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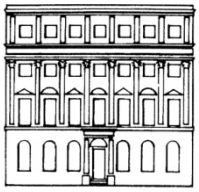

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ARTICLE

WELFARE IN THE WARFARE STATE: NAZI SOCIAL POLICY ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE

KIRAN KLAUS PATEL

The evening of 8 November 1939 could have rung the knell on the Third Reich. A mere thirteen minutes after Adolf Hitler left the Bürgerbräukeller in Munich, a bomb exploded. Seven were dead, over sixty injured. Georg Elser, a Swabian carpenter far removed from the centre of power, had planned this attempt on the life of the Führer for months, and only failed after last-minute changes in Hitler's schedule; as every year, his speech at the Bürgerbräukeller to commemorate the Beer Hall Putsch of 1923 (see Ill. 1.) had been planned months in advance. His intention to attack the West after the *Wehrmacht*'s swift victory over Poland made him initially cancel his speech, then ultimately deliver an abridged version. For this reason, he left the venue earlier than usual. Nothing but luck saved the dictator's life; luck that implied disaster for millions.

While this assassination attempt is well known, few are aware of what Hitler actually said on that day. In contrast to the speeches he normally gave on these occasions, he spent only a few sentences praising the rise of his party from obscurity to power. Instead, he delivered a long and crude tirade against Britain. In tune with his raucous audience as well as his paranoid and psychopathic personality, he accused the British government of warmongering, hypocrisy,

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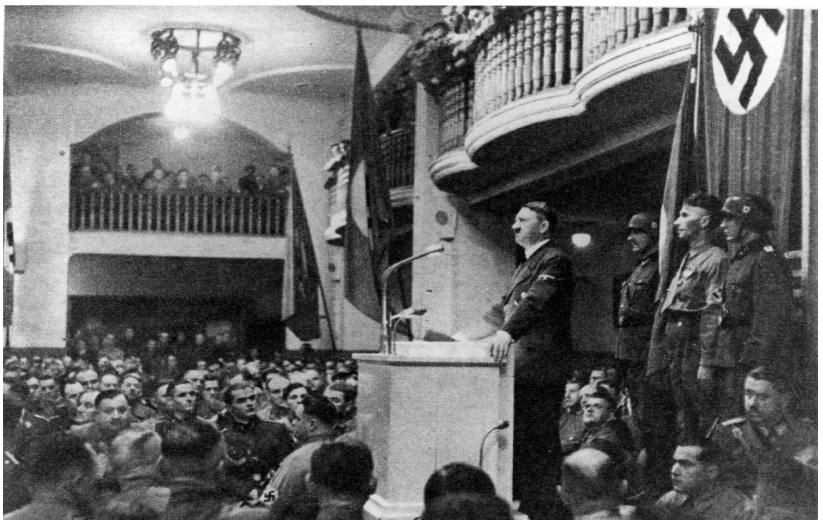
and aggression against Germany. He continued his rant with what he called the 'true reasons' behind British policy: 'What they hate is the Germany which sets a dangerous example for them, this social Germany. It is the Germany of a social labor legislation . . . It is the Germany of social welfare, of social equality, of the elimination of class differences—this is what they hate! . . . This Germany which grants its labourers decent housing—this is what they hate because they have a feeling their own peoples could be "infected" thereby.'[1]

Illustration 1: Hitler's Speech at the Bürgerbräukeller in Munich, 8 Nov. 1939



Source: *Der Rundblick*, 19 Nov. 1939

[1] Adolf Hitler, *Hitler: Speeches and Proclamations, 1932–1945*, vol. iii, ed. Max Domarus (London, 1997), 1871; German original: Adolf Hitler, *Hitler: Reden und Proklamationen, 1932–1945*, vol. ii, ed. Max Domarus (Würzburg, 1963), 1411 ('Was sie hassen ist das Deutschland, das ein gefährliches Beispiel für sie ist, das soziale Deutschland, das Deutschland unserer sozialen Arbeitsgesetzgebung . . . Dieses Deutschland der Fürsorge, des sozialen Ausgleichs, der Beseitigung der Klassenunterschiede—das hassen sie! . . . Das Deutschland, das seinen Arbeitern anständige Quartiere gibt, das ist es, was sie hassen, weil sie das Gefühl haben, daß davon ihr eigenes Volk "angesteckt" werden könnte!'). The importance given to this part of the speech is demonstrated by the fact that it was reprinted in the *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, the official journal of the

This quotation leads to the core of this article's subject. Even if Hitler's shrill attacks on Britain could not have been more erroneous or pharisaic, they hint at a dimension of the international history of Nazism and the global 1930s and 1940s that has attracted little attention so far: the regime's attempt to promote its social policy programmes internationally, and the complex and ambivalent history of their reception in various parts of the world.

Against this backdrop, the basic point of this article is very simple: the Third Reich's social policies were much more part of transnational conversations and exchanges on welfare issues than has been argued in the existing literature. So far, Nazism's social policies have been researched largely in isolation. This is quite surprising since Nazi Germany took great pride in its social policies, including their anti-Semitic, racist, and eugenic dimensions, and also advertised them internationally. German social policy had enjoyed great international prestige since the days of Bismarck and had long served as a transnational point of reference, as Daniel Rodgers has reminded us recently.[2] Moreover, the Nazis' racial welfare state was, in Mark Mazower's words, 'in so many ways the apotheosis of very widespread trends in European social thought',[3] which explains why their programmes resonated internationally.

I

Before focusing on the empirical side of this topic, it is useful to ask how these issues have been dealt with in existing research. This article argues that we know surprisingly little about the subject, although such work could help to elucidate core questions in the history of Nazism and of the 1930s and 1940s more generally. In order to explain this, historiographical, conceptual, and, to some extent, even normative questions need to be considered briefly.

Reich Labour Ministry. See 'Haß gegen das soziale Deutschland', *Reichsarbeitsblatt,* 2nd series, 1939, 421–3.

[2] Daniel T. Rodgers, 'Bearing Tales: Networks and Narratives in Social Policy Transfer', *Journal of Global History*, 9 (2014), 301–13.

[3] Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (London, 1999), 101.

The work presented here sits at the intersection of three bodies of literature: the historiographies of the Third Reich; of social and welfare policies; and, finally, of international and transnational history. The first of these dimensions, historiography of the Third Reich, has focused mainly on structures and developments *within* the boundaries of the German nation-state. The idea of a German *Sonderweg*, a special path leading into the abyss of the Second World War and the Holocaust, has long reinforced this tendency. Such work has been driven by the search for the roots of Nazi policies, a highly legitimate research motive. Yet it has marginalized work on some of the regime's international effects. Existing work is normally broken down into nationally defined historiographies, disregarding transnational and international dimensions, beyond the obvious focus on diplomatic relations. Even the war years, the period when Nazism reached the apex of imperial expansion in Europe, are still mostly analysed through the lens of national history.

This certainly holds true for research on the economic and social policies of the Third Reich. Such programmes, which often claimed to transcend traditional divisions such as that between social and economic policy, were part of the attempt to build a racist welfare state.[4] More precisely, we have whole libraries demonstrating that such programmes were key to the regime's efforts to include individuals in the *Volksgemeinschaft*, the national community of the people, or to exclude them from it.[5] Having said this, the Third Reich's social policies are

[4] Separating Nazi social policy from the regime's economic policy is difficult, since many economic measures were highly ideologized and racialized. Reich Labour Minister Seldte himself claimed that the regime had broken down the difference between economic and social policies. Against this backdrop, some of the Third Reich's economic policies will also be referred to in this article. For Seldte's view, see 'Franz Seldte über die gegenwärtige und zukünftige Sozialpolitik', *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, 2nd series, 1938, 8. For a succinct overview, see e.g. Ulrich Herbert, *Geschichte Deutschlands im 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich, 2014), 360–2.

[5] See e.g. Martina Steber and Bernhard Gotto (eds.), *Visions of Community in Nazi Germany: Social Engineering and Private Lives* (Oxford, 2014); Detlef Schmiechen-Ackermann (ed.), *'Volksgemeinschaft': Mythos, wirkungsmächtige soziale Verheißung oder soziale Realität im 'Dritten Reich'? Zwischenbilanz einer kontroversen Debatte* (Paderborn, 2012); Frank Bajohr and Michael Wildt (eds.), *Volksgemeinschaft: Neue Forschungen zur Gesellschaft des Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt am Main, 2009).

still one of the most splendidly isolated pockets of German historiography. Hence, most studies deal with programmes in Germany, with collaboration in occupied territories, or with schemes elsewhere, but only rarely with the transnational interconnections between them.[6]

The extreme nationalism of the Third Reich, its cult of the Aryan, and its denunciation of any form of internationalism go a good way towards explaining why the transnational dimensions of social policy have not thus far attracted much attention. Outwardly, the Nazis appear to have dismantled Germany's international commitments. In the autumn of 1933, for instance, the Third Reich left the League of Nations and the International Labour Organization (ILO) as the most important international hubs of social policy discussion during the inter-war years. An inward turn, soon to be followed by military aggression, therefore appears to be Germany's trajectory.

