, the domicile of the Skolt Sami<sup>20</sup>, are over-represented in the article.

Marianne Junila points out how information about encounters and relations is spread over numerous source groups, none of which were engaged in reporting or documenting everyday relations between the troops and the local population.<sup>21</sup> The information found about the Sami is fragmental, even anecdotal. German archives would have been the most obvious place to search for German attitudes and views, but their usage presented problems: an extensive visit was not possible, due to project budget limitations. The German archives closest to my home base were microfilms of the archives of the *Armeeoberkommando 20* (National Archives, USA), stored in the library of the University of Oulu in Finland. Another problem with the German military sources is that they originate far too high up in the military structure, resulting in little information about local relations. I soon decided to limit my archive work on this source group to a necessary minimum.

Most of the German and Finnish archives of war were destroyed.<sup>22</sup> This applies to the Gestapo archives<sup>23</sup> and the archive of the organization intended to act between the Finnish people and the German troops in Lapland (and provide information about the brothers in arms to the Finnish military leadership), *Yhteisesikunta Roi*.<sup>24</sup> The collection of the Governor of Lapland Province, Kaarlo Hillilä, in the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, provides a more complete series and has been utilized in what follows to shed light to the Wehrmacht views. The archive of the Finnish State Police, Valpo, turned out to be quite informative. As such, the archive has been used extensively in studying the contacts between the Valpo and the Gestapo.<sup>25</sup> Remaining sources contained some information about the Sami and how intelligence officials potentially related to them. Even though the sources are produced by a third party, by Finnish liaison officers and intelligence officials, the sources reveal glimpses of the encounters and cooperation, as well as Finnish ponderings on German racial opinions. The image conveyed in the sources is unavoidably distorted. The German voice is loudest in the *Lebensborn* material, located at the Regional State Archives in Tromsø (*Statsarkivet i Tromsø*). Used in isolation, the German gaze upon the Sami would appear clinical and eugenic. The Finnish material, although distorted, provides insights into the variation in military and racial gazes upon the Sami.

<sup>20</sup> The Skolt Sami belong to the eastern Sami language group. After decades long existence in the Russian side of the border, they became Finnish citizens, as Petsamo was annexed to Finland in 1920.

<sup>21</sup> Junila 2000, 15.

<sup>22</sup> Matti Lackman, "Etsivä Keskuspoliisi 1919–1937". *Ratakatu 12. Suojelupoliisi 1949–2009*. Edited by Matti Simola. WSOY, Helsinki 2009, 234.

<sup>23</sup> Silvennoinen 2008.

<sup>24</sup> Lars Westerlund, *Saksan vankileirit Suomessa ja raja-alueilla 1941–1944*. Tammi, Helsinki 2008, 19–22.

<sup>25</sup> Lackman 2009, 239.

### Encounters with and perceptions of the Sami: a security risk

The encounters occurred in different contexts in Finland and Norway. Norway was an occupied country, with the Reichskommissariat as the leading organization, Vidkun Quisling's Nasjonal samling (NS) puppet regime competing for influence and access to Hitler, and a functioning NS-led local and provincial administration. Norwegian officials were the underdogs in an administrative setting that nonetheless remained operative. The German-Austrian troops had only military responsibility over Northern Finland, north of the River Oulu.<sup>26</sup> According to special contracts between Germany and Finland, central civilian administration, including police administration, was left to the Finnish authorities, with Governor Kaarlo Hillilä, head of the provincial administration, as the highest local official. Buildings, land and natural resources were under Finnish administration. Finnish sovereignty was to be respected by the troops, and was closely protected by Finnish officials. Contact zones in Northern Finland included trade, working for and billeting German troops and personnel, which was undertaken in cooperation with the Finnish authorities. The troops had no right to confiscate private or state property and the maintenance of the German troops relied on their own supplies, which became part of the civilian structures of opportunities.<sup>27</sup> The feared and fanatical General Ferdinand Schörner, in particular, demanded extended rights to control the local population, which was a nuisance and considered an encroachment against Finnish sovereignty.<sup>28</sup> As we shall see, the means with which to control and punish the local populations were different in Finland and Norway.

<sup>26</sup> Yngve Flo, "Distriktsforvaltning under førarprinsippet. Nasjonal samlings nyordningsambisjonar overfor det lokale og regionale styringsverket". *Historisk tidsskrift*, Volume 94, Number 1, 2015, passim.

<sup>27</sup> Junila 2000, 109–110, 117; Kalle Korpi, *Rintama ilman juoksuautoja. Saksalaisten keskeiset rakentamiset, työmaat ja työvoima Pohjois-Suomessa 1941–1942*. Pohjois-Suomen Historiallinen Yhdistys, Rovaniemi 2010, 13–14, 21; Timo J. Tuikka, *Kekkonen takapiru. Kaarlo Hillilän uskomaton elämä*. Otava, Helsinki 2011, passim; Olli Vehviläinen, "Isännät ja aseveljet – Suomalaisen hallinnon ja saksalaisen sotaväen suhteista 1940–1944". *Katsauksia tulkintoja näkemyksiä historiasta historioitsijalle*. Historiallinen Arkisto 82. Edited by Marjatta Hietala, Päivi Setälä, Matti Viikari and Rauno Endén. Suomen Historiallinen Seura, Helsinki 1984, 331.

<sup>28</sup> Hillilä Pakaslahdelle 27.3.1942 NO A.71 (report by Hillilä to Pakaslahti), UM 110, 7 A.6., Maaherra Hillilän raportit 1942, Fb 110 (1941–1950), Saksalaiset joukot Suomessa ennen välirauhaa syysk 1944 ja suomalaiset vapaaehtoiset Saksassa, Series: Suomen sota 1941–1944 (1947), Suomi-Neuvostoliitto ja Suomi-Saksa, The Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMFA), Helsinki.

