

While during the war the population, including workers, trade unionists, and politicians representing labour interests, generally supported the patriotic effort, by the end of the war they were demanding in exchange for the sacrifice of mass wartime participation that an equal sacrifice be made by property owners, in both material and political terms, constituting a new social and political order. In this context, India followed the same path. This unplanned expansion of the social and political domains subsequently allowed the working class and labouring poor to enter the political sphere more directly through a combination of electoral politics, trade unionism, and radical action, such as the 1920 and 1922 Indian migrant workers' strike in Abadan and the Akali movement of the 1920s and its impact on the post-war sphere of nationalist politics in India.

Radhika Singha's study is an objective, masterful, and beautifully written account of the lives and role of the Indian Coolies Corps in the Great War. With great skill Singha depicts the history of the Great War from below, and through the perspective of the coolies she also follows the practice of war in the British Empire in the multicultural colonial peripheries. Coinciding with the centenary of the Great War, this is a timely look at the war from a non-European and subaltern perspective – a perspective rarely adopted in studies of the Great War, a war that, although it originated in Europe, was not confined to Europe's frontiers.

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FIGAROL, THOMAS. *Les diamants de Saint-Claude, Un district industriel à l'âge de la première mondialisation, 1870–1914*. Préf. de Jean-Claude Daumas. [Collection Perspectives Historiques, Entreprises.] Presses universitaires François-Rabelais, Tours 2020. 379 pp. Ill. Maps. € 24.00.

When asked about which places they associate with the history of diamonds, the diamond trade or industry, most historians, scholars, and members of the general public will undoubtedly point to cities such as Antwerp, Amsterdam, London, or to the diamond fields and mines of South Africa. Not many would think of a few scattered villages in the Jura mountains (Haut-Jura) on the French border with Switzerland. Yet, it is precisely this area which lies at the geographical heart of this book and forms the basis of a fascinating historical inquiry into the role of the town of Saint-Claude, and a few other neighbouring localities, as a local manufacturing centre within the international diamond industry.

This book, the result of a doctoral dissertation defended at the University of Franche-Comté in 2015, uses the rigorous exploitation of an impressive corpus of local sources to tell the little-known history of the diamond industry of Saint-Claude. It offers a wide-ranging study of the economic, technical, and social realities of the diamond industry while giving ample attention to the companies, cooperatives, suppliers, and customers as

well as the social conflicts between labourers and employers active in the industry in Saint-Claude that marked the period.

Central in the book is the concept of the industrial district as first defined by Alfred Marshall.¹ Contrary to the focus on large cities or large mining basins in the more classic historical representations of the “industrial revolution”, forms of proto-industry developed in certain rural areas in the nineteenth century. This was reflected in the intensification and generalization of work at home or in small workshops, most often to make small objects or parts that were assembled elsewhere; this system is sometimes referred to as “small-scale industry” or “dispersed industry”. Even before the diamonds made their way to Saint-Claude, forms of proto-industrial activity, such as the cutting of precious stones, briar-wood worked for the manufacturing of tobacco pipes, as well as various other wooden objects, were common features of the economic life in the Haut-Jura. These economic activities formed a vital precondition for the successful implementation of the diamond industry in this area. In addition, long-time economic activities practiced in the region, such as dairy farming, combined with wood-turning in winter, forged an economy and a society already attuned to flexible work, work in family units, lowering barriers for many to become employed as pieceworkers in the diamond industry, where similar forms of organization prevailed.

The exploitation of vast diamond deposits discovered in South Africa in the 1870s led to an enormous expansion in the diamond market and triggered the development of the industry of cutting and manufacturing stones in Western Europe. Within this rapidly growing international market, the town of Saint-Claude came to occupy a small but relatively important place within the global production chain. The flexibility of economic organization, small manufacturing units, low cost, focus on small stones, and relatively low-quality cuts allowed diamond companies in the Haut-Jura, which worked mostly as subcontractors to trading houses based in London, Antwerp, Amsterdam, and Paris, to be competitive in the international market. The majority of the stones produced in the mountain district of the Haute-Jura were marketed in Birmingham, where a relatively low-cost jewellery industry was booming.

The book roughly follows a chronological and thematic structure, in three parts. The first part presents a broad overview of the history and development of the diamond industry. Using an impressive reading of the literature, the author sketches the world of the mining and trading of rough diamonds between 1870 and 1914: from the discovery of the South African deposits, the economic organization of the market dominated by the London Syndicate, and the rise of the De Beers monopoly in the years leading up to World War I. The technical aspects of processing rough stones into cut diamonds and the expansion of the industry throughout this period are explained, while ample attention is paid to the effects of international political developments such as the Boer Wars. The European diamond centres, such as Amsterdam, Antwerp, London, and, to a lesser degree, rural areas in France and Switzerland are discussed, as well as the basic institutional structures of the industry. The author persuasively demonstrates how, even before the advent of the diamond industry in the Haut-Jura in the 1880s, the area witnessed a gradual transformation from forms of proto-industry to a polyvalent industrial district, characterized by a double specialization in the manufacturing of pipes and precious stones, where subcontracting (through a

1. Alfred Marshall, *Principles of Economics*, 2 vols (London, 1890), II.

putting-out system), specialized labour, small production units (often on a family basis), and forms of low-degree mechanization were common.