While all this is true, policy exchange with other countries did not come to a complete standstill. From the outset, the regime was highly interested in promoting its social and economic policies. In its early years, many international experts and state leaders perceived Germany as a brutal and aggressive dictatorship, but did not necessarily consider it fundamentally worse than any of the other states that had abandoned democracy during the 1920s and 1930s.[7] Nazi Germany was neither completely ostracized from international welfare debates nor uninterested in developments in the world around it. And certain welfare dimensions were perceived as remote from ideological and political concerns. An extreme example of this mindset comes from late 1936, when the US Minister to Peru was looking for a place to recuperate from 'attacks of grippe and colitis'. He informed his superiors in Washington that he would soon travel home, but given his health condition, he quickly added: 'I must get on to Baden-Baden as fast as I can.'[8] Obviously he did not take issue with

[6] Other fields of history, such as the analysis of the Holocaust, collaboration, or ethnic cleansing during the Second World War have been internationalized to a much larger extent; for details, see e.g. Sven Reichardt and Armin Nolzen, 'Editorial', in eid. (eds.), *Faschismus in Italien und Deutschland: Studien zu Vergleich und Transfer* (Göttingen, 2005), 9–27.

[7] For the example of Britain, see e.g. Dan Stone, *Responses to Nazism in Britain, 1933–1939: Before War and Holocaust* (Houndmills, 2003).

[8] National Archives and Record Administration (NARA)/Franklin Delano

the fact that the flagpoles in front of the famous spa's Kurhaus now flew swastikas. This is not to say that 'Baden-Baden' can be fully identified with Nazi policies. But a letter of this kind would have been quite unthinkable a few years later. It was an intellectual operation of the postwar decades, this article argues, to remove Nazi Germany from the arena of international contact. The war, the Holocaust, and general historiographical trends made us overlook the extent to which Germany remained interconnected with the wider world.[9] Few historians still adhere to the *Sonderweg* thesis, yet its presence can still be felt.

This brings me to the second strand of literature. Histories of the welfare state have long been written from a state-centred perspective, just as most post-1945 historiography has posited the nation-state as the central object of analysis. There were good reasons for such an approach: obviously, the rise of modern statehood and welfare-statism—a conscious regulation of the social and economic order by the state—were inextricably linked. Social policies played a central role in re-routing hopes, frustrations, and possibly also feelings of allegiance and identity from all sorts of directions towards the nation-state. For this reason, social policy is normally associated with *domestic* policies. Over the past twenty years or so, however, transnational history has demonstrated how porous and connected the container of the nation-state has always been. Social policies were no exception. There is a lot of new research on how social policies and welfare regimes have linked societies. Labour migration and remittances at the level of individuals are one example. More pertinent in our context are the intense exchanges between state actors and experts on social policy ideas and programmes. In this light, it appears that the welfare state has risen from a complex web of transnational exchanges spanning Europe and the North Atlantic, but also other parts of the world.[10] However fecund these new historiographical

Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, NY (FDRL), Sumner Welles Papers, Box 28, Dearing to Welles, 29 June 1936.

[9] Kiran Klaus Patel, 'In Search for a Transnational Historicization: National Socialism and its Place in History', in Konrad H. Jarausch and Thomas Lindenberger (eds.), *Conflicted Memories: Europeanizing Contemporary Histories* (New York, 2007), 96–116.

[10] See e.g. Christoph Conrad, 'Social Policy after the Transnational Turn', in Pauli Kettunen and Klaus Petersen (eds.), *Beyond Welfare State Models: Trans-*

debates, the Third Reich hardly ever crops up in them. International exchanges on social policies and the welfare state, so it seems, were mainly the affair of democrats, and reserved to the halcyon days before the First World War and more recent periods since 1945.[11]

This, however, raises the question of whether it makes sense to speak of a 'welfare state' when it comes to the Third Reich. Certainly not, if we adopt William Temple's definition. He described the welfare state as one aiming at the 'preservation of Justice and for the promotion of human welfare'.[12] Temple, it should be added, was one of the first to use this expression in writing, and a key figure in popularizing the term, especially in the United Kingdom.[13] Many would probably agree with his definition, even today. But the time when Temple wrote these words matters. He published the book that is the source of the quotation, *Citizen and Churchman*, in January 1941, as Archbishop of York (and he became Archbishop of Canterbury soon thereafter). In his work, he opposed the 'Welfare-State' to the fascist 'Power-State'.[14] Temple associated the welfare state with democratic ideals, in stark contrast to Nazism. For him, Britain should aspire to become such a 'Welfare-State'; he did not see it as a description of its present condition. The term 'welfare state' had been in use since the 1920s and gained prominence during the 1940s amidst a clash of ideologies on how to organize society.[15] We should therefore historicize

national Historical Perspectives on Social Policy (Cheltenham, 2011), 218–40; Madeleine Herren, 'Sozialpolitik und die Historisierung des Transnationalen', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 32 (2006), 542–59; Young-sun Hong, 'Neither Singular nor Alternative: Narratives of Modernity and Welfare in Germany, 1870–1945', *Social History*, 30 (2005), 133–53.

[11] Most obviously in Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge, Mass., 1998).

[12] William Temple, *Citizen and Churchman* (1st edn. 1941; London, 1947), 36. Also see id., *Christianity and Social Order* (Harmondsworth, 1942), esp. 75–90; on Temple, see Stephen Spencer, *William Temple: A Calling to Prophecy* (London, 2001), esp. 70.

[13] On the history of the term and the concept see now Daniel Béland and Klaus Petersen (eds.), *Analysing Social Policy Concepts and Language: Comparative and Transnational Perspectives* (Bristol, 2014).

[14] Temple, *Citizen and Churchman*, 36.

[15] Daniel Wincott, 'Original and Imitated or Elusive and Limited? Toward a Genealogy of the Welfare State Idea in Britain', in Béland and Petersen (eds.),

our notion of the welfare state and place it in a transnational perspective. The modern welfare state arose during the period when war-waging democratic states endeavoured to distinguish themselves from welfare-mongering fascist warfare states. It is therefore more productive to refrain from a normative definition of welfare that short-circuits it with a democratic political system and a positive understanding of modernity, according to which welfare is a vehicle for individual emancipation and societal progress. Some social policies were, in fact, spearheaded by authoritarian and dictatorial regimes, while democracies such as Sweden or the United States also implemented eugenicist and racist schemes. At a more philosophical level, Michel Foucault, Zygmunt Bauman, and others have highlighted the problematic dimensions of social policies.[16]

Against this backdrop, this article argues that we should distance ourselves from any quick normative definition of the welfare state. The Third Reich was fully part of social policy debates characteristic of the age, and a conclusive definition of 'welfare state' or 'social policies' is quite impossible, since the relationship of such terms, as well as their meaning, has shifted markedly over time.[17] Still, it can be said that Germany went further in creating such programmes than most other nation-states, including many democracies, since they played a central role in realizing its racist and aggressive ambitions. To be sure, the Nazis themselves normally did not speak of a 'welfare state', or its German equivalent, the 'Wohlfahrtsstaat'. Instead, they referred to the 'Volkswohlfahrt', but they also often continued to use the established term 'Sozialstaat'.[18] This in itself is already revealing:

Analysing Social Policy Concepts and Language, 127–41, who stresses British awareness of the links of the British debate to Germany. Convincingly, he gives less credit to Temple himself than to the earlier literature, but I think he underestimates the extent to which Temple separated himself from Nazi policies.

16 See e.g. Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (London, 1967); and Zygmunt Bauman, *Intimations of Postmodernity* (London, 1992). See also Detlev Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany: Conformity, Opposition and Racism in Everyday Life* (London, 1987), 15–16.

17 See e.g. Béland and Petersen (eds.), *Analysing Social Policy Concepts and Language*.

18 Norbert Götz, *Ungleiche Geschwister: Die Konstruktion von nationalsozialistischer Volksgemeinschaft und schwedischem Volksheim* (Berlin, 2001); Klaus Peter-

on many other issues, the Nazis distanced themselves from the established political vocabulary and came up with (seemingly) new terms. Nevertheless, they were quite comfortable putting their social policies in a specific national tradition, seen as the 'overcoming of the spirit of 1789', as Robert Ley, head of the almighty Deutsche Arbeitsfront (DAF; German Labour Front), once put it in a programmatic article.[19] Regardless of these semantic findings, it still seems appropriate to call the Third Reich a racist variant of the welfare state.[20]

The third strand of literature is international and transnational history, regardless of the discussion on how to define these terms.[21] For a long time, research on the Third Reich and beyond has concentrated on a narrow definition of international history, focusing on official state affairs and problems of high politics, chiefly the question of war and peace. Social policy has remained below the radar of debates, along with other 'lowbrow' policy domains. For the international history of the inter-war years more generally, this has dramatically changed in recent years, as demonstrated especially by the new interest in the League of Nations and philanthropic organizations.[22] Such work has shown that today's international activities in fields such as the management of epidemics, combatting drug trafficking, and trade negotiations originated, or were furthered in important ways, during the inter-war years. This complicates our understanding of international history and globalization more broadly.

sen and Jørn Henrik Petersen, 'Confusion and Divergence: Origins and Meanings of the Term "Welfare State" in Germany and Britain, 1840–1940', *Journal of European Social Policy*, 23 (2013), 37–51.

[19] Robert Ley, 'Die Überwindung des Geistes von 1789', *Neue Internationale Rundschau der Arbeit*, 1 (1941), 1–9.

