

concentrated in large factories, all factors conducive to impressive worker solidarity and protests by Jewish workers against Jewish capital, as De Vries describes it. He accurately explains these labour conflicts as resistance to the “political regimentation of the workplace” and stresses the diamond workers’ pride in their skills. Regretfully, in this well-researched book the voices of the workers do not express this dissatisfaction and pride directly.

In the last part of the book De Vries describes the course of the industry in Palestine after the liberation of Belgium. The British government and De Beers – who cooperated closely with the Belgian government and the Antwerp *diamantaires* in exile in London – had always stressed that the Palestine industry would be a temporary replacement for the operations in Antwerp. By 1944, however, the different parties in Palestine, including the diamond merchants and workers, wanted to retain and expand the industry. The British and De Beers decided that the Palestine industry would have to diversify, in part by cutting larger and more intricate stones, thereby complementing the slowly recovering Antwerp industry rather than competing with it.

Despite this diversification, the Palestinian industry faced a deadlock in 1946: not only competition from Antwerp but also the declining demand for diamonds in the postwar period caused this crisis, forcing the PDMA to cede part of its monopoly position. The industry liberalized, the labour process was deregulated, and a diamond exchange was opened. Many diamond factories were sold as a consequence of the slump, and a domestic industry materialized, ending the concentration of the workers and the massive labour protests. Within this new context, the relationship between the PDMA and the Jewish Agency improved and the Histadrut started to buy out bankrupt factories and transform them into cooperatives.

At the same time, the relationship between Britain and Palestine changed, and when the independent Israeli state was proclaimed in May 1948, the diamond industry was incorporated in the Department of Trade and Industry of the new state. Several Dutch Zionists were pivotal in this process, combining a liberal economic approach with commitment to state building and to the needs of a state-run economy. Within this economy, diamonds would yield global trade networks and hard currency much needed by the new state. The state helped the industry by providing capital, finding new markets for polished stones outside the United States, and exempting diamond workers from military service. After the war and the establishment of Israel, as De Vries demonstrates in his epilogue, the relationship between state, capital, and labour had clearly changed. This epilogue concludes a good read on a fascinating global commodity, of which the circumstances were deeply influenced by state intervention, both in wartime, under colonial relationships, and during the state formation.

*Karin Hofmeester*

HACHTMANN, RÜDIGER. *Das Wirtschaftsimperium der Deutschen Arbeitsfront 1933–1945*. [Geschichte der Gegenwart, Band 3.] Wallstein Verlag, Göttingen 2012. 696 pp. Ill. € 49.90; S.fr. 66.90. doi:10.1017/S0020859012000697

The period since the 1980s has seen the appearance of several studies of the history of the Deutsche Arbeitsfront (DAF). Attention has also been paid to a number of particular firms within the DAF, the largest mass organization of the Nazi dictatorship. Up till now, however, there has not been an overall survey of its economic empire. There are pertinent reasons for this. The source material is fragile, and it is hard to grasp the economic complex run by the DAF in conceptual terms and spell out its particular features within the Nazi economy. This has, however, meant a serious lacuna for historical research, since the DAF’s complex of firms formed a key intersection where the fields of action of the

ruling elites of the “Third Reich” were directly faced in their social and economic policy with problems of subjugation, domestication, and integration of the lower classes.

Rüdiger Hachtmann has now finally filled this gap with his monumental study. He has approached this task with great caution, as the decades he spent investigating the Nazi dictatorship’s workers’ policy and social policy have made him well aware of the shallowness of the soil. In a methodological introduction, he starts off by conceptualizing the DAF trust as an omnipresent “community server”, which, given the precondition of strict exclusion of all tangible products and visionary promises that were “alien to the people” or the “community”, acted for the positive integration of the lower classes, while at the same time shoring up economically the DAF’s political power claim. He then offers in chapter 1 (pp. 47ff.) some reflections on the general economic contextual conditions, which were marked by a close and many-levelled imbrication between the political and the economic fields of action. It is in this context that Hachtmann goes on to locate the particular prehistory of the DAF trust, tracing the carefully planned expropriation and reorientation of the production and distribution arrangements of the workers’ movement, which were mainly cooperatives, into the DAF trust organized as a private economic agency.

