

## CHAPTER 9

# Compensation Policies for Danish Resistance Fighters and World War II Victims 1941–2026

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**D**enmark was a peculiar case among the German-occupied countries. After the 1940 invasion, it surrendered within hours, resulting in only few casualties and no immediate need for extensive social measures. Danish politicians then pursued a policy of cooperation with Germany, accepting their militarised presence while formally retaining sovereignty which was largely illusory. Submitting to these conditions, the civilian population was largely spared and the Jewish population protected until this state of affairs collapsed in August 1943.<sup>1</sup> Because of the policy of cooperation, there was little impetus for coordinated resistance, and no organised Danish resistance movement existed in the first calendar year of the occupation. Consequently, in 1940 there was no perceived need to establish measures to assist war victims, or what would later be termed *victims of the occupation*.<sup>2</sup>

The first instance of a defined group of Danish citizens who required war-related social assistance during the occupation occurred in summer 1941. This occurred when the Danish state, at the request of the Germans, arrested around

300 leading (mostly male) communists after the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union. Their wives, outraged by the detentions of their husbands, demanded that the state assumed responsibility for their material needs. The women organised themselves into a group that later became known as the Red Widows. They approached the Ministry of Social Affairs, where their primary contact became the senior civil servant Hans Henrik Koch. Koch took their demands for support seriously and established a social relief apparatus for the internees' families.<sup>3</sup>

This initiative constituted the first kind of assistance directed at individuals defined as victims of the occupation. It was, however, only the first of many such initiatives, some of which remain in effect today. This chapter examines the overall developmental trajectories of social assistance for resistance fighters and other victims of the occupation. It asks which actors were responsible for providing assistance and what support former resistance fighters received.

The institutions discussed here merit a vastly more extensive investigation than what has been possible within the confines of this anthology. A full review of their structures, practices, and procedures, as well as a detailed account of the often-extreme social conditions faced by victims and their families, lies beyond the scope of this chapter. Instead, it focuses on the overarching principles behind the compensation that was given to victims and the roles of key officials across different periods.

Scholarly inquiry of social assistance that was granted to victims of the occupation began with historian Jørgen Hæstrup. He conducted a study of the Danish Ministry of Social Affairs and the support structures they created for Danish concentration camp prisoners. This effort was later refined by historian Hans Sode Madsen in his work on the White Buses operation (the evacuation of Danish and Norwegian concentration camp prisoners), which also details the Ministry's assistance to the relatives of resistance fighters who were combating the occupation.<sup>4</sup> The most comprehensive analysis of the various post-war compensation schemes to date has been compiled by Sofie Lene Bak, whose research focused on the support granted to repatriated Danish Jews and demonstrated how this assistance contributed to their resocialisation back into civil society.<sup>5</sup> The most recent contribution to this field of inquiry is the anthology *De udstødte, de uvelkomne og de beundrede* (The Excluded, the Unwelcome, and the Admired) which analyses the social assistance provided to the victims of the occupation. It compares initiatives aimed at Danish resistance members, resocialisation measures directed at refugee groups and convicted Danish collaborators.<sup>6</sup>

Social assistance during the occupation is difficult to reconstruct due to fragmented and often discreet archival material, as much of the work was conducted semi-clandestinely. Nevertheless, extensive sources from ministerial, municipal, and private archives allow the uncovering of what turned out to be a broad, multilayered system of wartime relief after liberation. Moving past the tumultuous years immediately following liberation, the records become more systematic and comprehensive, which shifts the historical documentation challenge from one of scarcity to one of scale, as compensation archives comprise thousands of files documenting the post-war assistance initiatives.<sup>7</sup>