[20] Christoph Sachße and Florian Tennstedt, *Der Wohlfahrtsstaat im Nationalsozialismus: Geschichte der Armenfürsorge in Deutschland,* vol. iii (Stuttgart, 1992); see also Mazower, *Dark Continent*, 77–184; Michael Schneider, *In der Kriegsgesellschaft: Arbeiter und Arbeiterbewegung 1939 bis 1945* (Bonn, 2014), 454–5.

[21] For an attempt to distinguish between various approaches see Kiran Klaus Patel, 'Überlegungen zu einer transnationalen Geschichte', *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, 52 (2004), 626–45.

[22] See e.g. Susan G. Pedersen, *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire* (Oxford, 2015); Patricia Clavin, *Securing the World Economy: The Reinvention of the League of Nations, 1920–1946* (Oxford, 2013); Glenda Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism* (Philadelphia, 2013); Daniel

The inter-war period, long seen as a phase when international contacts withered away, in fact witnessed intense and, on some issues, intensifying forms of exchange. For all the nationalism and aggression that characterized the age, we should not forget that between 1930 and 1940 the number of international organizations grew from thirty-one to thirty-eight, and of international non-governmental organizations from 375 to 477.[23] New forms of communication emerged; experts, often of the social engineering brand, exchanged ideas informed and driven by international debates. Some even argue that the very nature of diplomacy changed fundamentally at this time. Alongside traditional diplomats, many new actors entered the scene. And beyond negotiations between representatives of states over questions of peace, war, and trade, diplomacy itself increasingly became a form of international self-representation and propaganda.[24]

All this is well established in recent research. Few, however, have dared to touch on the dark sides of inter-war internationalism. The recent historiographical hype on this subject concentrates on those actors and forums that strove for reconciliation and peace. But cosmopolitans, philanthropists, and progressives were not the only ones who cooperated; so did representatives of authoritarian and dictatorial regimes. On social policy specifically, Italian fascism and Nazism claimed leadership roles in reorganizing Europe. This has very recently led to a new interest in 'fascist' internationalism, mainly with a focus on Italy,[25] but Germany and social policy issues also deserve more attention in this context.

Laqua (ed.), *Internationalism Reconfigured: Transnational Ideas and Movements between the World Wars* (London, 2011).

[23] Johan Galtung, 'Nonterritorial Actors and the Problem of Peace', in Saul Mendlovitz (ed)., *On the Creation of a Just World Order* (New York, 1975), 151–88, at 161.

[24] Madeleine Herren, *Internationale Organisationen seit 1865: Eine Globalgeschichte der internationalen Ordnung* (Darmstadt, 2009), 55, 74. This change is, for instance, reflected in Charles K. Webster, *The Art and Practice of Diplomacy: Oration Delivered at the London School of Economics* (London, 1952), 6.

[25] See the recent conference 'Fascism without Borders: Transnational Connections and Cooperation between Movements and Regimes in Europe from 1918 to 1945', held in Berlin on 19–21 July 2014, and the forthcoming special section: Kiran Klaus Patel and Sven Reichardt (eds.), 'The Dark Side of Trans-

II

In what follows, this article will focus on the relationship between sovereign states, rather than on instances in which Nazi Germany annexed or occupied foreign territories, where social policies were often imposed externally, accompanied by brutal violence, as a means of subjugating and exploiting populations. The article thus concentrates on the other end of the spectrum, on situations in which non-German actors enjoyed more room for manoeuvre, where it would have been easy to sideline international debates and ignore the programmes of Nazi Germany or any other foreign country. This choice is conceived as a litmus test to show that such a transnational dimension really matters; that analysing such links between societies can shed new light on the history of the Third Reich and the 1930s and 1940s more generally.

Moreover, this article focuses on the level of state policies, partly for pragmatic reasons, partly because nation-states remained the decisive forums and format for social policy actors during the 1930s and 1940s. Transnational and international forums will therefore not take centre stage, and the perspective of recipients and other individuals who came in contact with such welfare policies, although a highly interesting alternative approach, will remain beyond the scope of this text.

More precisely, two dimensions in the transnational history of Nazi social policy will be distinguished. These are information exchange, in which foreign models were used to legitimize existing or emerging national policies; and cases of selective policy adaptation, building on transnational exchange and learning processes which ultimately reified national differences, even if this might sound paradoxical.

The first of these dimensions, information exchange, often served to legitimize existing national policies. If we consider the wider background, social programmes had already become a central element in building the modern state before the First World War. Even back then, this had led to a massive increase in mutual observation and cross-referencing between societies. Statistics made it possible to

nationalism: Social Engineering and Nazism, 1930s–1940s', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 51 (2016).

compare and rank nations on the basis of international social policy research. Societies around the world observed each other using criteria such as population size, fertility and, especially during the interwar years, unemployment levels, pension schemes, and other welfare provision. Experts conversed in a transnational vernacular of social expertise and often framed their ideas in typically high modernist language, characterized by a belief in progress and change,[26] but also in the commensurability and readability of societies.

In a world shaped by social Darwinist thought, such standardized knowledge was frequently translated into a hierarchy of nations, with clearly defined 'pioneers' and 'laggards'. Social engineers, regardless of their political views, associated lavish programmes with societal progress and civilizational standards, and laissez-faire liberals seemed to be on the retreat. Politicians used such knowledge for their own ends and, all in all, scientific communities and politicians viewed each other reciprocally as resources for one another, as Mitchell G. Ash has put it.[27] Normal citizens, finally, were not only a target for such schemes and propaganda efforts with transnational dimensions; they also played a central role in putting them into practice. Social policy, in other words, became a symbol and a site for negotiating the international prestige of a nation.

The 1930s were not a particularly auspicious period for introducing new social policies, given the financial and other constraints resulting from the Great Depression and growing international ten-

[26] See e.g. James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, 1998); and Ulrich Herbert, 'Europe in High Modernity: Reflections on a Theory of the Twentieth Century', *Journal of Modern European History*, 5 (2007), 5–21. See also Kerstin Brückweh, Dirk Schumann, Richard F. Wetzell, and Benjamin Ziemann (eds.), *Engineering Society: The Role of the Human and Social Sciences in Modern Societies* (New York, 2012); on social policy experts in Germany at the time see Lutz Raphael, 'Sozialexperten in Deutschland zwischen konservativem Ordnungsdenken und rassistischer Utopie (1918–1945)', in Wolfgang Hardtwig (ed.), *Utopie und politische Herrschaft im Europa der Zwischenkriegszeit* (Munich, 2003), 327–46.

[27] Mitchell G. Ash, 'Wissenschaft und Politik als Ressourcen für einander', in Rüdiger vom Bruch and Brigitte Kaderas (eds.), *Wissenschaften und Wissenschaftspolitik*: *Bestandsaufnahmen zu Formationen, Brüchen und Kontinuitäten im Deutschland des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart, 2002), 32–51.

sions. Across societies, austerity policies dominated at the beginning of the decade, and social programmes had to face the criticisms of economic orthodoxy. Yet the Nazis continued or launched a whole host of programmes, ranging from job-creation schemes to leisure-time programmes and pro- and anti-natalist policies. And they were not alone in doing so. In fact, many European and non-European states intensely debated and introduced new welfare measures at the time. Social security, to give but one example, was introduced or reformed in various parts of the world, including Sweden, France, Canada, Brazil, and New Zealand. To contemporaries, such schemes often appeared radical, risky, and overly expensive. States around the world—and Nazi Germany was by no means an exception—collated information about practices elsewhere in order to relate their own efforts to them.[28] (See Ill. 2.)

Illustration 2: Visit of the Japanese Ambassador, Lieutenant General Oshima, to Ordensburg Vogelsang in January 1939

Source: Archiv Vogelsang IP

[28] See e.g. 'Die Weltwirtschaftskrise im Spiegelbild der sozialpolitischen Gesetzgebung des Auslandes', *Soziale Praxis,* 44 (1935), 587–94, 611–16; more

Building on efforts dating back to the mid nineteenth century, much exchange on such issues took place in the inter-war period. And while some accounts would have it otherwise, the Third Reich kept existing channels wide open, and even established many new ones. Regular exchange of information through the Foreign Ministry in Berlin and its embassies; study tours abroad, and in Germany for foreign visitors; access to non-German professional and scholarly publications—all these instruments served this goal. Moreover, Germany did not burn all bridges with the League of Nations and its affiliated agencies when it left the League in October 1933. The official Berlin office of the ILO was closed, but the regime allowed the organization to keep a representative in Berlin. This correspondent, Wilhelm Claussen, eagerly reported back to Geneva about Nazi social policy; in fact, the ILO's Berlin representation turned into a tool of German propaganda, as Sandrine Kott has recently demonstrated.[29] At an informal level, contacts between high-ranking officials in the Reich Ministry of Labour and Harold Butler, director of the ILO's secretariat, the International Labour Office, continued until the second half of the 1930s. German hopes that Butler planned to increase the Office's independence from the League of Nations—as a basis for closer links to Nazi Germany—ultimately did not materialize. Still, both sides invested quite some time and energy in these exchanges.[30]

Quite generally, German officials continued to participate in international congresses, not least to pre-empt criticism of the Third Reich

generally, Kiran Klaus Patel, *The New Deal: A Global History* (Princeton, forthcoming 2016).