This creates optimal preconditions for reconstructing the particular history of the DAF’s economic empire. In chapter 2 (pp. 70ff.), Hachtmann traces the origin of this holding company: this was effected in several stages, and only in 1938 acquired a certain structural stability, as a result of major structural alterations and a comprehensive generational change. Comprehensive chapters are then devoted to the numerous branches of this rapidly expanding trust: the banking group dominated by the Bank der Deutschen Arbeit (chapter 3, pp. 93ff.), the insurance group Volksfürsorge und Deutscher Ring (chapter 4, pp. 190ff.), publishing, with the Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt, Verlag Langen-Müller, and Büchergilde Gutenberg (chapter 5, pp. 266ff.), the conflictual and lengthy transformation of the consumers’ cooperatives into the retail chain Deutsches Gemeinschaftswerk (chapter 6, pp. 369ff.), the development of the house-building corporation Neues Heimat, as the nucleus of the “social housing” programme that DAF pursued (chapter 7, pp. 425ff.), as well as the industrial participation of the DAF in the automobile industry and shipbuilding, with Volkswagen GmbH and Stettiner Vulkan-Werft (chapter 8, pp. 499ff.).

Following on from his introductory conceptualization, and his sketch of the political and economic contextual conditions, Hachtmann concludes by laying down a second analytical cornerstone. This consists in the investigation of the personnel and management structures of the DAF trust (chapter 9, pp. 531ff.), a synopsis of its self-conception, structures, and field of action (chapter 10, pp. 556ff.), and a look at the postwar history (chapter 11, pp. 599ff.). He also supplies a comprehensive appendix with tabular information on the balance-sheets, order books, employment figures, and turnover of the business groups (pp. 623–657).

Hachtmann’s study marks an important turning-point in the history of its subject, with indications that go beyond the DAF trust and the Nazi mass organizations with which it economically interacted. Its author has been able to answer successfully a question for which convincing responses have been sought for decades; and he also opens up new problem areas, which can only be tackled in the context of a comparative historical analysis of the Nazi dictatorship. Six aspects strike me as particularly important in the area that Hachtmann has been working on.

Firstly, according to Hachtmann, the main task of the DAF economic empire lay in expropriating from the working class all its self-determined and self-managed structures of production and distribution. The multifarious building cooperatives, consumer unions, production cooperatives, and insurance societies formed the key material cornerstones of the proletarian milieu, and could be considered – despite their partial deformation by working-class bureaucracies – as a kind of “socialization from below”, reflecting hopes of an authentic socialist society. The destruction of these structures was seen by the DAF trust and its protagonists as their most important task.

Secondly, in the transformation of their booty into an instrument for the economic support of their power ambitions, the DAF protagonists proceeded from the unconstrained primacy of private property and free entrepreneurial initiative. They rejected the path of state ownership or transformation into regular legal enterprise structures. These fundamental premises were expressed at all structural levels of the DAF trust. Robert Ley, the Reichsleiter of the DAF, acted as overall trustee, delegating this function to several subordinate trustees, who in turn built up a decentrally organized holding company. Under this umbrella, the various business groups were run as joint-stock companies or companies with limited liability (GmbH). Their respective managements enjoyed considerable room for manoeuvre, and were anchored in the informal networks formed by the top DAF managers in the context of multifarious overlapping on the supervisory boards.

Thirdly, the DAF trust was characterized by an aggressive policy of expansion that went hand in hand with the DAF's "association-imperialist" dynamic. This mutually reinforcing dynamic expressed a close imbrication between the political mass organization and the economic holding company. The trust conglomerate could draw here on the almost inexhaustible resources of the DAF, the largest in membership of the compulsory mass organizations of the Nazi dictatorship. Conversely, value was placed on a substantial increase in returns and profits, and within the business groups, in the wake of their consolidation, comprehensive measures of rationalization were conducted with a view to reducing operating costs. This led to the formation of a new kind of manager within the DAF trust, characterized by a youthful élan, a high readiness to take risks, and a particularly intense loyalty to the basic racist and anti-semitic norms of the fascist "community of people and achievement". With 200,000 employees, and an annual turnover of more than 2 billion Reichsmark, these protagonists were in a position to head large businesses and occupy key positions in the exploitation of German-occupied Europe.

