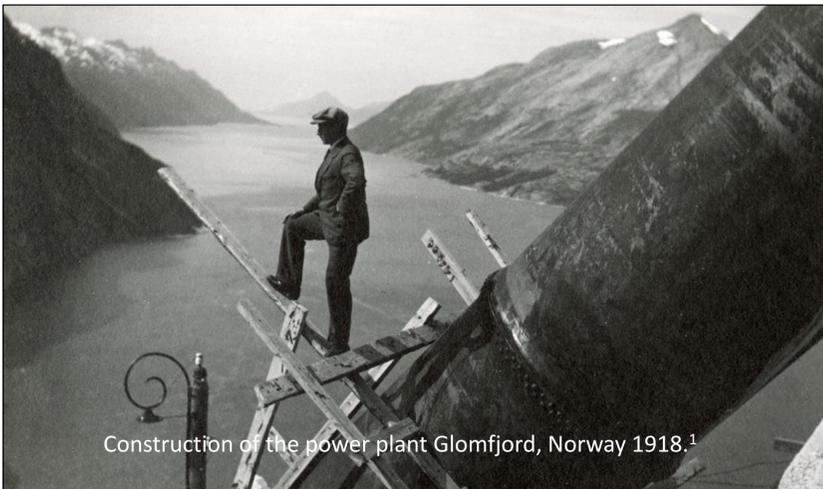


The economic significance of hydroelectricity. Autarky politics in Norway

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Construction of the power plant Glomfjord, Norway 1918.¹

1. The economic significance of hydroelectricity for Norway

- The expansion of water power plants began in Norway at the end of the 19th century.
- The great water resources made the overproduction and export of hydroelectricity economically favorable.²
- A nearby country with a high energy demand, like Germany, was a desired consumer.

- In 1930, the first technical plans for energy transmission between Norway and Germany were completed³:
 - It was possible to transmit 750 MW of hydro energy from Norway via Sweden and Denmark to Germany.
 - The power supply line was supposed to be 1000 km long and transport energy of 380 KV.
 - The estimated costs of the revolutionary project were 66 million € in 1930 (2,2 billion € today).

- In 1931 the *study group for Norwegian energy export* was established.³
- The economic depression of the early 1930s interrupted the technical progress, but in 1938 the plans were revived.⁴
- In 1940 the German National Socialists occupied Norway.

2. The economic significance of Norwegian hydroelectricity for Germany

- The energy-intensive armaments industries caused a shortage of coal, which made the exploration of alternatives necessary.
- The already existing plans for the export of Norwegian hydroelectricity were continued by the German National Socialist.
- The usage of Norwegian waterpower meant the coverage of the energy demand of the German Reich at a low price.⁵

3. Conclusion:

- Norway was of economic importance for the plans of autark, industrial development of Hitler's Great Germanic Reich and the armament of the German Reich.
- Hypothesis: The collaboration of Norwegian and German engineers led to technical progress (as proven for the aluminium industry)⁶.

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