[29] Sandrine Kott, 'Das Reichsarbeitsministerium und die Internationale Arbeitsorganisation: Internationalisierung der Arbeits- und Sozialpolitik im Dritten Reich' (Geneva: unpublished expertise for the German Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales, 2013); ead., 'Dynamiques de l'internationalisation: l'Allemagne et l'Organisation internationale du travail (1919–1940)', *Critique internationale*, 52 (2011), 69–84. See also the rather cautious article after the Third Reich had left the International Labour Organziation: 'Deutschlands Austritt aus der Internationalen Arbeitsorganisation', *Soziale Praxis*, 42 (1933), 1301–2, and, in the wider context, Reiner Tosstorff, *Workers' Resistance against Nazi Germany at the International Labour Conference 1933* (Geneva, 2013).

[30] Bundesarchiv Berlin, R 3901/20641, esp. Reich Ministry of Labour, Note Krohn, 31 May 1937.

at such events.[31] In 1934 Goebbels's Propaganda Ministry established the Deutsche Kongress-Zentrale to facilitate, scrutinize, and control international conferences in Germany on a whole variety of issues, while also creating a sophisticated system of information gathering and management.[32] A critical article in *Nature* on the German institution in 1935, accusing it of being a propaganda tool, prompted an immediate reply from the Deutsche Kongress-Zentrale, trying to whitewash itself.[33] In 1936 an official German delegation attended the third International Conference on Social Work in London.[34] In 1936–7 the DAF elaborated a social programme with a strong international dimension, and during the war it published the journal *Neue Internationale Rundschau der Arbeit* (in German, French, Dutch, and Italian) to disseminate the social policies of the expanding Nazi empire, perfidiously playing on the name of the International Labour Office's publication, the German version of which was called *Internationale Rundschau der Arbeit*.[35] (See Ill. 3.) The DAF had a separate unit that collected statistical information on other countries which, in 1943, exchanged publications with some 450 institutes and libraries beyond German borders. As late as March 1944, the Arbeitswissenschaftliche Institut of the DAF organized an international conference on labour relations in Bad Salzbrunn. Under the banner of planning a 'European

[31] Daniel Laqua, 'Transnational Intellectual Cooperation, the League of Nations, and the Problem of Order', *Journal of Global History*, 6 (2011), 223–47, at 236.

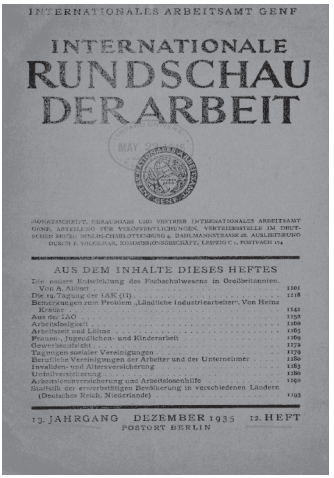
[32] The Deutsche Kongress-Zentrale originally focused on the medical field but soon expanded its activities to include social policies; see Deutsche Kongreß-Zentrale, *Jahresbericht der Deutschen Kongreß-Zentrale, 1939/40* (Berlin, 1940); and Madeleine Herren, ' "Outwardly . . . an Innocuous Conference Authority": National Socialism and the Logistics of International Information Management', *German History,* 20 (2002), 67–92.

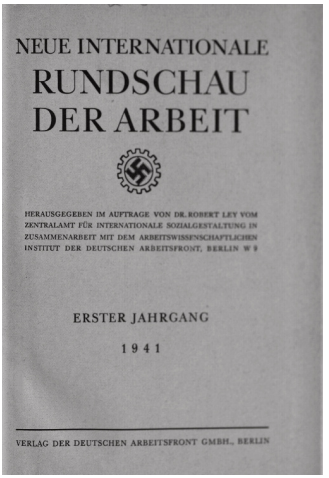
[33] 'Nazi-Socialism and International Science', *Nature*, 136 (1935), 927–8; C. F. O. C. Adam, 'Nazi-Socialism and International Science', *Nature*, 137 (1936), 829.

[34] Hilde Eiserhardt, 'Dritte Internationale Konferenz für soziale Arbeit', *Soziale Praxis*, 45 (1936), 570–4, and, as evidence of the extended preparation by the German delegation, Hermann Althaus (ed.), *Social Work and the Community* (Karlsruhe, 1936); see also 'Social Service', *The Times*, 13 July 1936.

[35] *Neue Internationale Rundschau der Arbeit*, herausgegeben im Auftrage von Dr. Robert Ley vom Zentralamt für Internationale Sozialgestaltung in Zusammenarbeit mit dem Arbeitswissenschaftlichen Institut der Deutschen Arbeitsfront, Berlin, published 1941–4.

Illustration 3: Covers of *International Rundschau der Arbeit* and *Neue Internationale Rundschau der Arbeit*





Source: *Internationale Rundschau der Arbeit* and *Neue Internationale Rundschau der Arbeit*

social order', the meeting turned into a clearing-house for social policy information.[36] And these are just a few examples.

But how was such information used? In the German context, it was often exploited to legitimize existing or emerging policies. An explicitly triumphalist tone prevailed from the mid 1930s. Comparisons with states traditionally seen as underdeveloped featured prominently in the regime's claims to have raised living standards through social policies. But its pretences went even further. In 1939, for instance, Labour Minister Franz Seldte bragged in his book, *Social Policy in the Third Reich*, that 'representatives of ministries of social affairs, scholars and practitioners from Europe and overseas come to us in great numbers, in order to learn on the spot about the excep-

[36] Ulrich Zucht, 'Das Arbeitswissenschaftliche Institut und die Nazifizierung der Sozialwissenschaften in Europa, 1936–1944', *1999: Zeitschrift für Sozialgeschichte des 20. und 21. Jahrhunderts*, 4 (1989), 10–40, quotation at 10.

tional successes' of Nazi Germany's social policies.[37] The same year, an internal note from his ministry stressed that 'especially today', German social policy had acquired the 'quality of an "export article"' which helped to strengthen and expand its global influence.[38]

In general, the regime's social programmes and alleged successes in overcoming mass unemployment were used to legitimize Nazi rule. Such statements were for both international and domestic consumption. And while their crude and presumptuous tone might have struck a chord in the Reich, their propaganda value at an international level was often more limited.

This is all well known. It is much less well known that at first, the regime's international references frequently had a more defensive ring to them. After the takeover, the regime was internationally vulnerable and sought to uphold a façade of respectability. The press was repeatedly advised to tone down comparisons regarding social and economic policy issues.[39] Moreover, a quantum of insecurity about the regime's direction characterized debates, particularly since many new social programmes were financed in unorthodox ways. References to social policies elsewhere therefore served to legitimize Nazi policies. Fascist Italy was often invoked in 1933, for instance, in the repression and replacement of free trade unions with Nazi front organizations or the creation of the leisure organization Kraft durch Freude (Strength through Joy).[40] Italy also stood at the cradle of the

[37] Franz Seldte, *Sozialpolitik im Dritten Reich, 1933–1938* (Munich, 1939), 267. See also e.g. 'Die Sozialpolitik am Ende des zweiten Kriegsjahres', *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, 5th series, 1941, 427–30; 'Internationale Sozialpolitik', *Soziale Praxis*, 48 (1939), 953–6; Arbeitswissenschaftliches Institut der Deutschen Arbeitsfront, *Sozialpolitik zwischen zwei Kriegen: Deutschland, Frankreich und England* (Berlin, 1940), 160–7; and 'Entwicklungslinien der europäischen Sozialpolitik', *Neue Internationale Rundschau der Arbeit*, 1 (1941), 10–38. For a chronology of the German–Italian relationship on these issues see Daniela Liebscher, 'Faschismus als Modell: Die faschistische Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro und die NS-Gemeinschaft "Kraft durch Freude" in der Zwischenkriegszeit', *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Nationalsozialismus*, 21 (2005), 94–118.

[38] Bundesarchiv Berlin, R 3901/20653, Reich Ministry of Labour, Note, 28 Dec. 1939.

[39] Philipp Gassert, *Amerika im Dritten Reich: Ideologie, Propaganda und Volksmeinung* (Stuttgart, 1997), 214.

[40] Daniela Liebscher, *Freude und Arbeit: Zur internationalen Freizeit- und Sozialpolitik des faschistischen Italien und des NS-Regimes* (Cologne, 2009), 250–317.

Deutsche Kongress-Zentrale.[41] The regime cited the positive reception its eugenic policies had received from some US eugenicists in order to boost the legitimacy of its new schemes.[42] To give a last example: the Adolf Hitler schools, created to educate the next generation of leaders, were compared to established elite education institutions such as Eton, and Nazi leaders went so far as to invite a delegation of Etonians to visit.[43]

Obviously, the boundaries between defensive and triumphalist references were porous, and by tendency, the regime increasingly moved from the former to the latter over time. Instead of featuring as role models, Italian policies were soon referred to as inferior attempts at refashioning society, in comparison to which the Nazi policies shone even brighter. The reference to Eton is another good example: a few years after rather defensive parallels had been drawn, Hitler was boasting about the superiority of the Adolf Hitler schools: in contrast to Eton, which was populated by 'the sons of financial aristocracy and financial magnates', the Nazi schools catered to 'children of the people'.[44]

While it is easy to discount such statements as cheap propaganda, it in fact reveals how much debates and practices were internationally connected. This holds particularly true for those layers of the dis-

[41] Liebscher, 'Faschismus als Modell', 108, n. 25.