Fourthly, the particular private-economic character made it possible to ascribe to the DAF trust particular functions within the overall Nazi economy. Its managers and staff were active first and foremost in those fields of business that were of strategic importance in guaranteeing the social policy of the Nazi regime, but were neglected by the established private sector on account of the risks associated with them and problems of sustainability. These included essential components of the consumer goods sector, construction of housing settlements for rental, the development of a mass automobile industry, and personal risk insurance for the lower classes. It was in these areas that the most successful companies of the DAF trust were active. In the interest of the system's stability, they produced widely specialized "special offers" addressed to the "*Volksgemeinschaft*", from mass tourism through "popular housing" to the Volkswagen cars, even a "people's refrigerator". The intention underlying this was quite serious, to compensate the subordinate classes for the loss of the collective assets they had enjoyed in the form of cooperatives by the surrogate of mass consumption. Even if it always remained subject to the primacy of preparation for aggressive war, and accordingly remained very much confined to "material force", the perspective of mass consumption made a tremendous contribution in terms of its social-psychological effect, thereby relieving the burden on the system of terror and greatly stabilizing the "home front".

Fifthly, in this context, the DAF's economic trust grew into a nodal point of the networks that prepared a specifically German variant of Fordism during the Nazi era. Hachtmann has brought out its particular social-racist and warmongering characteristics, but also has indicated its systematic borrowing from the prevailing US prototype. The leading managers and functional bearers of the DAF trust played a significant part in shaping the Fordist intermediary stage in the short twentieth century.

Finally, in formal terms, the history of the DAF trust ended with the wartime defeat of German fascism. The firms located in the Soviet occupation zone and subsequent GDR were taken into state ownership and in part dismantled by way of reparations. It was

originally intended that the component firms in the zones of Western occupation would also be placed at the disposal of the inter-allied reparations agency. But the Cold War put an end to this project, and the DAF companies were allocated to West German trade unions as legal successors of the expropriated cooperatives. Yet this did not in any way result in a revival of the cooperative movement. Instead of this, the DAF trust was converted into a private economic umbrella of the German trade-union federation, while the Volkswagen Company newly established in 1938 grew into a global corporation. The continuities of both personnel and structure are remarkable. In the case of the housing construction company, Neues Heimat, they were spectacular indeed, as right through to its demise in the 1980s this pursued an extremely aggressive and destructive strategy of mass housing construction, which in no way departed from the principles of its Nazi precursor.

So much for a summary of the most important results. Hachtmann's monumental study has not only established clarity on many points, it has also improved the preconditions for an integrated overall analysis of the Nazi dictatorship. In this connection, however, there remain some problematic areas to be tackled, which indicate certain shortfalls in the study. In my view, the book is too one-sidedly addressed, first of all, to the academic world. The *hommage* paid in the introduction to the Weberian dichotomy between "charismatic" and "bureaucratic" domination, and to the associated concept of "polycracy", is out of date and has repeatedly been contradicted by more recent findings. The fact that Hachtmann continually returns to it leads him to unnecessary exegeses and repetitions.

Secondly, I note the lack of an analysis of the DAF trust as a whole in terms of economic performance. It is undoubtedly the case that the sources required for this are scant, but by systematic exploitation of some survivals to which too little attention is paid, it would have been possible to establish at least a balance-sheet based on a model. Also in his description of the postwar history of the DAF trust, Hachtmann has left unheeded certain important funds of sources, with the result that – and this is my third point of criticism – the salience of the debates in the Western occupation zones between liquidation and maintaining corporate continuity escapes him.

Fourth and finally, I see the greatest deficit in the lack of a comparative perspective. His investigation certainly does contain several pointers in this direction, but they remain unsystematic and underdeveloped. If Hachtmann had pruned down his presentation somewhat, he could have made sufficient room for a concluding comparative chapter, and introduced far more detail on the structures of the DAF trust in comparison with the SS's economic empire, Hermann Göring's Reichswerke, the holding company of the air ministry, the Montan group of the Wehrmacht, Albert Speer's construction empire, and Organisation Todt, as well as the East Prussian/Ukrainian Erich-Koch-Stiftung.

These critical comments are in no way intended to diminish Hachtmann's achievement. His investigation is a great success. Everyone working at a historical-analytical synthesis on the Nazi dictatorship will need to have his book close at hand on their reference shelf.

*Karl Heinz Roth*

FIELD, GEOFFREY G. *Blood, Sweat, and Toil. Remaking the British Working Class, 1939–1945*. Oxford University Press, Oxford [etc.] 2011. x, 405 pp. Ill. £125.00. doi:10.1017/S0020859012000703

Geoffrey G. Field describes World War II as the pivotal event of twentieth-century British history. It certainly appears that way in British labour historiography. Politically, the pivot is Labour's emergence in 1945 as a party of majority government. The significance