

# **Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte (JWG) 2003/1:**

## ***Neue Ergebnisse zum NS-Aufschwung***

### **I. Abhandlungen und Studien**

**Christoph Buchheim**, Die Erholung von der Weltwirtschaftskrise 1932/33 in Deutschland, in: Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte (JWG) 2003/1, S. 13-26.

**Jochen Streb**, Das Scheitern der staatlichen Preisregulierung in der nationalsozialistischen Bauwirtschaft, in: Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte (JWG) 2003/1, S. 27-48.

**Ralf Banken**, Die deutsche Goldreserven- und Devisenpolitik 1933-1939, in: Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte (JWG) 2003/1, S. 49-78.

**J. Adam Tooze**, "Punktueller Modernisierung": Die Akkumulation von Werkzeugmaschinen im "Dritten Reich", in: Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte (JWG) 2003/1, S. 79-98.

**Jörg Baten und Andrea Wagner**, Mangelernährung, Krankheiten und Sterblichkeit im NS-Wirtschaftsaufschwung (1933-1937), in: Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte (JWG) 2003/1, S. 99-123.

**Albrecht Ritschl**, Hat das Dritte Reich wirklich eine ordentliche Beschäftigungspolitik betrieben?, in: Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte (JWG) 2003/1, S. 125-140.

### **II. Diskussion**

**Werner Plumpe**, Die Unwahrscheinlichkeit des Jubiläums - oder: warum Unternehmen nur historisch erklärt werden können, in: Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte (JWG) 2003/1, S. 143-156.

### **III. Forschungs- und Literaturberichte**

**Zdenek Jindra**, Joseph Alois Schumpeters "Böhmisches Memorandum" vom August 1917, in: Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte (JWG) 2003/1, S. 159-174.

**Titus Kockel**, Eine Quelle zur Vor- und Gründungsgeschichte der Kontinentale Öl AG aus dem Jahr 1940: E.R. Fischer (Reichswirtschaftsministerium, II Min. Öl), "Die Versorgung Europas mit Mineralöl vor dem Kriege, Ermittlung des Nachkriegsverbrauchs und Sicherung der Belieferung, 1940", September 1940, in: Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte (JWG) 2003/1, S. 175-208.

**Rainer Fremdling**, European Railways 1825-2001, an Overview, in: Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte (JWG) 2003/1, S. 209-221.

## **Abstracts**

### **I. Abhandlungen und Studien**

#### **Christoph Buchheim, Die Erholung von der Weltwirtschaftskrise 1932/33 in Deutschland**

##### *Abstract*

The Great Depression in Germany culminated in 1932. However, did this year also see the beginning of the upswing, was the Nazi regime thus favoured by spontaneous economic improvement? What, on the other hand, was the contribution of Nazi employment policy? Was it primarily a psychological one? At first indicators for the turning point of the business cycle are dealt with. It is shown that the beginning of quite strong growth can be dated from winter 1932, i.e. before Hitler came to power. And the continuation of growth in 1933 was mainly due to endogenous forces as well as employment creation measures of the last Weimar governments. Nazi economic policy had little effect in that year because of rather late start and unavoidable lags. The psychological situation even worsened after January 30th, 1933, as signalled by the stock market. Confidence of industry in the new regime was shattered by its protectionist stand, its apparent interventionism and the radicalism displayed by its labour organisations. The conclusion therefore can only be: The economic upswing, which already had started the year before, continued in 1933 despite, not because the Nazi government.

#### **Jochen Streb, Das Scheitern der staatlichen Preisregulierung in der nationalsozialistischen Bauwirtschaft**

##### *Abstract*

To keep the inflationary pressure resulting from the rapidly growing demand for armament as low as possible the National Socialists generally tried to limit the profits of private firms by a strict price regulation. However, this attempt often failed because of adverse selection and moral hazard arising from the fact that the government was neither able to assess the firms' technologies nor to monitor the entrepreneurs' effort to reduce production costs of the goods that were delivered to the state. This holds especially true for the German construction industry before and during the Second World War. Traditionally, public construction projects were assigned by inviting tenders and then giving the order to the firm which demanded the lowest price. It will be shown that, as a consequence of the growing shortage of construction capacity and the increasing complexity of the construction projects, the National Socialists were often forced to replace this relatively efficient method with inefficient cost-plus contracts that had to be carefully observed by regulatory agencies. In addition, principal-agent problems also arose between entrepreneurs and construction workers on the one hand and between the National Socialists government and the regulatory agencies on the other. With respect to the latter it will turn out that both poor knowledge and corruption of the members of the regulatory agencies considerably increased the possibilities of construction firms to achieve high prices.