In Part Two, the diamond industry in the Haut-Jura takes centre stage. The successful implementation of the diamond industry in Saint-Claude from the late 1870s is discussed. While Saint-Claude remained a relatively marginal production centre within the international diamond industry, and, even regionally, diamond production never supplanted other areas of economic activity, it did make a steep development. While around 300 labourers were employed in the industry in 1880, this had increased to around 1,600 by 1914 (p. 164). A particularly interesting chapter deals with the place of Saint-Claude within the international diamond industry, analysing its heavy reliance on foreign subcontractors, who outsourced production to this area because of the competitive prices and the flexibility of the labour. Although Saint-Claude thus became part of the international diamond industry, its position remained weak due to a lack of quality in cutting, mediocre yields, and technical backwardness. The dependency on foreign contractors, and its precarious place within the international system, also influenced the way local companies, cooperatives, unions, and other actors attempted to impose working regulations, giving rise to conflicts. The author does an excellent job in explaining the motives of different actors, their struggles and disputes, and the need to balance international competitiveness with improving local working conditions.

In Part Three, Figarol turns to the minority of actors in the Haut-Jura who did not work directly for foreign contractors, but who bought parties of rough stones on the international market located in London. He sketches the attempts, failures, and successes of the two local cooperatives on the London market, mainly through the activities of two men, Samuel Vuillet and Albert Waille, who played an essential role. The commercial strategies of the two cooperatives on the market for cut stones, the creation of a clientele in Paris and London, and even the penetration into the American market are analysed, and Figarol presents a fascinating account of the strategies developed by local actors within this globalized industry.

The overall strength of this work is that it seamlessly connects the local history of Saint-Claude to the international diamond world, thereby creating a connected history which is both rich in historical detail and attentive to its global scale. The book convincingly analyses the capacity of local manufacturers and industrialists to integrate into a developing industrial market and to adapt to the emerging globalization of the economy, emphasizing how industrial development on a local scale can be the manifestation of a global process and the globalization of the economy. Its structure and overall methodology makes it an interesting template and source of inspiration for future historical inquiries into, as of yet largely understudied, “smaller” production centres in the diamond industry; the rural Campine area (De Kempen) in the province of Antwerp comes to mind as an example.

Rather than a grand sweeping historical exposé with dashing new insights or perspectives on a “hot” historical topic or debate with an already established corpus of literature, the book’s sharp focus allows it to delve deep into the small but fascinating world of the diamond industry of Saint-Claude. This attention to detail, which in large part can be attributed to the pioneering nature of this work – the first of its kind on the diamond industry in the area of Saint-Claude – tends to make the book somewhat descriptive, although it never loses sight of the larger historical picture of the increasingly globalized world of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, the attention to detail and the sometimes overly long descriptions slow the pace of the book down and can get in the way of formulating clear arguments.

The emphasis of the work is on economic and labour structures, the history of relevant organizations (cooperatives, unions), while it also gives some biographical information on a number of key figures in the diamond industry. Even if this methodological approach is justifiable, and in line with the overall objectives of the work, it obscures more humane, interpersonal, and cultural elements, which have also been part of the historical reality of the diamond industry and its workers in Saint-Claude. A reading of the sources through a more social or cultural historical lens might have presented additional interesting insights, and can be considered a missed opportunity.

In general, however, these points of criticism should not detract from the overall high quality of the work. For those interested in the history of the diamond industry, its international context, or what globalization looked like at the *fin de siècle*, this book has plenty to offer.

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BONNELL, ANDREW G. *Red Banners, Books and Beer Mugs. The Mental World of German Social Democrats, 1863–1914*. [Historical Materialism Book Series, Vol. 220.] Brill, Leiden [etc.] 2021. viii, 225 pp. € 135.00; \$ 163.00.

After years of relative neglect in the historiography of modern Germany, labour history has recently regained some importance. This renewed interest has been accompanied both by a reflection on the strengths and weaknesses of former research in the field and by a new pluralism of methods.¹ Andrew G. Bonnell's monograph is to be situated in this context. As Bonnell is a long-standing expert on the book's subject, his inspiring and well-composed book synthesizes many years of deep reflection both at the thematic and the conceptual levels. Not only does it give new insight into the history of the German Social Democratic Party (SPD) and "the movement culture of the party" (p. 5), but it also demonstrates how cultural–historical approaches can enrich labour history without abandoning social history.

While labour history has often focused on the split and failure of the SPD by reading its history "backwards from 1914" (p. 5), Bonnell takes the opposite approach.² His monograph centres on the issue of "why the Social Democrats were as successful as they were

1. See, for example, C. Morina, *Die Erfindung des Marxismus. Wie eine Idee die Welt eroberte* (Munich, 2017) (an English translation will be published by Oxford University Press later this year); S. Hake, *The Proletarian Dream: Socialism, Culture, and Emotion in Germany, 1863–1933* (Berlin, 2017). On Habsburg Austria, see J.S. Beneš, *Workers and Nationalism: Czech and German Social Democracy in Habsburg Austria, 1890–1918* (Oxford, 2017).

2. This approach was recently discussed in other contexts. See, for example, the conference on cohesion forces in German Social Democracy, 1871–1925, organized by Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, <https://www.fes.de/ebert150/fachkonferenz> (21 January 2022).