### *The Sami and the secret police services*

Even before Operation Barbarossa and the German-Austrian presence in the region, the Gestapo secured relations and made their presence known in the Sami regions. A Valpo employee in Lapland and at the border then conjoining Nazi Germany and Finland, pass controller Tauno Heliara, held a lowly position in the ranks of the Finnish state police. He spoke German and could negotiate with the officers, so he obtained a central position in cooperation with the Gestapo. This cooperation was initiated as early as July 1940 by the Chief of Gestapo in Eastern Norway Wilhelm Laqua<sup>29</sup>, who visited Heliara in Petsamo. As plans for the “Renntier” (reindeer) and “Platinfuchs” (platinum fox) became clearer, German initiatives and contacts developed in significance during Spring and early Summer 1941. Laqua asked Finnish surveillance personnel to participate in the push to the east and in the purging of the remaining Finnish communists in the Murmansk region in June 1941.<sup>30</sup>

Before Operation Barbarossa, Heliara met Laqua and SS Sturmbannführer Gustav vom Felde<sup>31</sup> in Rovaniemi. The meeting had two aims: to build relations and to report on German plans and the front situation to Finnish administrative hierarchies. Vom Felde wanted contacts between partisans and the local “Lapp” population to be charted and “resolved”.<sup>32</sup> This is an example of the alert climate of opinion within which the surveillance worked.

<sup>29</sup> “Willi” Laqua (born 1909) joined the Nazi Party (NSDAP), SA and SS in 1929, took part in some street fighting, escaped to Sweden in 1930 so as not to be prosecuted for an assault and returned to Germany in 1933, as the Nazi reign of power dawned. He gained enough “merits” in the SS police force (as a “*Hilfpolizist*”) and was recruited into the Gestapo during the 1930s, but his career then stagnated somewhat. His activities are not well-known, since he survived the war and tried both to belittle and exaggerate his actions and commitments under interrogation. He was ordered to Larvik in Norway and, after victory in North Norway, to Kirkenes to lead a local branch of the Gestapo. Laqua became the most visible officer of the *Sicherheitspolizei* in the North Calotte. In 1942, when vom Felde returned to Germany, Laqua took over the command of *Einsatzkommando Finnland*. Silvennoinen 2008, 155–156, 159–163.

<sup>30</sup> Lackman 2009, 239, 242; Silvennoinen 2008, 62, 152.

<sup>31</sup> SS *Sturmbannführer* Gustav vom Felde was an early member of the SS (from 1930, the same year he had joined the NSDAP) and an ardent Nazi, positioned deep in the security police organization (*Sicherheitspolizei*), and at times nominated to the most secretive tasks of the war in the east in the ranks of the *Einsatzgruppe*. Vom Felde was sent to Lapland to coordinate cooperation between the Valpo and the Gestapo. From July 1941, vom Felde commanded *Einsatzgruppe Finnland*, which interrogated and selected POWs to be executed in different Stalags in Finland and Norway. Silvennoinen 2008, 202–208, 219–226, 231. *Einsatzgruppe Finnland* was terminated in late 1942. Tuikka 2011, 338.

<sup>32</sup> T. Heliara Matkakertomus 2.10.1940, Salmijärveltä, T. Heliara 22.4.1941, Tauno Heliara 9.12.1941, matkakertomus, er.sal. no 80 1941 saap 15.12.-41 V.P.-K.D. 73 (travel reports by Heliara), XXV F 3 – XXV G1a, Valpo II, Serie 13, 3322, Vuosien 1939–1944 sodat ja niistä johtunut toiminta, The Archive of the State Police (Valpo), National Archives of Finland (NA), Helsinki.

The Gestapo gaze upon the home front was imbued with suspicion, and this was apparent among leading German officers as well.<sup>33</sup> This suspicion included the Sami as a potentially threatening folk element, but Sami ethnicity or race, and the Sami as such, appeared not to be a focal point of Gestapo interest. The following were listed by Laqua to Heliara: communist activity in particular, people of foreign extraction and Russians. The sources comprise almost entirely details of action against suspected communists, and there is one example of reindeer herders from the Norwegian side of the border being arrested and “made to talk” by the Gestapo. Some reindeer herders<sup>34</sup> were viewed by the Valpo as “communist-minded”, as well. The communist-inclined reindeer herder and peasant surfaces one again in the sources, since a planned road between Sør-Varanger and Petsamo was to cross his lands. What was of interest were his political leanings, considered suspicious in spite of his wealth, and the resulting need to produce cover-up stories for the road construction. His ethnicity is not mentioned in the source, but the fact that he was well-to-do is.<sup>35</sup>

Information was exchanged about one Skolt Sami man (judging by the last name, which is always uncertain) and he was followed by both the Valpo and the Gestapo. Most of the information about this incident has been lost. A note written about this man was not in the Valpo archives and Laqua thought the man had left Petsamo, heading southwards, because he was being surveyed.<sup>36</sup> The Oulu branch of the Valpo had created a “card” for this man, but on that personal card there was no information about the reason they had done so<sup>37</sup>, and as the first source does not give the whole name, there is no certainty that it was the same person. What can be said with certainty is that this man had crossed a line in what was acceptable to both surveillance authorities and was therefore subjected to “normal” surveillance activity. This was done regardless of his ethnicity and as the source is otherwise silent, it is not known what role, if any, his ethnicity played in this incident.