### **A PROCESS IN FIVE PHASES**

To explain the relief process from 1941 to present day, this chapter divides the history of social assistance into five distinct phases. This division is based on the premise that each assistance period operated according to a distinct set of guiding principles or assumptions. In developing this periodisation, I was inspired by the work of historians Jolande Withuis and Annet Mooij. They uncovered how Dutch assistance to war victims evolved through clearly defined phases. Their periodisation analysis is particularly useful for understanding how welfare measures and recognition of victims are not merely the outcome of administrative planning but shaped by wider transformations in the public memory and by expert knowledge.<sup>8</sup>

This chapter uses their analytical framework as a comparative point of departure for examining the development of Danish compensation practices as they developed over time. Withuis and Mooij argue that early sporadic initiatives were followed by a focus on compensation for resistance fighters and, from the 1970s, a shift towards a focus on alleviating trauma and cultivating health. This pattern also largely holds true in the Danish context. Similar developments can be observed in Norway from 1968, where the trauma suffered by former resistance members and sailors became the focal point of contemporary compensation legislation.<sup>9</sup> Despite these parallels, I propose an alternate periodisation structure that better describes Danish assistance developments.

As noted, this chapter primarily focuses on resistance members and the assistance they received. In the Compensation Act, they were defined as part of the group of Danish war victims, who were assigned the formal legal term *victims of the occupation* (besættelsestidens ofre).<sup>10</sup> For the sake of clarity, this chapter also uses this designation when referring to the period prior to the Compensation Act. In these terms it is important to remember that this designation functions

as a legal categorisation rather than an ethical classification that tries to define who should be regarded as victims.

### **THE FIRST AD HOC PHASE: FROM 1941 TO MAY 1945**

The first period of social assistance for victims of the occupation can be described as the *ad hoc phase*, as support was improvisational in nature that did not operate on a solid legal foundation and relied on guidelines rather than laws. Assistance was given in close cooperation between social authorities and members of the resistance milieu. The phase consists of two parts: the first occurred during the occupation, when the vestiges of the state determined forms of support, and the second part from 5 May 1945 to February 1946, when assistance continued on the same legal basis and with the same actors but without the yoke of German occupation.

In this section I ask how the assistance to Danish victims was organised during the war, and how public actors such as the state and municipalities as well as other interest groups interacted.

After Hans Henrik Koch presented the complaints of the Red Widows to the Danish government, the politicians granted him broad discretion to design an appropriate system of social assistance. This initiative became the first organised form of relief for members of the group that would later be legally defined as “victims of the occupation”.<sup>11</sup> Despite experiencing strong resistance from the social services in many municipalities, the Red Widows ended up being supported by the Ministry of Social Affairs for the remainder of the war. Despite the official anti-communist line in Denmark, the government and civil service found it reasonable to mitigate the social consequences for the relatives of the imprisoned communists. Danish Social Democratic prime Minister Thorvald Stauning stated: “It is we who have interned them, and thereby we have driven them into poverty and ruin.”<sup>12</sup>

As no applicable legislation existed for assisting civilian war victims, the Ministry of Social Affairs relied on section 281 of the Public Assistance Act, originally intended for people drafted for extraordinary military service. This provision allowed for more generous support than ordinary municipal relief, reflecting official recognition that internment created exceptional hardship for the affected requiring extraordinary assistance. Unlike ordinary social assistance, the aid was intended to involve “a more generous allocation of support and a more lenient mode of disbursement,” as stated in an official circular issued by the Ministry of Social Affairs to municipal social offices in 1941.<sup>13</sup>

In the summer of 1943, tensions in Denmark reached a breaking point as large-scale strikes erupted and the resistance movement had grown significantly. Originating in communist networks formed after the 1941 arrests, the resistance movement expanded to include people from a diverse set of social and political backgrounds. As activities intensified, German pressure on the Danish government increased, which included demands for reinstating the death penalty. When the government refused to comply, it led to the collapse of the policy of cooperation that had been conducted by the Danish authorities since the start of the occupation.<sup>14</sup>

