Soldiers of Labor

_Soldiers of Labor_ is the first systematic comparison of the labor policies of the Nazi dictatorship and New Deal America. The main subject of the book is the Reich Labor Service (Reichsarbeitsdienst), a public works project that provided work and education for young men. Here, the organizational setup, the educational dimension, and its practical work are extensively examined. Originally, the institution was an instrument in the fight against unemployment at the end of the Weimar Republic. After 1933, it became a Nazi propaganda tool that ultimately became involved in the Nazi war of extermination. This study examines the similarities and differences, mutual perceptions, and transfers between the Reich Labor Service and its New Deal equivalent, the Civilian Conservation Corps. Patel uncovers stunning similarities between the two organizations, as well as President Roosevelt’s personal irritation with the Nazi equivalent of his pet agency, the CCC.

Kiran Klaus Patel is Assistant Professor of History at Humboldt University, Berlin. The German edition of this book was awarded the Prix de la Fondation Auschwitz (Brussels) and the Tiburtius Recognition Prize (Berlin).
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Preface

“It was so difficult to gain insight into the Reichsarbeitsdienst” – this line from Uwe Johnson’s Jabrestage applies also to my work. Many people and institutions helped me as I prepared this study, and it is my great pleasure to be able to thank them here.

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