<sup>33</sup> E.g. Junila 2000, 108–109.

<sup>34</sup> One cannot be sure whether the reindeer herders in the border area were Sami: the area had been a target area for Finnish migration, which practised herding as well. This remained possible until 1978 in Finnmark, when owning reindeer was reserved by law to the Sami. Olav Beddari, “Jul i Grenseland mellom øst og vest”. *Varanger årbok 2000*. Edited by Reidun Rushfeldt. Historielag i Sør-Varanger, Vadsø og Vardø, Vadsø 2000, 15.

<sup>35</sup> T. Heliara 5.5.1941, Ilm no 1688 (report), 7.5.1941, XXV F 3 – XXV G1a, Serie 13, 3322, The archive of State Police (Valpo), Valpo II, NA, Helsinki.

<sup>36</sup> T. Heliara Matkakertomus 2.10.1940, Salmijärveltä, T. Heliara 22.4.1941, matkakertomus (travel reports by Heliara) XXV F 3 – XXV G1a, Serie 13, 3322, The Archive of the State Police (Valpo), Valpo II, NA, Helsinki.

<sup>37</sup> Valtiollisen poliisin Oulun osaston henkilökorttiarkisto, The archive of state police, NA, Helsinki. On the card there is a minimum amount information, just a reference to another card with a slightly differently-written surname, which was absent from the archive. It appears that another person with the same surname, possibly his (ex?)wife, was also followed by the “Red” Valpo after the war, when she returned from Norway and Germany.



The Skolt Sami were targeted once again in Spring 1942. As the Wehrmacht were preparing for the Spring campaign, Officer Berger, representing Gestapo<sup>38</sup>, suggested evacuating the Skolt village of Ylä-luostari, near a German military airfield. The Skolt Sami had lived in the vicinity of the airfield throughout the war and been able to witness all the airfield activity. Other German officers, including the airfield commandant, felt that the Skolt Sami frequenting the Parkkina and Liinhamari population centres had a good chance to spy. A new airplane model was to be brought to the airfield, so all the civilians were to be barred from the area.<sup>39</sup> An evacuation was ordered, but a while later, in an indication of the informality of German-Sami relations, some Skolt Sami women had once again been hired for kitchen and laundry duties. The source reports Berger's complaint that the women would soon haul along their children, husbands and their whole kin.<sup>40</sup>

Heliara visited Karigasniemi in February 1943. The region appeared to him in a positive light: there were "4-5 prosperous Lapp houses" in the region. He reported the involvement of men from Organisation Todt and Russian POWs in road construction work, as well as uncontrolled and lively cross-border traffic in the region. This also involved smuggling fish from Norway. Heliara mentioned three Sami who were engaged in the importing and illegal sale of fish. The Sami do not appear in a purely negative light, according to a local official's chat with Heliara. They had a collegial exchange of ideas, in which the local official expressed his desire to get on the Valpo payroll as a pass controller. Since the local official could only speak Finnish and "Lappish" (but not German?), and lived a long way from the road, Heliara was doubtful. Otherwise, his house was well-to-do (the wife of the household also had work and proved to be "first class" in her cleanliness). Heliara was warmly welcomed and provided a positive appraisal of the local official.<sup>41</sup>

The Gestapo take on the Sami relied on the behaviour of the Sami themselves; everyday relations were uncomplicated, but if there were doubts about problems of security, the Gestapo struck, regardless and inclusive of all ethnicities. Since the police services organized border and passport control, the Skolt Sami were able to continue to visit their "neighbours" in Norway. The German border guards had become acquainted with the Skolt Sami of Koltaköngäs, who frequently crossed the border. The Skolt Sami were allowed to do so and only the Finnish labour force,

<sup>38</sup> Kirsi Kuusikko, *Laiton Lappi, laiton Petsamo. Rikollisuus ja järjestysvalta Petsamossa 1921–1944*. Studia Historica Septentrionalia 29. Pohjois-Suomen Historiallinen Yhdistys, Rovaniemi 1996, 442.

<sup>39</sup> Tauno Heliara, 5.2.1942 matkakertomus, ILM No 220, 9.2.1942 (travel report by Heliara), XXV F 3 – XXV G1a, Serie 13, 3322, The Archive of the State Police (Valpo), Valpo II, NA, Helsinki.

<sup>40</sup> Heliara, matkakertomus, Er.Sal, NO 10 1942, saap 4.5.1942 (29.4.1942), V.P.K.D 42 (travel report by Heliara) XXV F 3 – XXV G1a, Serie 13, 3322, The Archive of the State Police (Valpo), Valpo II, NA, Helsinki.

<sup>41</sup> T. Heliara 25.2.1943 ILM No 483/1.3.1943 (report by Heliara), XXV F 3 – XXV G1a, Serie 13, 3322, The archive of State Police (Valpo), Valpo II, NA, Helsinki.

who did not have the right to cross the border into Norway but did so for alcohol-related reasons, had been troublesome. Laqua did not object to the border crossings but established a separate passport category for the local population, as part of the administration of the climate of opinion.<sup>42</sup>

In these institutional contexts, ingrained with anti-communist suspicion, there existed very little room for relating to the Sami from other points of view than that of the security of the New Order. Issues of ethnicity were less significant: what mattered was their relation to the war and the occupier/brother in arms, to which the whole population had to conform. Or so the fragments of information in the sources indicate. I found no reference to the great espionage case<sup>43</sup> or to potential contacts over the border on the part of the Skolt Sami, which may mean that Gestapo opinions were based on a general suspicion of their own position as occupants and the low-key loyalty of the locals. The slightly more informative travel report by Heliara reveals that the aspect of security was a guiding principle in the Finnish context as well, clarified in the aspect of “being well-to-do”, which in a Finnish context was a way of guaranteeing social peace. Ethnicity is mentioned as one of several (potential) aspects, one that enhances the positivity of the encounter. Since the ethnicity of the local official wishing to get on the payroll of the Valpo was not a categorical hindrance, only his lack of general competence and practical issues, one must conclude that in this setting the Sami were encountered in a less alarmist, less suspicious and less stigmatizing manner.