After 29 August 1943, the number of wartime victims rose sharply. Nearly 6,100 Danes were deported to concentration camps, around 7,000 Jewish Danes fled to Sweden, and thousands of Danes were imprisoned and often tortured by the Gestapo. The Ministry of Social Affairs expanded assistance schemes under section 281a to support Jewish refugees, deportees, and resistance families by covering rent and living costs. What began as a limited initiative for a few hundred individuals soon became a broad sweeping effort assisting thousands. Throughout the war, the Red Widows worked closely with the Ministry, gathering information on wants and needs and alerting Koch and his staff when municipalities failed to act in accordance with the Public Assistance Act. Their requests were consistently accommodated.<sup>15</sup>

### **THE SECOND AD HOC PHASE: FROM MAY 1945 TO FEBRUARY 1946**

Already during the occupation, Danish politicians, civil servants, and the resistance movement discussed how assistance to resistance fighters should be organised after liberation. Social support was a featured item on the agenda of the Danish Freedom Council (consisting of the leaders of the resistance movement), and confidential contacts between the Council and the Ministry of Social Affairs made plans for the future structure of post-war relief. Likewise, Allied representatives and Danish politicians in exile stressed the importance of recognising and supporting the resistance movement to ensure post-war stability, a message they conveyed to the political leadership in Copenhagen. As a result, the Danish political elite was already planning concrete institutional solutions for post-war social assistance in 1944.<sup>16</sup>

Upon liberation, a coalition government established the so-called Offices for Special Affairs (Kontorerne for særlige Anliggender) to provide rapid and targeted support to victims of the occupation. Officially, the offices were presented as an initiative originating from the resistance movement. But here it becomes perti-

ment to ask how significant the resistance's actual role was in their establishment and operation, and what the assistance actually entailed?

A coalition government was formed between the established political parties and the resistance movement. Members of the Freedom Council were assigned responsibility for resistance-related political portfolios. The communist and resistance leader Mogens Fog was appointed Minister for Special Affairs and was tasked with ensuring that the offices were established and that a compensation law for victims of the occupation was drafted. In his memoirs, Fog recounts that he defined the overall direction, while the civil service handled the concrete construction of the compensation apparatus.<sup>17</sup>

The Offices for Special Affairs were established immediately after liberation. They consisted of a central office in Copenhagen and local offices in most provincial towns. Their primary purpose was to ensure that resistance fighters and any other eligible individuals could receive immediate relief and financial support. Another priority was to reintegrate resistance fighters back into the labour market helping them find gainful employment. Assistance was disbursed through municipal treasuries but financed by the state. The guiding principle of the assistance remained that support should be provided in an uncomplicated and generous manner. In this respect, the system continued to function long after its initial conception much as it had during the war, with its legal basis still rooted in Section 281.<sup>18</sup>

Financial support from the offices varied. Payments were generally based on the social assistance rates of the Municipality of Copenhagen but could be adjusted according to the specific situation. Assistance included compensation for lost property, payment of rent, purchase of essential consumer goods, and in some cases the settlement of urgent debts. In addition, tax relief and wage supplements could be granted to former resistance fighters.<sup>19</sup>

The resistance movement was strongly represented on the board of the central office, but day-to-day operations were primarily handled by civil servants. Nevertheless, in their own case materials, the offices were portrayed as a resistance initiative that was exclusively planned and executed by the movement during the occupation. This narrative is misleading, as municipal and state authorities in fact financed and staffed the offices. Moreover, as mentioned above, the Ministry of Social Affairs had already played an active role during the occupation in the planning and execution of future assistance.<sup>20</sup>