[42] Claudia Koonz, *The Nazi Conscience* (Cambridge, Mass., 2003), 123–4.

[43] Hartmut Happel, *N.S. Ordensburg Sonthofen* (Immenstadt, 2011), 82. During the first years of the regime, some more specialized journals and outlets kept a rather neutral tone when comparing German to other schemes. In 1935, an article in *Soziale Praxis* on a study by the International Labour Office on placement service even acknowledged that the work provided 'several suggestions that result from the comparison of so many countries'. 'Bedeutung und Organisation der Arbeitsvermittlung in der Welt', *Soziale Praxis,* 44 (1935), 529–37, at 537.

[44] Adolf Hitler, *Der großdeutsche Freiheitskampf* (3rd edn. Munich, 1943), 351–2: 'Dort das Eton-College und auf unserer Seite die Adolf-Hitler-Schule oder die nationalsozialistische Erziehungsanstalt, nationalpolitische Schule [*sic!*]. Zwei Welten: In einem Fall die Kinder des Volkes, im anderen Fall nur die Söhne dieser Geldaristokratie, dieser Finanzmagnaten. Dort nur Leute, die im Staat eine Rolle spielen, aus dieser Schule, und hier Leute, die im Staat eine Rolle spielen, aus dem Volk. Das sind zwei Welten.' As one of many other examples: Gisela Augustin, 'Die Sozialpolitik des Faschismus', *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, 2nd series, 1937, 339–43.

cussion in which more detailed knowledge played a role, especially at the expert level. Such work often relied on statistics from the League of Nations and similar international bodies and came up with detailed calculations on entitlements in various countries. In 1939, for instance, the official *Reichsarbeitsblatt* published an article on family allowances for soldiers, comparing provision in London, Paris, and Berlin. Not surprisingly, it argued that German provisions were an exceptionally generous 'model'. British policies, in contrast, appeared 'completely unsatisfactory'.[45] In this specific case, recent research has demonstrated that Nazi provisions for the dependents of mobilized men were indeed more generous than those in most other nations. As a lesson from the First World War, the regime wanted to keep this group in particular happy in order to stabilize its political rule.[46] Another case is more representative. During the early years of the regime, comparisons of unemployment figures were used in a similar way to praise its alleged achievements, while glossing over the fact that Germany's rapid reduction in unemployment was built on an incipient 'natural' economic upswing, rearmament, and sugar-coated statistics.[47] And a final example, in which a transnational ref-

[45] Regierungsrat Flügge, 'Familienunterhalt in London, Paris und Berlin: Ein aufschlussreicher Vergleich', *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, 2nd series, 1939, 433–4; for the contemporary debate see e.g. Marianne Sakmann, 'Foreign Provisions for the Dependents of Mobilized Men', *Social Security Bulletin,* 11 (1941), 11–28. As a similar example, in this case with detailed comparative statistics on Austria (published roughly one year before the annexation), 'Wirtschafts- und sozialpolitische Tatsachen aus Österreich mit Vergleichszahlen für das Deutsche Reich', *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, 2nd series, 1937, 391–4.

[46] Birthe Kundrus, *Kriegerfrauen: Familienpolitik und Geschlechterverhältnisse im Ersten und Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Hamburg, 1995), 431–4. Obviously, the German programme was strongly racist; Götz Aly, for instance, has called it 'continual bribery of the populace via the social welfare system'. Götz Aly, *Hitler's Beneficiaries: How the Nazis Bought the German People* (London, 2006), 72.

[47] See e.g. E. Winners-Runge, 'Die Arbeitslosigkeit im Ausland im Jahre 1934', *Soziale Praxis*, 44 (1935), 675–84; 'Die Entwicklung der Arbeitslosigkeit in verschiedenen Ländern Europas', *Neue Internationale Rundschau der Arbeit,* 1 (1941), 234–45; also 'Soziale Auslandschronik 1937', *Jahrbuch 1937 des Arbeitswissenschaftlichen Instituts der DAF* (1937), 349–66; on the regime's performance, see e.g. Dan P. Silverman, *Hitler's Economy: Nazi Work Creation Programs, 1933–1936* (Cambridge, Mass., 1998); Adam Tooze, *The Wages of Destruction: The Making and Breaking of the Nazi Economy* (London, 2007), 42–9;

erence was even incorporated into the name of a programme, was the Four-Year Plan. While obviously taking its cue from its Soviet homologue, the system of five-year plans, it also trumpeted that the Nazis needed less time to overcome the problems of the time.[48]

Germans were by no means the only ones basing comparative arguments on statistical evidence and other forms of expert knowledge. The 1942 Beveridge Report, for instance, included a separate appendix that compared British social insurance with that of other states, including Allied countries (among others, Australia, Canada,

Illustration 4: German Commemorative Stamp for the World Congress of Recreation in Hamburg, 1936

Source: In the author's possession

Timothy W. Mason, *Sozialpolitik im Dritten Reich: Arbeiterklasse und Volksgemeinschaft* (Wiesbaden, 1977).

[48] On transnational links and forms of entanglement (though mainly in other fields than the ones discussed here) between inter-war Germany and the Soviet Union, see e.g. Michael David-Fox, Peter Holquist, and Alexander M. Martin (eds.), *Fascination and Enmity: Russia and Germany as Entangled Histories, 1914–1945* (Pittsburgh, 2012); also Katerina Clark and Karl Schlögel, 'Mutual Perceptions and Projections: Stalin's Russia in Nazi Germany—Nazi Germany in the Soviet Union', in Michael Geyer and Sheila Fitzpatrick (eds.), *Beyond Totalitarianism: Stalinism and Nazism Compared* (Cambridge, 2008), 396–442; and Peter Temin, 'Soviet and Nazi Economic Planning in the 1930s', *Economic History Review*, 44 (1991), 573–93.

and the United States), neutrals such as Sweden and Spain, but also of foes such as Germany, Italy, and Japan.[49] The level of aggregation differed in these surveys, and only a few went as far as the *Reichsarbeitsblatt* piece, converting currencies to allow for direct comparisons. Still, the various nations saw each other in competition with each other, highlighting their respective achievements.

Moreover, it would be wrong to think of nation-states as single and consistent entities in such exchanges. This applied especially to the German side, where various institutions competed on welfare issues and their international representation. In this sense, international references were used not just by the state or experts to convince people at home and audiences abroad, but also by competing state and party agencies. The Reich Ministry of Labour had to face the growing power of the DAF that promoted its policies internationally, often in cooperation with the German Foreign Ministry and the Dienststelle Ribbentrop, thus challenging the role of the ministry.[50] The 1936 World Congress for Leisure Time and Recreation, for instance, was mainly organized by the DAF in Hamburg and showcased its achievements (see Ill. 4.), thereby overshadowing the traditional role of the ministry.[51] In a similar vein, the 1941 International Women's Meeting was not just meant to propagate a distinct form of female fascist networking, but also to strengthen the role of the NS-Frauenschaft at the expense of other female Nazi organizations.[52] And during the Second World War the Reichsarbeitsdienst

[49] William Beveridge, *Social Insurance and Allied Services* (New York, 1942), 287–93.

[50] See e.g. Hans Günter Hockerts, 'Sicherung im Alter: Kontinuität und Wandel der gesetzlichen Rentenversicherung, 1889–1979', in Werner Conze and M. Rainer Lepsius (eds.), *Sozialgeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Beiträge zum Kontinuitätsproblem* (Stuttgart, 1983), 296–323.

[51] Liebscher, *Freude und Arbeit*, 465–86. Timothy Mason had already argued that the DAF discovered leisure policy as a field not yet occupied by another important organization in the Third Reich; Mason, *Sozialpolitik im Dritten Reich*, 187. Despite its conflicts with the DAF, the Reich Labour Ministry also extensively commented on the event. See e.g. *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, 2nd series, 1936, 295–308.

[52] Elizabeth Harvey, 'International Networks and Cross-Border Cooperation: National Socialist Women and the Vision of a "New Order" in Europe', *Politics, Religion and Identity*, 13 (2012), 141–58.

(RAD) promoted its own model for combining economic and social policy internationally, and sought to support the creation of similar institutions in Axis and client states such as the Slovak Republic. The *Wehrmacht*, however, wanted a different policy, and the Foreign Ministry was also more a rival than an ally for the RAD. For all its efforts to promulgate its achievements in the realm of social policy, the Nazi state experienced clashes and conflicts within its various parts, and these should not be disregarded.[53]

International references and contacts were thus part of the power struggles between competing factions of the Nazi state. The Third Reich was anything but a unitary actor in this respect, revealing the polycratic dimensions of the Third Reich's political system. Radical Nazi leaders often challenged more conservative professional elites, as in the conflict between the DAF and the ministry, and here references to foreign policies and international propaganda efforts were one of several strategies in ferocious power struggles. They served as a tool to engender legitimacy in domestic controversies over policy choices. Obviously, this was not specific to the Third Reich. Even if decision-making mechanisms differed markedly between societies, competing groups and institutions also used international references elsewhere to further their domestic political agendas.