### *The Sami and officers of the Wehrmacht*

Of the Nazi elite, Heinrich Himmler and Albert Speer showed a leisurely and exoticizing interest in Lapland and the Sami. Both of them, as well as General Schörner, visited Sami villages. Available sources do not clarify their opinions on the Skolt Sami, while it was Russian monks in a monastery in Ylä-Luostari who

<sup>42</sup> T. Heliara Matkakertomus 2.10.1940, Salmijärveltä, ILM.No 2535, 7.5.1940; T. Heliaran konsepti matkakertomukseksi (draft of a travel report), 21.7.1940, Ilm no. 1347, 24.7.1940 (report), XXV F 3 – XXV G1a, Serie 13, 3322, The archive of State Police (Valpo), Valpo II, NA, Helsinki.

<sup>43</sup> A total of 15 people, of various ethnic backgrounds, were sentenced to prison for acquiring information and passing it to Soviet officials in 1939 and 1940. Contacts had taken place in the north-eastern regions of Petsamo; it is unclear to what extent this activity was ideologically or economically motivated. The information delivered to the Soviets is said to have been insignificant, and available elsewhere. Later, over 70 people were arrested by the Finnish State Police, including members of the frontier guard, just before The Winter War. Almost all of them were set free, but rumours were spreading and the reputation of the frontier guard, and other local people as well, had worsened. These cases received widespread publicity and added to the aura of mistrust and to the exotica connected to the region. Kuusikko 1996, 320–336.

generated the most racialized comments.<sup>44</sup> These leisurely moments could not defeat military concerns. Senior staff in the regular forces were troubled by a constant fear of communists, Allied propaganda and other kinds of threats and disloyalty in the rear area. German officers asked repeatedly for the evacuation of population centres near the front, especially in Petsamo.<sup>45</sup> Most of the time, the officers were satisfied with Finnish reassurances concerning the loyalty of the Sami, though sometimes their fears did result in action. General Schörner was among the sceptics, but in direct conversations with Hillilä, who – against his actual opinion<sup>46</sup> – tried to convince Schörner of the loyalty of the local people, (the overtly polite) Schörner had to admit that there had not been any sabotage.<sup>47</sup>

The Wehrmacht propaganda shared the loathing of Bolshevism, one of the main enemies in Nazi world-view.<sup>48</sup> Kaarlo Hillilä had to placate German officers and Gestapo personnel, who, mostly due to inexperience concerning conditions in Lapland, had a tendency to exaggerate the communist threat (a small Finnish communist cell had already been defeated in Lapland). Hillilä reckoned that partisan activity had led to German officers exaggerating the communist threat.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>44</sup> General Schörner had been impressed by an open fireplace he saw in his visit to Suonikylä. He ordered two similar fireplaces to be built, overnight, in a school where his staff held office. Hillilä Pakaslahdelle 24.3.1942 No A 68 (report by Hillilä to Pakaslahti), UM 110, 7 A.6., Maaherra Hillilän raportit 1942, Fb 110 (1941–1950), AMFA, Helsinki; Himmler also visited Petsamo and some Skolt Sami villages in March 1942, but did not, according to Finnish reports, mention anything about the Sami in dinner conversations with Finnish officials. According to the Finnish report, he did mention “ongoing action against the Jews and the Roma in Germany”. Hillilä Pakaslahdelle 25.3.1942 No A.69; Hillilä Pakaslahdelle 26.3.1942 NO A.70 (reports by Hillilä to Pakaslahti), UM 110, 7 A.6., Maaherra Hillilän raportit 1942, Fb 110 (1941–1950), AMFA, Helsinki; T. Heliara 12.2.1941 ilmoitus, Er.Sal no 7. 1941, saap, 17.2.1941; T. Heliaran laatima matkakertomus 21.7.1940; T. Heliara Valtiollisen poliisin pääosastolle ja Kemin osastolle 16.10.1940, ILM.No. 2758, 21.X 1940; T. Heliara 29.10.1940, matkakertomus; T. Heliara 5.5.1942, ILM no 1688, 7.5.1941 (report and travel report by Heliara), Valpo II, XXV F 3 – XXV G1a, Serie 13, 3322, The archive of State Police (Valpo), NA, Helsinki; on Speers visit, see Tuikka 2011, 368–371.

<sup>45</sup> Kivikosken puolesta Hillilä UMlle 24.9.1941, (ei Nroa), Lääninhallitus ministeri Pakaslahdelle 6.11.1941 (ei Nroa); 26.11.1941, Min. Aaro Pakaslahdelle ei noa salainen; 2.12.1941, Min. Aaro Pakaslahdelle No A 19; 5.12.1941, Min. Aaro Pakaslahdelle No A 20; 8.12.1941, Min. Aaro Pakaslahdelle No A 23 (reports by Hillilä to Pakaslahti), UM 110, 7 A.6., Maaherra Hillilän raportit 1941, Fb 110 (1941–1950), AMFA, Helsinki.