The operation of the offices was initially chaotic but gradually became more structured. Certain issues persisted, including the interpretation of unclear rule-

sets and guidelines while it also posed a challenge to verify the backgrounds of some applicants. The offices also encountered cases of abuse, where individuals attempted to obtain assistance through fraudulent means. Nevertheless, they succeeded in providing extensive support to a wide range of victims. Surviving records from that time show that assistance was distributed on a large scale, with more than 30,000 recipients in Copenhagen alone. Although many victims of the occupation received help, resistance members formed the largest group of recipients, accounting for 75 per cent of applicants in provincial towns and 55 per cent in Copenhagen.<sup>21</sup> Average payments were modest, but particularly hard hit persons such as widows and disabled individuals could receive larger sums which in some cases exceeded half a year's worth of wages.<sup>22</sup>

The Offices for Special Affairs was a temporary institutional measure and was gradually phased out following the adoption of the Compensation Act in October 1945. From December 1945, most payments ceased, and by the end of February 1946, the vast majority of local offices had closed. In many respects, the social assistance provided by the offices was unique in Danish history. The aid functioned as an extraordinary social safety net for victims of the occupation and helped ensure a relatively smooth transition into the post-war period. The offices became part of a political narrative in which the resistance movement presented itself as the primary driving force behind the effort, even though civil servants working and paid for by the state were largely responsible for its practical implementation.<sup>23</sup>

## **SECOND PHASE: THE PHASE OF STATE CONSOLIDATION 1946-1948**

The second phase of aid was marked by the state's emergence as the official central actor, behind the compensation schemes, while the resistance movement played a more limited role in the social apparatus. At the same time, the legal basis for assistance was now anchored in the Act on Compensation for Victims of the Occupation. The formal starting point of the second phase was 1 February 1946, when assistance under section 281 was finally discontinued. This second phase ended in 1948 when the authorities stated that the direct social problems caused by the war had largely been solved.

While the time frame here is 1946-48, the first part of this section addresses the genesis of the Compensation Act, which chronologically belongs to the "ad hoc phase". The legislative process is examined here because it explains the framework within which the Compensation Board operated during the phase of state consolidation.

### **The compensation act**

In July 1945, a working group of civil servants and resistance representatives was established to draft a compensation law for victims of the German occupation. The first draft, written by resistance fighter and communist Carl Madsen, sought political recognition and preferential treatment for resistance members, awarding them with higher compensation rates while also enabling former concentration camp prisoners to retire, as well as introducing more innovative welfare measures. In contrast, the civil servants aimed for a broader and administratively streamlined compensation scheme without experimental elements and preferential treatment. The final draft was a compromise between the two compensation philosophies that strengthened state control of the process and reduced overall benefit levels, while securing a continuous honorary payment (*hædersgaven*) for resistance members.<sup>24</sup>

When the proposal was presented in parliament, several parties criticised its exclusivity and argued that compensation should cover everyone who had suffered during the war. The debate became a power struggle between the resistance movement and politicians. The politicians ultimately prevailed, they broadened the scope of the law, reframing it as a collective national settlement rather than just being a reward for resistance.<sup>25</sup>

The Compensation Act which was enacted in November 1945 with full effect from February 1946, covered resistance fighters, communists, police officers, border guards, Jews, victims of German reprisals and other civilian victims. Compensation was granted for disability, loss of a breadwinner, funeral expenses, torture and imprisonment. However, benefit levels were significantly lower than those proposed by the resistance movement. For example, the annual honorary payment awarded to resistance widows and individuals disabled by German torture or those who were seriously injured during resistance operations was set at 800 kroner (20,760 kroner or € 2,780 in 2026 when accounting for inflation).<sup>26</sup> This was a stark decrease when compared with the 7,800 kroner (202,500 kroner or € 27,100)<sup>27</sup> that were originally demanded, while compensation for having been imprisoned abroad was reduced to one quarter of the originally proposed level.<sup>28</sup>

For context, a skilled worker's annual wage in Denmark in 1945 was on average 11,400 kroner<sup>29</sup> (295,900 kroner or € 39,600).<sup>30</sup> The final legislation thus became a broad but comparatively modest compensation scheme, falling far short of the resistance movement's original ambitions for a generous but exclusionary support apparatus.

