

# An ideological war: The politics of translation in occupied Norway (1940–1945)

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Recent research has drawn attention to the roles of translators and translation during wartime in countries such as Belgium (Gouanvic 2001), Germany (Rundle & Sturge 2010) and France (Lombez 2013; 2016; 2017). This paper presents the first research on translation during the Nazi occupation of Norway (1940–1945).

Findings from research in newly opened archives shows how the publication of translated literature came to be controlled during the occupation by regulations implemented by German officials in Norway. In 1941 the “department for culture and enlightenment”, a propaganda department established by Nazi officials, demanded that Norwegian publishing houses ask permission for each translated book they wanted to publish, a time-consuming and costly process. The archives reveal obvious instances of censorship, but they also show several instances of the authorities pushing books to translate. Some publishing houses highlight in their applications that they have been urged by the Reichskommissariat to publish certain works.

By asking how the policies, processes and regulations of translation of literature were in this period, and how translators, publishers and Nazi officials interacted with each other in order to publish translated works, this paper gives insight into the politics of translation during Nazi occupation, as well as the ethical challenges of navigating regulations set by antidemocratic authorities – or, for some, profiting from them.

The flow (or lack of such) of foreign literature in a country occupied by a foreign power does not only indicate the attitudes towards, and conditions for, translation under a given regime. It also yields insight into how this power could use censorship and withholding of translated literature on one hand, and pushing certain kinds of translated literature on the other, as means in the fight to win the ideological war, as Lombez (2016) has argued was the case in occupied France.

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