<sup>46</sup> Information exists in Finnish research about how Hillilä and other high-level officials, e.g. in the Valpo, had a deep mistrust of the Skolt Sami, who had a command of the Russian language, relatives in and other connections with the Soviet Union. After the Winter War, Hillilä seems to have changed his opinion. Tuikka 2011, 189, 192, 217.

<sup>47</sup> Hillilän raportti UMlle tapaamisesta Schörnerin kanssa 26.6.1942 No 86 (report by Hillilä to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about a meeting with Schörner), UM 110, 7 A.6., Maaherra Hillilän raportit 1942, Fb 110 (1941–1950), AMFA, Helsinki.

<sup>48</sup> E.g. Soleim 2009, 29.

<sup>49</sup> Silvennoinen 2008, 205–207, 229–231, 276.

To Hillilä's great frustration a few Skolt Sami were caught by the German troops, but escaped in Russian partisan action. Hillilä feared that this would provoke the commander-in-chief Eduard Dietl and provoke mistrust against the local population, which it did. Dietl demanded more troops from the head of Yhteysesikunta Roi, Colonel Oiva Villamo, in order to secure the rear area and the civilian population. Hillilä disputed the evacuation once again, his reasons connected to military needs: there was no point in allowing evacuees to spread unrest to the rest of population, and it was time to harvest the hay. In addition, the Soviets would then "achieve their goals" and there would be greater scope for action in the emptied villages. For the moment there were great numbers of troops in Lapland, which could secure the local population.<sup>50</sup> For Dietl the Sami were, and had now turned out to be, a potentially disloyal threat, but for Hillilä the local population was a part of a defensive system in a totally mobilized territory/province. As plans for a Soviet attack dawned on Dietl in Spring 1944, and he relayed these to Hillilä, both men seem to have revised their opinions; still mostly positive, Hillilä asked cautiously whether it was time to evacuate, to which Dietl answered that he could not provide an absolute guarantee that the local people could stay, and he did not have enough troops to secure all the distant villages.<sup>51</sup> The Sami were included in the emerging evacuation plans, as well in the earliest phases of the evacuation. Dietl died soon after this negotiation, but that did not change the situation or the plans, and the Sami were evacuated alongside the Finnish population.<sup>52</sup>

In North Norway relations were distant, but increasingly friendly when things went as expected by the occupants. The troops located in many places in North Norway (e.g. Eastern Finnmark) enjoyed long periods of inactivity, or "securing" the area, which helped create friendly relations. At best, mutual help and invitations to festivities could be expected, at Christmas, for example.<sup>53</sup> The Sami are mostly absent from the sources. They feature in reindeer-herding and reindeer theft cases, but the

<sup>50</sup> X-40, Ramsaylle henk.koht. 1.7.1943 (private report to Ramsay); No 171, Ramsaylle henk.koht. 21.7.1943 (private report to Ramsay), UM 110, 7 A.6., Maaherra Hillilän raportit 1942, Fb 110 (1941–1950), AMFA, Helsinki; see also Lähteenmäki 1999, 143–145. Maria Lähteenmäki explains Hillilä's refusal to evacuate out of concern that Lapland would be left to sole German responsibility. The local people were in any case left in their villages just before the most active and brutal phase of partisan warfare in Eastern Lapland.

<sup>51</sup> X-40, henkkoht Ramsay 31.5.1944, no 231, (private report to Ramsay), UM 110, 7 A.6., Maaherra Hillilän raportit 1942, Fb 110 (1941–1950), AMFA, Helsinki.

<sup>52</sup> Hillilä has been severely criticized for neglecting the evacuations before the Winter War. It seems he learned his lesson, in the sense that his pro-Sami rhetoric to Dietl had an appeasing agenda, and in the end he did not hinder evacuation during the end phases of the Continuation War. On criticism, see Lähteenmäki 1999, 143–145; Tuikka 2011, 195–198.

<sup>53</sup> Frithjof Heitmann, "M/S 'Black Watch', Minner om et skip". *Altaboka 2004*. Alta historielag, Alta 2004, 28–29; Rune Rautio, "Waffen-SS i Varanger 1940–1941". *Varanger årbok 1994*. Edited by Reidun Rushfeldt. Historielagene i Sør-Varanger, Vadsø og Vardø, Vadsø 1994, 125–126.

German officers whom the Finnish officials met for negotiations concentrated on the Norwegians, and even on the Finnish population, more than on the Sami. Laqua, for example, expressed very negative views on the Norwegian members of the NS regarding their poor organizational skills and lack of effectiveness, which damaged occupant interests. The only estimations which may have included the Sami were reports of quite high loyalty towards the occupants, a lack of sabotage and relatively high work efficiency.<sup>54</sup> The absence of the Sami can only be speculated on, but the example implies that interest in the Sami, especially from the racial point of view, was a marginal issue and limited to those specially interested, while the main worry among German personnel in the North Calotte was securing the military operation.