A relevant question concerning the Compensation Act is whether it represented a genuine social policy innovation. The short answer is no. At liberation, social policy was characterised by an expansion of social provision, but without a decisive break from earlier traditions of poor relief. The Ministry of Social Affairs addressed acute social challenges in general through emergency legislation, and there was a broadly founded political willingness to support victims of the occupation. At the same time, reforms introduced in 1945 reduced legal incapacitation and abolished repayment requirements for assistance. The Compensation Act reflected these general trends: support was allocated according to need and followed existing social policy principles, with widows and concentration camp survivors receiving the highest benefits. The structure of the law, however, drew on earlier social and insurance legislation, including the Workers' Compensation Act and military compensation schemes. The concept of the honorary payment also had historical precedents which were notably present in legislation for veterans of nineteenth-century wars.<sup>31</sup>

### **The Compensation Board**

The Compensation Board was established in November 1945 and was operated by both civil servants and resistance representatives. In 1946, the central council for former resistance members was dissolved due to internal conflicts, leaving no formally appointed resistance representatives, although those already delegated to the board remained as ordinary members until the 1960s. Initially intended to operate until 1947, the Board had handily expedited most cases by then, but complex cases prolonged its work, and it remained in existence until 1997.<sup>32</sup>

The Compensation Board served as the central body for administering the Compensation Act. The Directorate of Industrial Injury Insurance (DIII) processed disability cases under the act and made its own decisions, though it could seek guidance from the Compensation Board in cases containing elements of doubt. Applicants could also appeal the Directorate's decisions to the Board. Case processing followed the same procedures as ordinary industrial injury cases, with standardised forms and sober descriptions of incidents.

Cases concerning honorary payments, compensation for torture, property damage, and assistance for education were referred directly to the Compensation Board. The Board's secretariat conducted preliminary reviews of the cases before they were presented to the board, which determined the final outcome. Some complex cases were used to establish standardised precedents for future rulings. This meant that the distribution of war-related compensation was, in

many respects, handled in a traditional manner, closely resembling the administration of standard work accident insurance schemes.<sup>33</sup>

In total, the Compensation Board processed 21,706 applications from 15,640 individuals, excluding cases handled by the DIII. Fifty-five per cent of recipients were resistance fighters or communists. There is no complete account of how much individual recipients received in disability support from DIII, but a sample of case files indicates that a person assessed as fifty per cent disabled could receive one and a half weeks' wages per month in disability benefits. If an applicant before the Compensation Board was awarded compensation for torture, property damage, and non-material losses, the average payout amounted to 4,453 kroner, equivalent to approximately 15,000 Euro in present-day value with inflation taken into account.

Although this compensation provided recipients with some financial leeway, it was insufficient to allow receivers to withdraw from the labour market completely.<sup>34</sup> Nor was that the intention of the compensation scheme. Severely disabled individuals and widows were to be supported by the state, while the expectation was that most applicants would be able to re-enter the labour market after recuperation, medical treatment, possible educational support, and compensation. The Minister for Special Affairs emphasised this point in 1947, stating that the assistance efforts were nearing completion.<sup>35</sup> This proved true for a lot of clients, though many resistance fighters never fully recovered from the traumas they had suffered because of the war.

### **The Freedom Fund**

After liberation, several private funds were established to assist victims of the occupation, the largest of which being the Freedom Fund (Frihedsfonden), founded by prominent resistance leaders in June 1945. The board was dominated by older, socially established non-communist resistance veterans whose outlook differed from that of the younger fighters who sought broader social change within Denmark. It was intended to supplement the Compensation Act and the fund primarily supported resistance fighters and their relatives who received insufficient public assistance. Although formally independent, it maintained close ties to the state and was mentioned in the Compensation Act, which allowed it to receive surplus compensation funds in certain cases.<sup>36</sup>