This sort of propaganda and propagandistic competition was not just projected onto other European societies, or restricted to the North Atlantic. The international dimensions of Nazi social policy had an even broader scope. Nazi institutions also invited representatives and experts from Bolivia, Colombia, Mexico, Persia, Afghanistan, and elsewhere to promote their social policies.[54] They tried to win over and instrumentalize German minorities abroad for their purposes, and set up offices in various parts of the world. Argentina, for instance, had representatives not only of the NSDAP and military intelligence, but also of the DAF, the NS-Frauenschaft, several party sub-organizations, and Goebbels's Propaganda Ministry.[55] And in

[53] Tatjana Tönsmeyer, *Das Dritte Reich und die Slowakei 1939–1945: Politischer Alltag zwischen Kooperation und Eigensinn* (Paderborn, 2003), 263–76.

[54] 'Ausländer sehen das soziale Deutschland', *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, 5th series, 1940, 46–7; Kiran Klaus Patel, *Soldiers of Labor: Labor Service in Nazi Germany and New Deal America, 1933–1945* (New York, 2005), 1–2.

[55] Uwe Lübken, *Bedrohliche Nähe: Die USA und die nationalsozialistische Herausforderung in Lateinamerika, 1937–1945* (Stuttgart, 2004), 228; and

places there was real interest in these programmes. In India, for instance, some intellectuals saw the RAD as a role model for the time after independence. In January 1938 Subhas Chandra Bose, one of India's best-known nationalists, argued for the creation of a voluntary organization to mobilize the masses for the Indian cause. In addition to the British political parties' summer schools, he referred to the Nazi RAD as a role model, arguing that it 'deserves careful study and, with suitable modification may prove beneficial to India'.[56]

Latin America is another case in point. It is established fact that the Third Reich competed with the United States and other democracies for Latin American markets.[57] But they also competed for Latin American minds. There is good research on this for cultural relations, for instance, the role of the cinema, music, and the radio. But social policies also became a dimension in these ideological clashes. Arthur Manthey, for instance, who was in charge of the international division of the committee organizing the World Congress for Leisure Time and Recreation mentioned above, argued that American states had to be wooed especially. He travelled to the United States, visited several Central American states, and continued on to Brazil and Argentina, among other places, to enlist support for the Nazi event. Consequently, several American delegations attended and the concluding report of the Congress was published in German, English, French, Italian, and Spanish.[58]

Apart from its domestic functions, Nazi social policy thus strove for international recognition as part of an effort to challenge the dominant role of the League of Nations and the International Labour Organization as clearing-houses of international debates on social issues. The anti-Geneva thrust of these international activities demonstrates that during the Third Reich, the regime did not simply revert to bilateralism or turn inward. Instead, Nazi and fascist inter-

Harvey, 'International Networks', on the gendered agency of these initiatives.

[56] Subhas Chandra Bose, *Collected Works,* vol. ix: *Congress President, 1938–1939*, ed. Sisir Kumar Bose and Sugata Bose (Kolkat, 2004), 24.

[57] See e.g. Ronald C. Newton, *The 'Nazi Menace' in Argentina, 1931–1947* (Stanford, Calif., 1992); Lübken, *Bedrohliche Nähe*.

[58] Liebscher, *Freude und Arbeit,* 466–7; Weltkongreß für Freizeit und Erholung (ed.), *Memoria del Congreso Mundial para le Organizacion de las Horas Libres y del Recreo* (Hamburg, 1937).

nationalism was a clear-cut alternative to existing forms of internationalism, whether under the banner of the League of Nations, or of a socialist, communist, or liberal–capitalist brand.[59] In 1939–40 the Reich Ministry of Labour and the Foreign Ministry even discussed creating a direct rival to the ILO and started negotiating these plans with Italian officials.[60]

For all these reasons, the Third Reich was part of the overall push for internationalization that social policy had witnessed since the creation of the ILO in 1919 that had led to strong new links between societies around such questions. Democrats at the time were acutely aware of the Nazi challenge. Writing in the *American Political Science Review* in June 1937, exile Karl Loewenstein warned that 'a closer transnational alignment or "bloc" of fascist nations . . . a fascist International of the multi-colored shirts is clearly under way'.[61] Despite such early warnings, fascist internationalism continues to be 'one of the most under-researched aspects of fascism', as Roger Eatwell has argued.[62] This certainly holds true for questions of social policy. Perhaps research is still struggling with the fact that 'fascist internationalism' itself is a contradiction in terms; that research on this dimension seems counter-intuitive.[63]

As mentioned above, German policies in this respect were highly fragmented and inconsistent since they reflected internal power struggles in the Third Reich. Moreover, the anti-internationalist, exclusivist, and supremacist dimensions of Nazi ideology counterbalanced the regime's international propaganda and missionary zeal, as well as the credibility of such efforts.[64] This was also true because Hitler himself never fully embraced the idea of advertising Nazi wel-

[59] Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: The History of an Idea* (New York, 2012), 154–88; Kott, 'Dynamiques'.

[60] Bundesarchiv Berlin, R 3901/20653, esp. Reich Ministry of Labour, Note Krohn, 15 May 1939.

[61] Karl Loewenstein, 'Militant Democracy and Fundamental Rights', *American Political Science Review*, 31 (1937), 417–32, quotation at 418.

[62] Roger Eatwell, 'The Drive Towards Synthesis', in Roger Griffin (ed.), *International Fascism: Theories, Causes and the New Consensus* (London, 1998), 189–204, quotation at 195.

[63] Stuart J. Woolf, 'Introduction', in Stuart J. Woolf (ed.), *Fascism in Europe* (London, 1981), 17.

[64] See e.g. Fritz Meystre, *Allgemeine Sozialpolitik* (Munich, 1934), 76; Arbeits-

fare programmes internationally. By comparison, both fascist Italy and Japan created more formalized institutions for international propaganda and filled them with more life.[65] Yet it would also be wrong to underestimate the extent of information exchange and the legitimizing function of references to foreign models for the German case.

III

'All of this helps us in planning even though our methods are of the democratic variety.' These are the words US President Franklin D. Roosevelt chose for an internal note in 1938 to explain why he was personally interested in learning about Nazi welfare programmes and why he looked to the Third Reich even for political inspiration. This leads to the next part of this article, which looks at selective policy adaptation. In some cases, transnational debates about Nazi social policy led to non-coercive forms of selective policy adaptation. In the specific case mentioned above, the American president personally ordered lengthy reports on Nazi institutions from the US embassy in Berlin, not to procure propaganda material against the Third Reich, but as a source of information and even inspiration. Against this backdrop, American experts studied Nazi institutions such as Strength through Joy, the RAD, or the regime's public works schemes. As shown elsewhere, some aspects of the German measures were even adopted in America in a modified form and thus assimilated, for example, in the case of air mechanic training.[66]

This was not an isolated case. US experts such as labour economist Lewis Lorwin argued that democracies could learn from the social policies of Nazi Germany.[67] Swedish politicians also analysed

wissenschaftliches Institut der Deutschen Arbeitsfront, *Sozialpolitik zwischen zwei Kriegen,* 16–17.

[65] Herren, *Internationale Organisationen seit 1865,* 77–8.

[66] NARA/FDRL, OF 58B, Box 4; NARA, College Park, MA, RG 59/862.504/545; see also Patel, *Soldiers of Labor*, 277–91.

[67] Lewis L. Lorwin, Public Works and Employment Planning in Germany, 1933–1939, Prepared for the National Resources Planning Board, 1 Nov. 1940, in: NARA/FDRL, President's Secretary's Files, Box 157.

Nazi social policies in search of inspiration, and integrated them into their political proposals. At the same time, such references were the very reason why these ideas were unacceptable to other Swedes.[68] The Hamburg World Congress for Leisure Time and Recreation was instrumental in the development of the Japanese leisure time movement, especially in the establishment of the Nihon kôsei kyôkai (Japanese Recreation Association). More generally, the second half of the 1930s saw an intense discussion about whether Japan should emulate Germany, or develop a distinct Japanese form of recreational activities.[69] In Britain, the debate in the 1930s about the physical fitness of British youth was deeply informed by Nazi policies. In October 1936, Neville Chamberlain, Chancellor of the Exchequer and future Prime Minister, argued that Britain could learn 'from others', explicitly referring to the 'splendid condition of the German youth'.[70] The following year the government passed the Physical Training and Recreation Act of 1937, which encouraged voluntary activities to improve Britons' physical fitness and created new initiatives, such as the National Fitness Campaign (NFC), to this end. In this case, the German example did not have a direct impact on British legislation. Instead, British actors quickly stressed that their approach was voluntary and non-coercive. Improving national fitness was seen as the ultimate proof of the superiority of democracy over Nazism and other dictatorships.[71] In sum, the history of some social policy programmes in the United States, Japan, Britain, and other countries cannot be understood without taking into account these transnational processes of selective adaptation and rejection.

[68] Norbert Götz and Kiran Klaus Patel, 'Facing the Fascist Model: Discourse and the Construction of Labor Services in the United States of America and Sweden in the 1930s and 1940s', *Journal of Contemporary History,* 41 (2006), 57–73.

[69] Daisuke Tano, '"Achse der Freizeit": Der Weltkongress für Freizeit und Erholung 1936 und Japans Blick auf Deutschland', *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, 58 (2010), 709–29; more generally, also see Sheldon Garon, *The State and Labor in Modern Japan* (Berkeley, 1987).

[70] 'Mr. Chamberlain on Peace', *The Times*, 3 Oct. 1936.

[71] Anna Maria Lemcke, '"Proving the Superiority of Democracy": Die "National Fitness Campaign" der britischen Regierung (1937–1939) im transnationalen Zusammenhang', *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 57 (2009), 543–70; Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Managing the Body: Beauty, Health, and Fitness in Britain, 1880–1939* (Oxford, 2010), 279–329.