In Norway a whole range of encounters, and the way that the war situation affected them, is evident in the activity of guiding refugees across the border to Sweden. In this, Sami guides acting as “grenselos” (“border pilots”) played a prominent role, especially in the county of Nordland, as part of the activity of the resistance movement in Norway. Thanks to reindeer nomadism, the Sami had exceptional knowledge of the terrain far into Sweden, as well as the asset of the Sami language, so they could communicate in secrecy even when German soldiers were present. The occupants appear to have been reluctant to act on this traffic, especially in the beginning and towards the end of the occupation, sometimes even warning those suspected, but German testimony is lacking on this issue. Sometimes there was a military rationale for this attitude: in border control terms, the Swedes are mentioned as being stricter, since the troops concentrated on the western sea-border and knew the refugees had little chance of joining Norwegian troops in the UK. German control tightened in 1942 and the relationship became one of mistrust, no different from typical occupier-resistance movement relationships elsewhere in Europe. The relationship could erupt into violence, dramatic chases in the mountains and threats of hostage-taking, as well as nocturnal raids, arrests and executions. The German army managed to break up sections of this activity and one Sami guide, Amund Johnsen, was sent to Sachsenhausen concentration camp, which he survived. The Sami were a resource in one case where a German soldier, having lost those closest to him, deserted his post and relied on the network to join a group on its way to Sweden. There were other cases of German soldiers deserting with the help of Norwegian/Sami guides and relationships evolved at best into ones of mutual aid.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>54</sup> No 158, Henkilökohtainen Pakaslahdelle ei dateerausta, raportti piirikomissaari Laquan vierailusta (report on the visit by Laqua), UM 110, 7 A.6., Maaherra Hillilän raportit 1942, Fb 110 (1941–1950), AMFA, Helsinki.

<sup>55</sup> Marianne Neerland Soleim, Jens-Ivar Nergård and Oddmund Andersen, *Grenselos i grenseland. Samisk og norsk losvirksomhet i nordre Nordland og Sør-Troms 1940–1943*. Orkana Akademisk, Stamsund 2015, 18–20, 23, 29, 31, 35, 43–45, 47, 60–62, 65, 67, 69–85, 89, 91–94, 99–100, 104, 107, 109, 114–116, 120–127, 138–145, 171.

It was not Johnsen's Sami-ness that led to his Sachsenhausen sentence. The reason was his anti-Reich activity, of great significance in a polity that feared a new form of back-stabbing, as in 1918. Although the German attitude towards civilians in Western occupied countries hardened in the course of the war, Norway, and by the same token the Sami, remained an exception.<sup>56</sup> The Sami were thus an element in the rear area, encountered and treated as a part of a wartime norm, an element whom the troops had to relate to, but towards whom no special annihilative measures were directed. This is the root of the way in which the Sami could be encountered in such numerous ways: not all the Sami were engaged in illegal activities, and the wartime norms also led the way for constructive encounters. These were swiftly abandoned if imperative, i.e. military needs, altered the situation.

### **The occupiers' racial interest in the Sami: Sami women and the Lebensborn**

German interest in the Sami included aspects of race. German contact with Finnish officials demonstrated eugenic interest in Finnish racial attitudes and policies regarding mixed marriages between Finns and the Sami, as well as with Jews.<sup>57</sup> Occupant relations towards women in occupied countries was of the utmost eugenic interest. In other countries allied with Germany, abstinence in relations with the locals was emphasized. Those concerning women in Finnish Lapland were desired to be of a modest kind and the troops were asked to heed "the high moral codes of the Finns". Since these regulations were not followed, marriage between German men and Finnish women was allowed under certain conditions, but not recommended. Stricter rules regarding marriage licence policy towards the end of the war were intended to restore discipline and moral uprightness to the troops.<sup>58</sup>

In the Oberkommando der Wehrmacht (OKW, Armed Forces High Command) handbook "Der deutsche Soldat und die Frau aus fremdem Volkstum" (1943), only "Finninnen", Finnish women, were referred to as potential spouses for German soldiers or civilians, effectively ruling out Sami women. Following the removal of the marriage ban for Wehrmacht soldiers in 1941, this exclusion was made clear in 1942 in the decree concerning marriages between Norwegian women and German soldiers – one could not marry women of Sami heritage. In the "Tagesbefehl" (order of the day) of the Oberkommando des Heeres (OKH, Army High Command) in August 1942, marriages with Sami women were ordered to be ended for reasons of

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<sup>56</sup> Chapoutot 2017, 236–264.

<sup>57</sup> Lääninneuvos Gideon Nyholm's raportti tekemästään huomiointimatkasta Tromssaan ym. (Report by Nyholm on a surveillance trip to Tromsø), No 185, 12.10.1943, UM 110, 7 A.6., Maaherra Hillilän raportit 1942, Fb 110 (1941–1950), AMFA, Helsinki.

<sup>58</sup> Junila 2000, 142–145.

racial purity<sup>59</sup>. Eduard Dietl, a supporter of the race policies of the NSDAP, forbade even procreating with Nordic/Norwegian women on 23.12.1943: Military and economic unity in German-occupied Europe had not and should not substitute for the racial-national oneness of the Germanic race. Dietl mentioned the Sami as well, but not Finnish women; this was done for pragmatic and politically tactful reasons, according to Lars Westerlund.<sup>60</sup>

These orders were not closely followed. The number of children fathered by occupants in Norway is unknown, estimations varying between 8,000 and 10,000. The number of children was highest in North Norway, where the local population was outnumbered by German troops.<sup>61</sup>

Himmler was obsessed with thoughts about the condition of the German race. One of the solutions was its improvement through the infusion of “pure Nordic blood” from Norway. In Norway, one problem was detected that threatened the German-Nordic race: low birth-rates. Welfare measures for mothers and children and restrictions in abortion rights were introduced in 1941 to improve the situation. Unlike controls among Wehrmacht soldiers, members of the SS were encouraged to have sexual relations with Norwegian women of high racial quality. The Lebensborn was established in 1935 to cater for the improvement of German blood. The Lebensborn was a mixture of children’s homes, welfare services and a racial institution, and a resource for women in unexpected situations. The organization was intended to secure a high number of births among women of valued racial qualities. There are indications that racial selection was more stringent in Germany than in Norway, and there were differences in stringency among the Norwegian institutions – e.g. Finnish mothers had access to the organization. The racial qualities of both partners were checked in great detail, while marital status was of less importance: the system catered for unmarried women to give birth and recuperate from the birth, and for the child to be adopted. Norway was the first occupied country to acquire Lebensborn facilities, in 1940; in all, eleven Mother’s homes were established in Norway and 8,000 children were registered with the Norwegian organization.<sup>62</sup>

Roughly speaking, Lebensborn archive show two categories of encounter between occupant men and Norwegian women: couples seeking permission to marry,

<sup>59</sup> Tagesbefehl 21/42 (Order), BA-MA RH 24-70/57, OKH, Höheres Kommando LXX, Abt II a, Bundesarchiv, Berlin.

