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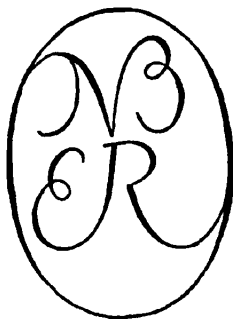
Wages in Germany

1871-1945

BY GERHARD BRY

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*(Resolution adopted October 25, 1926
and revised February 6, 1933 and February 24, 1941)*

TO THEA

PREFACE

THE title of this book might suggest that the study is concerned with matters past and far away. In some sense this is, of course, true. But the limitation to a specific time and country is less stringent and less significant than it might appear. The major characteristics of wage behavior, as observed during the three-quarters of a century under review, reappear during the more recent past. And wage behavior in industrial Germany is shown to have had much in common with that observed in the United States and Great Britain during corresponding phases of their development.

So far as topical interest is concerned, the study deals with money and real wage trends in the course of economic growth and development; with the late and slight response of wage rates to downturns in economic activity; with wages during creeping, marching, and galloping inflation. These topics are, of course, the focus of much current economic thinking.

The value of the book, however, lies not only in the description of wage phenomena common to industrial countries. The bulk of the study is devoted to German experience, and what are perhaps its most interesting portions deal with German wages during two World Wars and the Great Inflation, against the background of the German institutional setting and economic thinking of these periods.

The study reflects the continuing interest of the National Bureau in the economics of wage behavior. It complements Daniel Creamer's *Behavior of Wage Rates during Business Cycles* (1950), Clarence D. Long's *Wages and Earnings in the United States, 1860-1890* (1960), and Albert Rees' *Real Wages in Manufacturing, 1890-1914* (in press). All of these investigations, in addition to making available more reliable series of money and real wages, are designed to clarify the important short-term and long-term relationships between wages, output, and general economic conditions.

Economists seeking to ascertain basic characteristics of economic behavior are deeply concerned with the degree of generality that can be claimed for their findings and hypotheses. Are the observed phenomena limited to a particular set of institutions, or do they reflect ubiquitous and generally valid relationships? Evidence from more than one country and more than one historical period is helpful in deciding such an issue. The present study will, it is hoped, in this fashion contribute to our understanding of wage behavior.

LEO WOLMAN

AUTHOR'S ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

HAD I known, long years ago, how much effort the writing of this book would entail, I might never have begun it; and had I not had the generous help of many friends and colleagues, I might never have finished it. It gives me pleasure to recount my debts.

Of all my obligations, the largest is that to Leo Wolman. It was he who suggested this project, and who watched over its development every step of the way—advising, encouraging, prodding. I find it difficult adequately to express my thanks to him.

Geoffrey H. Moore read the manuscript with meticulous attention, making acute observations which helped to improve both content and organization. His practical assistance was invaluable. Daniel Creamer read several drafts of the manuscript and made many helpful comments. Harold Barger, at a critical juncture, gave me reassurance and constructive advice. Also, at one time or another, Solomon Fabricant, George and Vera Eliasberg, and Albert Rees offered good counsel.

Before being submitted to the publisher, the book was circulated, in mimeographed form, to a number of scholars in this country and abroad. I received many helpful responses which permitted me to correct mistakes and to add new material. The remaining weaknesses of this volume certainly cannot be blamed on lack of professional cooperation. I am particularly grateful for the detailed comments by Frieda Wunderlich of the New School for Social Research, by Hedwig Wachenheim of New York City, by John T. Dunlop and Melvin Rothbaum of Harvard University, by J. Heinz Müller of Freiburg University, by W. G. Hoffmann of Münster University, by Jürgen Kuczynski of Humboldt University in Berlin, and by E. H. Phelps Brown of the London School of Economics. I also wish to record my thanks to George Soule and Harry W. Laidler, who served as members of the reading committee of the Board of Directors of the National Bureau of Economic Research.

I have been particularly fortunate in my assistants. During the early stages of data collection and processing, several friends extended helping hands. Among them Ann Merjos came to my aid at a point when—in utter self-delusion—I thought I could complete this work in my spare time. During recent years I have enjoyed the unremitting cooperation of Charlotte Boschan, who has served not only as an indispensable co-worker but also, rather often, as my conscience. I am grateful for her industry, her perseverance, and above all for her rare qualities of mind.

If now and then the reader should come upon a deft turn of phrase in the depths of this book, I can assure him that these are raisins embedded

in the dough by my main editor, Bettina Hartenbach. Margaret T. Edgar edited my later additions and took care in the innumerable details of preparing the manuscript for press. I consider the editors responsible for whatever readability this study may possess.

H. Irving Forman designed and drew the charts with the impeccable craftsmanship that all of us at the National Bureau accept as one of our blessings.

I should like also to acknowledge the unstinting cooperation I received from the National Bureau's clerical staff in processing the manuscript against an ominous deadline.

Finally, there is my family. All research workers admit, with varying degrees of guilt, the heavy costs they inevitably pass on to the innocent—the women and children. My own case is no exception. Early in their lives my son Peter and my daughter Ava learned to shudder at the words "German Wages." I want to thank them for their prolonged forbearance. As for my wife, I have recorded my gratitude on an earlier page.

GERHARD BRY

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