The Nazis, in turn, emulated political practices elsewhere. Strength through Joy, established in 1933 as a flagship of the Third Reich, was inspired by Mussolini's *dopolavoro*. During the first years of the Nazi regime, fascist Italy also served as a point of reference in many other respects, and this continued well into the second half of the 1930s, despite the serious shortcomings of fascist social programmes.[72] Nazi leaders and experts were fascinated by Italian community planning in North Africa, and when the first 20,000 Italian settlers set out for Libya in the autumn of 1938, the German Embassy in Rome made sure one of its diplomats accompanied them. This was only one of several German study trips to the region; Heinrich Himmler, Robert Ley, Rudolf Hess, and Hermann Göring also travelled there to study Italy's settlement policy. In this context, Patrick Bernhard has recently argued that in one specific regard, German planning elites even emulated Italian colonial practices: the spatial setup of new towns for the east of Hitler's empire was inspired by Italian design with a central piazza concentrating all official buildings.[73] Given that the diplomatic relationship between the two regimes was not always easy, these transfers are quite remarkable. Still, fascist Italy was the most obvious place for the Nazis to turn to, given the Italian regime's earlier establishment and ideological proximity.

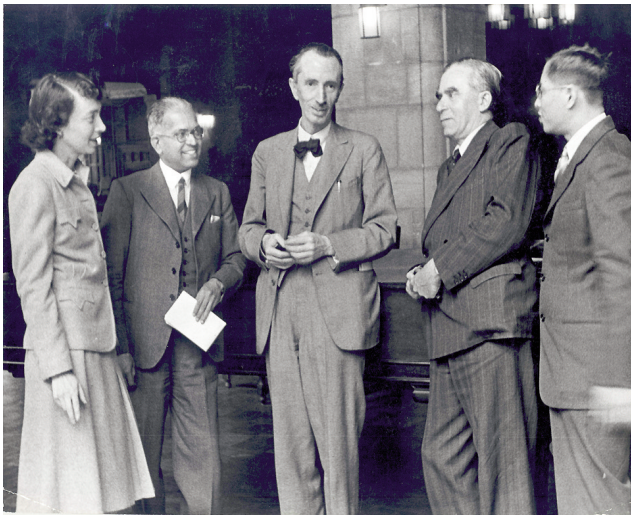
In some cases, one can even speak of a circulation of knowledge, involving mutual references, sometimes over an extended period of time. The March 1944 conference in Bad Salzbrunn mentioned above was explicitly intended to come up with an alternative to the congress of the International Labour Organization held in Philadelphia one month later (see Ill. 5).[74] The ILO debates for their part were driv-

[72] Liebscher, *Freude und Arbeit*; Reichardt and Nolzen (eds.), *Faschismus in Italien und Deutschland*; on fascism's shortcomings, see e.g. Victoria de Grazia, 'Die Radikalisierung der Bevölkerungspolitik im faschistischen Italien: Mussolinis "Rassenstaat"', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 26 (2000), 219–54; on a key Italian knowledge broker in this context, see Wolfgang Schieder, 'Faschismus im politischen Transfer: Giuseppe Renzetti als faschistischer Propagandist und Geheimagent in Berlin, 1933–1941', *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Nationalsozialismus*, 21 (2005), 28–58.

[73] Patrick Bernhard, 'Hitler's Africa in the East: Italian Colonialism as a Model for German Planning in Eastern Europe', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 51 (2015), forthcoming.

[74] Zucht, 'Das Arbeitswissenschaftliche Institut'.

Illustration 5: International Labour Conference in Philadelphia, April–May 1944



Source: Photo Library of the International Labour Office.

en by an attempt to formulate an alternative to Nazi rule over Europe, while also trying to secure a future for the organization in the postwar world. Its 'Resolution concerning social provisions in the peace settlement', in particular, was meant as a clear-cut alternative to Nazi social policies, which implied exploitation and terror for most non-German Europeans.[75] The British Beveridge Report was also deeply informed by simultaneous debates in Robert Ley's DAF and the Reich Labour Ministry, and vice versa. In the press, articles disparaged the efforts of the other country as part of the propaganda

[75] International Labour Office, *Resolutions Adopted by the Twenty-Sixth Session of the International Labour Conference, Philadelphia, April–May, 1944* (reprinted from the Official Bulletin, vol. XXVI) (Montreal, 1944), 1–8; more generally, Antony Alcock, *History of the International Labour Organisation* (London, 1971), 171–87.

effort; meanwhile, experts in both Berlin and London carefully explored the details of the respective plans.[76] Second-order observation, as Niklas Luhmann would call it, came on top, in that ILO experts also carefully scrutinized German perceptions of the Beveridge Report.[77]

What do these findings suggest? Transfers between dictatorships might seem unproblematic. But between dictatorship and democracy? Such work is not easy. International comparisons and the analysis of transnational flows involving the Third Reich run the risk of trivializing the terror of the Nazi regime; of drawing false analogies and comparisons. Its social policies were highly racist and need to be seen in the context of the preparation and execution of a war of aggression, and for this reason, it seems appropriate to characterize the regime as a warfare state. Referring to social policy transfers is not meant to exonerate the Third Reich. The conceptional debate on transnational history helps to avoid simplistic, and potentially apologetic, conclusions. This is not about one-to-one copies; not about little 'Third Reichs' in New Deal America, the Swedish *Folkhemmet*, or Britain's National Government. In all cases mentioned here, democratic politicians were well aware of the dilemmas they faced when turning to Nazi Germany for inspiration. Roosevelt's words, which opened this section of the article, must be seen in this context. Chamberlain's view was similar. After praising the physique of Ger-

[76] Karsten Linne, '"Die Utopie des Herren Beveridge": Zur Rezeption des Beveridge-Plans im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland', *1999: Zeitschrift für Sozialgeschichte des 20. und 21. Jahrhunderts*, 4 (1993), 62–82; Zucht, 'Das Arbeitswissenschaftliche Institut'; Marie-Luise Recker, *Nationalsozialistische Sozialpolitik im Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Munich, 1985), 151–4; on Beveridge, see Jose Harris, *William Beveridge: A Biography* (Oxford, 1997); a recent survey of the Beveridge Report and the state of the art is Cornelius Torp, *Gerechtigkeit im Wohlfahrtsstaat: Alter und Alterssicherung in Deutschland und Großbritannien von 1945 bis heute* (Göttingen, 2015), 38–59.

[77] ILO Archives, Geneva, SI 2/0/25/2/2, Bureau International de Travail, 'Plan Beveridge. Opinions allemandes recueillies dans la presse par le B.I.T., Genève' [no date]. I would like to thank Sandrine Kott for referring me to this file. On Luhmann, see, in English, Niklas Luhmann, 'Deconstruction as Second-Order Observing', *New Literary History*, 24 (1993), 763–82; more generally, Niklas Luhmann, *Soziale Systeme: Grundriß einer allgemeinen Theorie* (Frankfurt am Main, 1984).

man youth, he quickly added that 'our methods are different from theirs, in accordance with our national character and traditions'.[78]

And, indeed, there were no direct copies, but only piecemeal adaptations in which the highly ideological parts of the 'original' were cut out. Time and again politicians and experts referred to the dramatic distance between their political systems. But they did not restrict their search for solutions to societies with similar political systems. Consequently, we should not overlook this other dimension, however compromising and critical it might seem at first glance. In spite of the ideological differences, many experts and politicians of the time followed the famous saying from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*: 'It is proper to learn even from an enemy.'[79]

In Germany, things were not fundamentally different. The last years of the war saw a discussion about ambitious social reform projects, comparable to the British Beveridge Report. As late as summer 1944, the regime discussed a thorough reform of its social insurance system. Franz Seldte, whose Labour Ministry was in charge of these issues, pleaded for administrative simplification, but also for a substantial increase in pensions. When explaining his draft to the other ministers, he argued that Germany's level of pension benefits 'at least had to match minimal provisions, and possibly exceed the benefits abroad, particularly of Western democracies'. Otherwise, the 'psychological repercussions for the working German *Volksgenosse*' would be fatal, and the 'effect abroad' unacceptable. Seldte's point of reference was again Britain and the Beveridge Report. Obviously the politics of constant cross-national comparisons now obliged some actors to see the disadvantages of German provisions, and to argue for improved conditions to match propagandistic self-fashioning with reality.[80]

In the end, Seldte's proposal was shelved, since it met strong opposition from a phalanx of other ministries and agencies. In reaction to Seldte's proposal, his rival Fritz Sauckel, the almighty General Plenipotentiary for Labour Deployment, for instance, argued that the

[78] 'Mr. Chamberlain on Peace', *The Times*, 3 Oct. 1936; also see Lemcke, 'Proving the Superiority of Democracy'.

[79] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Book IV, 428. No contemporary source I know of refers to this saying directly.

[80] Bundesarchiv Berlin, R 1501/3783, Seldte to Funk and others, 25 Aug. 1944.