<sup>60</sup> Cited in Lars Westerlund, *Saksalaisten sotilaiden lapset. Ulkomaalaisten sotilaiden lapset Suomessa 1940–1948 Osa I. The Children of German Soldiers. Children of Foreign Soldiers in Finland 1940–1948 Volume I*. [https://arkisto.fi/uploads/Julkaisut/monografiat/Ulkomaalaisten\\_sotilaiden\\_lapset\\_nide1.pdf](https://arkisto.fi/uploads/Julkaisut/monografiat/Ulkomaalaisten_sotilaiden_lapset_nide1.pdf) (2011), 122–123, 126, 134, read 16.11.2020.

<sup>61</sup> E.g. Anders Chr. Gogstad, Ole Kr. Grimnes and Kjartan Rødland, *Der veiene skiltes. Hvorfor opplevde vi krigen så forskjellig?* Eide, Bergen 2005, 114.

<sup>62</sup> Emberland and Kott 2013, 188–191; Anu Heiskanen, *Naisen kokemus, sota ja selviytyminen – Kolmanteen valtakuntaan 1944 lähteneet suomalaiset naiset*. Doctoral dissertation. Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Helsinki 2018, 124–131.

and more numerous cases of mothers seeking recognition of fatherhood to a child born out of wedlock.<sup>63</sup> Which kind role did the Sami women have in this setting? In this specific context and field Sami women could be expected to have a poor chance of success. Sami women seeking access to Lebensborn facilities had to fill a form, where ancestry had to be reported. A photograph and lists of closest relatives and hereditary illnesses had to be produced. The Sami women appeared to fulfil this task with great care and eagerness, which may also have its origin in emotions between partners, a commitment to marry and follow the rules. In the case of single mothers, there may have been a desire to escape from a stigmatizing local community<sup>64</sup>.

Archive material reveals that the Lebensborn may have had an ambivalent attitude towards the racial categorization of the applicants, which grew in inclusivity towards the end of the war.<sup>65</sup> The organization did not automatically deny access from a racially less acceptable origin, but the racial status of the applicants had to be researched thoroughly.<sup>66</sup> Children born from relations between German soldiers and Sami women were registered by Lebensborn and they remained of continuing interest to the organization. Some of these children were even registered for future adoption<sup>67</sup>. Thus, as the child was born, it appears that the stringent and exclusive racial interest lessened. Race, including that of the father, was still a factor: it was of as great interest whether the father had (really) been German, or Norwegian, and women were required to affirm that they had not had other sexual relations at the time of conception. Relations with Sami men would have resulted in the denial of access.

The racial quality of the applicants was evaluated by a medical doctor. Applicant mothers were examined thoroughly, from the point of view of health, disease history and especially physical anthropology. There was a more stringent regulation of Sami women seeking to travel to Germany, whose applications were denied by the Reichskommissar. In the examinations, their “hereditary health” (“Erbgesundheit”) was ranked “average, mediocre” (“Mässig”) and the doctors sometimes made dramatic remarks in the documents, e.g. “Lappisch!” The racial categories encountered in the archive include “Mischling (nordisch-lappischer)” and “Lappin, mit finnisch-lappischen Einschlag”. Both categories resulted in a negative response as to whether “reproduction is desirable from a national point of view” (“Ist

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<sup>63</sup> Sindt 2008, 152–155.

<sup>64</sup> Aarnes 2010, *passim*.

<sup>65</sup> See also, Bjørg Evjen, “Livet i okkupasjonsårene 1940–1945”. Chapter 7 in *Samenes historie fra 1751 til 2010*. Edited by Astri Andresen, Bjørg Evjen and Teemu Ryymin. Cappelen Damm Akademisk, Oslo 2021, 286–287.

<sup>66</sup> Heiskanen 2018, 124–128.

<sup>67</sup> Aarnes 2010, 97, 104, 109 et *passim*.



Fortpflanzung in völkischen Sinne wünschenswert?“).<sup>68</sup> In this eugenic context, Sami women encountered clinical harshness that stigmatized them and revealed their place in the racial hierarchies.<sup>69</sup> From a Nazi point of view, this was legitimized by the health of the German folk and race.<sup>70</sup>

## Conclusions

Knut Einar Eriksen and Terje Halvorsen have concluded that the German-Austrian gaze upon the Sami differed from their gaze upon “Untermensch”, the Jews and the Slavs. This is credited to the Sami’s lack of racial positioning in German Nazi racial hierarchies and the potential for a “touristic” gaze upon this “colourful” and “exotic group”. There were some exceptions to this notion, however. Reichskommissar Josef Terboven (wished to) exclude(d) Sami women who had children with German fathers from the services of Lebensborn and there were some occupants who thought that the Sami ranked as “Untermensch”.<sup>71</sup> The perception as such is correct, in that the Sami were encountered and treated differently to the other groups mentioned, but I claim that in addition to the good relations, the troops imposed a suspicious gaze upon a security threat, and took a eugenic interest in a racial problem to be administrated.