The fund provided educational support, supplementary aid to surviving relatives, grants or interest-free loans for business start-ups, retraining, or convalescent care not covered by the public schemes. In practice, its activities soon

coalesced around three core areas: education, support for widows, and business start-ups, the latter of which often proving unsuccessful due to the severe health problems or lack of experience among loan recipients. Between 1945 and 1959, 1,001 individuals received educational support, helping prevent social decline within resistance families and enabling occupational mobility for the individuals who were supported. Initially the fund changed from functioning as a general relief organisation into a more selective body focussing mainly on widows and children. While the fund played an important role in the post-war assistance system, it did not constitute a social policy innovation but rather, it represented aspects of the traditional philanthropic model structured around private charity.<sup>37</sup>

### **THIRD PHASE: THE PHASE OF REJECTION 1948-1969**

Just as the Compensation Board and the Freedom Fund believed that the social assistance effort was nearing its completion, many victims of the occupation began to experience the long-term effects of wartime trauma. Within the medical profession, prevailing attitudes increasingly supported the reality that chronically ill resistance fighters continued to require substantial support. Those who had experienced German imprisonment were particularly prone to serious health problems. The Compensation Act, however, did not account for such problems with long-lasting and debilitating health conditions. Several interest organisations advocating for former resistance fighters demanded political action, but it was not until 1969 that this issue was regarded in earnest and opportunities for applicants were improved. Because many victims were denied support during this period, it is referred to as the phase of rejection in this chapter.

### **KZ Syndrome**

Shortly after liberation, Danish physicians Paul Thygesen and Jørgen Kieler who were both former resistance fighters and concentration camp prisoners, began studying the psychological and physiological effects of camp imprisonment. Under the guidance of Per Helweg-Larsen, research conducted in 1947–48 showed that most former prisoners suffered serious physical and psychological after-effects, later defined as “concentration camp syndrome,” and this syndrome was considered as potentially permanent as early as 1947. The physicians therefore concluded that the existing assistance apparatus helping the victims of the occupation was insufficient.<sup>38</sup> The key question then becomes how the compensation system responded to this new medical knowledge.

As early as 1947, the Danish press began reporting that many resistance fighters suffered severe after-effects. In subsequent years, articles regularly appeared describing how former concentration camp prisoners continued to suffer from serious impairments. This intensified public debate over how these late effects could be addressed.<sup>39</sup>

The Compensation Board actually attempted to adjust compensation rates as it became clear that many were more severely affected than initially assumed. The Board therefore financed research into the specific health risks faced by concentration camp prisoners. The resulting medical examinations prompted procedural changes in the system aimed at improving assistance for former prisoners. This was not sufficient, however, as the DIII did not recognise psychological illness when determining disability ratings because they did not recognise that KZ syndrome was a genuine illness.<sup>40</sup>

The Freedom Fund also took a critical stance towards applicants with mental illnesses, dismissing psychological trauma as a pretext for financial support and publicly claiming cases claiming this were fabricated. It opposed aiding traumatised resistance fighters on the grounds of potential abuse of the system, reflecting a broader prejudice against the mentally ill implying that psychological illness was not a “real disease”. This point of view was reinforced by the belief that seeking support for mental illness undermined the legacy of the resistance and conflicted with the ideal of the mentally strong, heroic freedom fighter.<sup>41</sup> These reservations on the part of both DIII and the Freedom Fund contributed to the absence of systematic and long-term rehabilitation efforts for many victims of the occupation.