Beveridge Report was 'a postwar plan and so far, we have serious doubts about its realization.'[81] At the time, it was still unclear whether the British government would eventually endorse this project; in Germany, references to Britain turned into an argument for both the proponents and the opponents of far-ranging reform plans. According to an unverified German source in the Beveridge papers held at the London School of Economics, some German administrators in 1944 acknowledged the superiority of the British scheme, however loath they would have been to admit this in public.[82] And even Sauckel had to concede that 'after a victorious conclusion of the war', Germany would have to increase and expand its social provision.[83] The significance attributed to British social insurance efforts is also revealed by the fact that in mid January 1945 the Reich Ministry of Labour produced an elaborate translation of a British white paper, based on the Beveridge Report on social insurance, of some 120 pages in length. This paper was sent to former Secretary of State Johannes Krohn two days before the Red Army reached the borders of the German Reich in the East, and months after Aachen had fallen in the West.[84] In sum, therefore, foreign ideas and concepts were an important element of the debate, even during the very months when the Third Reich was falling apart.

And it is possible to go a step further. On questions of concrete policy options, transnational exchanges also impacted in another way. Because of transnational exposure, this article argues, societies and their elites sometimes also decided which options *not* to pursue. In this sense, transnational exchanges helped to reify the nation. What does this mean? To stick to the extreme example of cross-references between democracies and dictatorships: in the United States, Britain, and elsewhere, transnational references could also influence

[81] Bundesarchiv Berlin, R 1501/3783, Sauckel to Seldte, 7 Oct. 1944; also see ibid., Seldte to Lammers, 25 Aug. 1944. On the wider context, see Recker, *Nationalsozialistische Sozialpolitik im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, 275–85.

[82] London School of Economics and Political Science, William Beveridge Papers, 8/59, appendix to PLS-Nr. 363/43 g, secret. Also referred to in Janet Beveridge, *Beveridge and His Plan* (London, 1954), 198–199. So far, it has been impossible to verify the authenticity of this document with other German sources.

[83] Bundesarchiv Berlin, R 1501/3783, Sauckel to Seldte, 7 Oct. 1944.

[84] Bundesarchiv Berlin, R 3901/20655, Karstedt to Krohn, 17 Jan. 1945.

policy choices by *reducing* options. To return to the example given above: after Britain introduced its National Fitness Campaign in 1937, the debate continued. Early in 1938, Sir Edward Grigg, the president of a regional committee of the NFC and a prominent politician who had served as governor of Kenya, argued in favour of compulsory paramilitary training for every young man as part of the NFC's work. Grigg again referred to Germany as an example, but this time there was public uproar. Grigg was quickly forced to resign as NFC regional committee president, while the NFC distanced itself from any kind of authoritarian practice. Interestingly, *The Times* sided with Grigg, but public opinion as well as the government clearly felt that any such idea was incompatible with the country's political standards. Just as transnational references had facilitated a debate two years earlier, they now defined the limits of what was perceived as legitimate political action.

Similar examples come from the United States, where questions of whether new programmes should be voluntary or compulsory, and whether they should have a (para-)military dimension also stirred heated debate—just as in Britain, the meaning and importance of voluntarism always remained contested.[85] More obligatory forms were often rejected as fascist or totalitarian, and the less binding approach ruled the day. Moreover, the United States saw a discussion about the 'American way' at this time as a search for an updated understanding of national identity. In this context, debates with transnational references sometimes resulted in the definition of a supposedly typical 'national way', thus reifying national differences. Put more simply: only because they were exposed to a transnational range of options did societies eventually decide what their path should be and, in turn, they rationalized these choices as the obvious consequences of national traditions, institutions, and so on. On broad issues, such as the alternative between democracy and dictatorship, they might have been right. But when it came to the nuts and bolts of specific programmes, national traditions did not always serve as guiding principles, and policy choices were contested domestically. Naming one option as the quintessentially 'British' or 'American'

[85] James Hinton, 'Voluntarism and the Welfare/Warfare State: Women's Voluntary Services in the 1940s', *Twentieth Century British History*, 9 (1998), 274–305.

solution ultimately revealed that societies were deeply embedded in transnational exchanges and conversations, and transnational delimitation was meant to add legitimacy for a given policy choice.

IV

All in all, this article has tried to demonstrate that Nazi social policies were part of an international conversation to a much larger extent, and in a more meaningful way, than research so far has suggested. In public discourse, references to programmes elsewhere were meant to give new initiatives legitimacy by referring to the pioneering role of other societies, to parallel developments elsewhere, or the alleged superiority of one's own solution by comparison with international homologues. In this respect, the Third Reich was not unique. Other societies referenced Nazi schemes in just the same ways. In a range of other cases, experts and politicians resorted to selective policy adaptation, building on transnational exchange and learning processes. Paradoxically, these exchanges tended to reify national differences and fundamental ideological rifts, particularly between liberal democracy and fascism. Not at a fundamental level, but at a technical level, so this article contends, some of these differences only emerged over time, and as a result of processes of mutual perception and exchange.

So far, the Third Reich's social policies have been excluded from the transnational context of its age. This Exceptionalist view, fully in line with the *Sonderweg* interpretation of German history, continues to dominate public and scholarly interpretations, even if most historians today would distance themselves from the *Sonderweg* narrative. The range of options for organizing public work schemes, leisure activities, or child allowance was limited. Nazi social and welfare policies had roots in social scientific discourses and administrative practices that were not worlds apart from the rest of the globe. To be sure, inclusion and exclusion were negotiated in very different ways across societies, and the differences between societies should not be levelled. Still, liberal democracies often developed their welfare elements to distinguish themselves from and to confront their fascist rivals, and not simply because of domestic dynamics or qualities intrinsic to democracies. These findings for the prewar and war years

can also be transposed to other contexts. In the Cold War, for instance, the Soviet Union was to assume a similar role in the West.

What has been described here is but a first step. More research is needed to properly understand the actors involved in such exchanges, the question of periodization, the exact relationship between public and expert discourses, and their links to policy-making, as well as the weight with which foreign references impacted on societies. Internal conflicts within the Nazi leadership over transnational models and references might also shed new light on the debate about whether the Third Reich's polycratic elements led to fragmentation and inefficiency or whether, on the other hand, a combination of competence overlap, infighting, and transnational networking increased efficiency.[86] On these issues, this article has only been able to offer some first ideas.

Moreover, there is the other side of these exchanges, which has been left out here for lack of space, even if, in fact, it mattered at least as much: the role of Nazi social policies in the broadest sense in the occupation and domination of Europe from the late 1930s. This part of history is well known. Again, social and economic policy instruments tended to converge, even if population policy (*Volkstumspolitik*) and economic targets often competed with each other. In general, however, policies were driven by racism, violence, and the drive to exploit non-Aryans. The destruction of trade unions, forced labour, racial hierarchization, resettlement, racist screening as part of 'Germanization' policies, and, ultimately, extermination characterized the Third Reich's policies. Frequently, the same organizations and individuals referred to in this article were involved in, or even in charge of, these tasks. The Arbeitswissenschaftliche Institut established a branch in Vienna soon after the annexation of Austria. The Deutsche Kongress-Zentrale plundered the archives of international organizations based in Paris and Brussels. Seizing expert knowledge was an important step towards dominating and exploiting other societies. Officials of German employment agencies and the Reich Ministry of Labour followed the *Wehrmacht* and played an important role in organizing forced labour. The first German labour agency in conquered Poland, for instance, was established on 3 September

[86] On this debate see esp. Sven Reichardt and Wolfgang Seibel (eds.), *Der prekäre Staat: Herrschen und Verwalten im Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt am Main, 2011).

1939, in Rybnik, a mere two days after the invasion had begun.[87] All of these agencies were part of the general racial policy intending to reconstruct German and European society as a harsh system of selection and exclusion.[88]

During the war, non-Germans across the continent quickly learned that the regime gave pride of place to war, violence, and exploitation. Ultimately, it lacked a political vision for winning allies and enlisting other Europeans in sufficient numbers to fight for a common cause. Nazi Germany never systematically strove to build a strong fascist international, and Hitler himself was never particularly keen on spreading German social policies internationally. Others, however, were. Some felt that 'am deutschen Wesen soll die Welt genesen', that the German character should heal the world. Others saw German policies as a role model or a cautionary tale. The world certainly witnessed a 'Nazi social policy moment' during the 1930s and 1940s, and postwar welfare state planning even continued when the regime's fate was already sealed. For these reasons, it would be wrong to disregard the fascination and interest that the regime's policies stirred at the time. In contrast to Hitler's claims in the opening quotation, Nazi Germany never achieved 'social equality' or the 'elimination of class differences'; in fact, it never even seriously aspired to do so. But its social policies cannot be ignored, and they can only be understood when placed against the backdrop of global developments and exchanges.

[87] Valentina Maria Stefanski, 'Nationalsozialistische Volkstums- und Arbeitseinsatzpolitik im Regierungsbezirk Kattowitz 1939–1945', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft,* 31 (2005), 38–67.

[88] See e.g. Karl Heinz Roth, 'Sozialimperialistische Aspekte der Okkupationspolitik: Strategien und Aktivitäten der "Deutschen Arbeitsfront" (DAF)', in Werner Röhr (ed.), *Faschismus und Rassismus: Kontroversen um Ideologie und Opfer* (Berlin, 1992), 353–75; and, more generally, Karl Heinz Roth, *Intelligenz und Sozialpolitik im 'Dritten Reich': Eine methodisch-historische Studie am Beispiel des Arbeitswissenschaftlichen Instituts der Deutschen Arbeitsfront* (Munich, 1993).

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