#### **Ralf Banken, Die deutsche Goldreserven- und Devisenpolitik 1933-1939**

##### *Abstract*

This contribution, based on recently found new material, gives a description of the development of the gold and exchange stock in Nazi Germany. It shows that, despite a

predominant and structural shortage of foreign exchange, Reichsbank president Schacht was able to secretly accumulate a substantive amount of gold, starting as early as 1934. apart from an outline of the various measures taken by the Reichsbank in order to increase its stock (including forced sale of foreign securities held by German subjects and seizure of gold coins), the text brings new estimates on the gold and foreign exchange robbed from Austria and Czechoslovakia after the occupation of these countries and provides details on the organisational framework for the distribution of the foreign exchange. Based on these new data, the text eventually shows that, in summer 1939, the gold and exchange stock was bigger than hitherto assumed. Therefore, a critical shortage of foreign exchange cannot be considered as the decisive reason for the Nazi government to go to war at that particular time.

#### **J. Adam Tooze, "Punktuelle Modernisierung": Die Akkumulation von Werkzeugmaschinen im "Dritten Reich"**

##### *Abstract*

There has been much discussion of the impact of the Nazi regime on German industry. Did rearmament and wartime production lead to innovation, particularly in the metalworking sectors? This article addresses this question with new statistical sources found in what was formerly the GDR state archive. Comprehensive surveys of the machine-tool stock allow an unprecedented insight into the precise size and composition of German metalworking capacity between 1920 and 1945. The data clearly show that there was not only an enormous accumulation of new machines, but also qualitative change between 1935 and 1945. Mass production lathes and production grinders came to the fore. High volume tools accounted for at least a third of new purchases during the war years. The evidence confirms the view that wartime production promoted modernization in metalworking, particularly in vehicles, aircraft and light manufacturing. However, questions must be asked about the rationality of this accumulation of machine-tools. Shortages of labour meant that capacity could not be fully utilized. And given the enormous reserves of labour in unproductive agricultural employment, there were probably better ways for the Third Reich to have invested 5 billion Reichsmark. At best, machine-tool accumulation in the Third Reich amounted, therefore, to "lop-sided modernization".

#### **Jörg Baten und Andrea Wagner, Mangelernährung, Krankheiten und Sterblichkeit im NS-Wirtschaftsaufschwung (1933-1937)**

##### *Abstract*

The "economic recovery" during the early years of nationalsocialist reign was perceived by many Germans as an increase in their standard of living: unemployment declined, and "national strength" was increasing. But did other components of the quality of life also improve? We compare trends in mortality, nutritional status and food supply, to other living standard indicators for the Weimar Republic (1919-1933) and for the early years of the Nazi period (1933 - 1937). We find that Germany experienced a substantial increase in mortality rates in most age groups in the mid-1930s, even relative to those of 1932, the worst year of the Great Depression. Moreover, children's heights - an indicator of the quality of nutrition and health - were generally stagnating between 1933 and 1938, but had increased significantly during the 1920s. Persecution by itself does not explain such an acute biological crisis in human welfare; the non-persecuted segments of the German population were affected as well. Expenditures on rearmament grew at the expense of public health measures. Food imports were curtailed, and prices of many agricultural products were controlled. There is ample evidence that this set of economic policies had an adverse effect on health and nutritional status of the population. Specifically, suffering most from the policy of restricting imports of protein-rich agricultural products were the highly developed areas with large urban sectors and the coastal regions of the Northwest.

**Albrecht Ritschl, Hat das Dritte Reich wirklich eine ordentliche Beschäftigungspolitik betrieben?**

*Abstract*

This paper examines the effects of deficits spending and work-creation on the Nazi recovery, and provides evidence against popular myths on its Keynesian nature. Investment in autobahn construction was minimal during the recovery and gained momentum only in 1936, when full employment was already approaching. Although full employment was reached within four years, archival data suggest that public deficits were too small to account for the speed of recovery: between 1933 and 1936, the deficit/GNP ratio averaged 3.1 percent. We employ VAR forecasts of output using fiscal policy instruments to obtain information in the possible impact of fiscal policy surprises. The time series evidence predicts full recovery already by the end of 1936. an upswing under self-fulfilling expectations would have had exactly the same vigor without Hitler and without deficit spending. We find some effects of the Four Years Plan of late 1936, which boosted government spending further and tightened public control over the economy.