Although the Freedom Fund began rejecting applicants with “KZ syndrome” in the late 1940s, other parts of the resistance milieu called for expanded social assistance. In the 1950s, the magazines *Gestapo-Fangen* (The Gestapo Prisoner) and *Pigtråd* (Barbed Wire), published by two competing associations of former imprisoned resistance fighters, voiced criticisms of the state. *Pigtråd* was issued by the left-leaning Comrades’ Relief Fund (*Kammeraternes Hjælpesfond*), which provided loans and financial support to victims of German imprisonment, while *Gestapo-Fangen* was published by the Gestapo Prisoners’ Association, whose members spanned many political affiliations including conservatives, social democrats, and others from across the political spectrum.<sup>42</sup>

Numerous clubs, associations, and funds supported victims of the occupation, but the Comrades’ Relief Fund and the Gestapo Prisoners’ Association led the push for change. They sought comprehensive revision of the Compensation Act

and criticised the Freedom Fund for the inadequate assistance that was provided. Disagreements over how support should be administered escalated into direct conflict between the Freedom Fund and the Comrades' Relief Fund, resulting in incidents serious enough between the organisations to warrant police reports being written.<sup>43</sup> Thus, the milieu surrounding the victims of the occupation was fragmented, and actors often disagreed about the best course of action.

#### **FOURTH AND FIFTH PHASE: ACCOMMODATION AND DISSOLUTION**

The fourth phase can be described as one of accommodation, as victims of the occupation were treated more favourably by funds and public institutions after several difficult years. Although the Compensation Act was revised multiple times, early changes were largely technical, only concerning deadlines and benefit rates. Substantial reforms only came after sustained political pressure from resistance organisations, which coordinated their efforts by the 1960s and presented a united front in order to champion legislative revision. Prominent resistance figures promoted this shift in attitude, and a workgroup was established to improve the quality of assistance to victims of the occupation. This coincided with contemporary and broader political currents that favoured more generous social support for war victims. By the late 1960s, resistance magazines such as *Pigråd* and *Gestapo-Fangen* overtly demanded social improvements for surviving victims of the occupation. Although the Freedom Fund (having undergone organisational changes in the late 1960s) did not formally align itself with these public demands, it gradually revised its dismissive stance on the long-term psychological consequences of camp confinement and began acknowledging the seriousness of KZ syndrome. Following this, the fund participated in negotiations with government ministries concerning the future organisation of its assistance efforts.<sup>44</sup>

These developments led to significant addendums to the Compensation Act between 1968 and 1973. These revisions made it easier to apply for assistance, it allowed for the reassessment of disability ratings, and enabled previously rejected cases to be reopened, all the while benefit rates were increased. Applications were now assessed by members of the resistance milieu, and mental illness was recognised as a legitimate condition when determining compensation. The burden of proof was now reversed, requiring the authorities to disprove claims rather than for claimants to prove the validity of their disabilities. Resistance fighters gained increased recognition, including access to pensions and welfare benefits, and the Compensation Board underwent reforms with the Freedom Fund acting as an

expert advisory body. Overall, the system became markedly more accommodating towards victims of the occupation.<sup>45</sup>

The legislative changes led to an unexpectedly large number of new applications. The Freedom Fund, for example, received so many enquiries that the Ministry of Social Affairs was forced to grant it extraordinary funding. After 1970, it became standard practice for the Freedom Fund to actively seek out former resistance fighters and encourage them to apply for assistance. In several towns, former prominent local resistance figures were engaged to maintain contact with victims of the occupation and support their claims.<sup>46</sup> Finally, the resistance fighters were granted access to a compensation scheme that provided extraordinary financial assistance and the opportunity to withdraw from the labour market exactly as they had requested twenty-five years earlier.

In 1996, the Freedom Fund dissolved itself as the number of tasks and victims of the occupation declined. The following year, the Compensation Board held its final meeting. At that time, 5,979 individuals still received support under the Compensation Act. The number of recipients declined rapidly as the ageing resistance fighters passed away. Nevertheless, the Compensation Act remains in effect. In 2026, the scheme was administered by the Danish Labour Market Insurance (*Arbejdsmarkedets Erhvervsforsikring*), and they continue to process new cases, including claims from widows of resistance fighters and individuals who were children during the war. The once extensive compensation apparatus is thus in the dissolution phase, yet it still exists.<sup>47</sup>