German military sources reveal that the Sami were not only an exception. The gaze upon the Sami was equalled in stringency by the German gaze upon the local population in general.<sup>72</sup> One aspect of the military and Nazi mental landscape was imagery of a constant, pitiless threat from the surrounding folks and states, and the

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<sup>68</sup> The archive consulted on this issue was the archive of the county governor of Finnmark, located at the regional state archive in Tromsø, consisting of paternity cases after the war, which in many cases included the applications processed by the Lebensborn. Strict professional secrecy and full anonymity is required in the use of the archive, so I shall not specify the case numbers studied or the aspects used in selecting the cases. I did not go through all the cases, as I expected that not all women would identify as or be identified as Sami – the archive contains potentially more Sami women than the organization imagined, since in both contexts, the Norwegian and the eugenic, there were numerous reasons not to reveal anything other than Norwegian ethnicity.

<sup>69</sup> Bjørg Evjen has found numerous Sami women who received access to Lebensborn, but with no remarks regarding their race in the sources. The thoroughness of the procedure, in the case uncovered in my archive studies, might be due to the fact that the application was for permission to travel to Germany, perhaps with the father of the child, and therefore perceived as an increased threat to racial purity. Compare Evjen 2021, 286–287.

<sup>70</sup> Chapoutot 2018, 139–152.

<sup>71</sup> Eriksen and Halvorsen 1987, 65.

<sup>72</sup> Tätigkeitsbericht des Armeeeoberkommandos Norwegen (Activity reports by AOK Norwegen), Befehlsstelle Oslo Abteilung Ia, in der Zeit vom 1.–30.11.1941; Bericht über die innere Lage Norwegens, 15.11.1941, Armeeeoberkommando 20, Tätigkeitsberichte des A.O.K. Norwegen für Abteilung 1940–1945, The National Archives, USA, located in University Library of Oulu.

violence that the German people lived under and experienced during the war.<sup>73</sup> In the world-view of the troops, the Sami occupied culturally and racially low positions, which also implied an inability to organize themselves (raise an armed resistance, practise agriculture, form higher polities), which diminished the perceived risk but did not erase it. If a situation showed signs of a rupture in the regulated friendship, existing good relations were set aside; the risk of sanction and/or aggression was always present and the Sami risked a disruptive change from the category of uncertain ally to that of enemy. In this sense, the Sami were treated under the same military preconditions as the Norwegians during the increasing Nazification of Norway.<sup>74</sup> Amongst others, the reindeer herder “made to talk” by Gestapo and the border pilot sent to Sachsenhausen experienced this – but it was not their Sami-ness that was sanctioned, it was their anti-occupant activity.

The thoroughly racialized Lebensborn was an exception, in the sense that in this context it was the Nordic/Germanic and Sami races which were the administrated problems. In a Lebensborn context, Sami women were subjected to concrete eugenic practices and the Nazi imaginings and categorizations of the lowly place of the Sami in racial hierarchies surfaced. The Sami *were* effortlessly positioned in the racial hierarchies, unlike Eriksen and Halvorsen’s claim, but it was because of the pragmatic flexibility of numerous and partially purely imaginary racial hierarchies.

The Sami were not under threat of holocaust. The secretive cooperation between the secret police services was harsher against the Soviet POWs, the communists and potentially, at the level of rhetoric, the Jews.<sup>75</sup> Norwegian researchers have not found any Sami lists corresponding to those compiled by the NS of Norwegian Jews to be arrested and deported.<sup>76</sup> In Norway, German troops perceived their task as being to protect the Norwegians from the English. One parallel with this was the evacuation period in Lapland, when German soldiers eagerly helped civilians as Lapland was evacuated: the German perception of the matter was that they were helping civilians to escape the Red Army. Ruth Sindt connects this to the compulsion for the individual soldier to justify his presence in the foreign country (“Rechtfertigungszwang”).<sup>77</sup> Military conditions allowing, the Sami merged into this mental zone of self-justification among the soldiers.

<sup>73</sup> Chapoutot 2017, 247, 263.

<sup>74</sup> Tore Pryser, “Arbeiderbevegelsen i motstandskampen”. *Søkelys på norsk krigshistorie 1940–1945*. Edited by Magne Skodvin et. al. Samarbeidsrådet for krigsveteranforeninger, Oslo 1990, 38 ff.

<sup>75</sup> Silvennoinen 2008, 333–336.

<sup>76</sup> Ingunn Elstad, *Samefolket i tvangsevakueringa*. <https://munin.uit.no/bitstream/handle/10037/10061/article.pdf?sequence=6&isAllowed=y>, read 11.4.2019.

<sup>77</sup> Sindt 2008, 189.

**Abstract**

This article sheds new light on previous perceptions of good relations between the German-Austrian forces and the Sami minority in Finland and Norway between 1941 and 1944. The preconditions and varieties of relations and encounters are researched: those relating to Wehrmacht, the Gestapo and to Valpo, the Finnish state police, as well as to the Lebensborn. Sources utilized consist of archival material produced by the Wehrmacht and by Finnish organizations responsible for cooperation between the troops and Finnish administration (Yhteysesikunta Roi, liaison staff Roi), by the Finnish State Police and by the Lebensborn. This article charts relations within institutional contexts, where more aggressive encounters would be expected to surface. Even though the encounters were mostly benign, and German-Austrian discourse on the Sami lacked any de-humanizing aggression, the Sami were nonetheless exposed to a racializing and eugenic gaze and practices in some institutional contexts. In addition, the Sami were treated as a suspicious factor that needed to be kept an eye on, like other civilian groups in the rear area.

