associations of Ruhr industry within the ministerial bureaucracy after 1933 was strong in formulating the Gesetz zur Ordnung der nationalen Arbeit, which appeared to block the way to the DAF's dream of one big Nazi trade union negotiating wages and working conditions. Ruhr entrepreneurs had not accepted Nazi rule to be forced to accept national union bargaining on these issues, even by a Nazi union. The Nazi state itself, however, did insist on a certain level of national regulation, because rearmament and the controlled economy were seen as national tasks. In the firms which Frese studies the DAF was allowed only those national activities which contributed to maintaining a peaceful atmosphere on the shop floor in the pursuit of the national goals, and to that entrepreneurs had also to submit. Outside the state's wishes entrepreneurs did not need to trouble themselves too much with the DAF. Its great ambition to combine workers' representation with productivity improvements in a national programme carried through by a mighty national organization ended only in its becoming a propaganda organization and a device for fudging the central issue of whether work was a communal or an individual experience. In matters which could be handled at the factory level, job-training for example, productive co-operation was possible. Sometimes this also worked for attempts to improve social conditions, but this depended somewhat on the previously established policy of the firm. But, as far as managerial decisions went, the DAF was excluded. Prevented by its own attitudes and political tasks from playing a directional role in the 'community of the firm', by 1938 it had also ceased to have any resemblance to a trade union and was far from being the decisive body for labour relations.

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Both Dr Kapp, the leader of the anti-republican putsch of 1920, and the anti-Hitler conspirators of 1944 had the same man in mind for the post of foreign minister: Ulrich von Hassell. Gregor Schollgen's succinct biography charts the course which led a conservative opponent of the 'Weimar system' (Hassell was one of the founders of the nationalist DNVP), through a distinguished diplomatic career in the service of both the Republic and the Third Reich, to resistance and ultimately to execution in the aftermath of the July plot. Many of the facts of the last period of Ulrich von Hassell's life are well known. His diaries for the years 1938–44 were among the earliest documents of the German resistance to be published after the war, and were translated into English in 1948. His career as a diplomat and as a prolific writer on German politics and foreign policy are less familiar. Schollgen pays considerable attention to these aspects as well as to his resistance activities, and includes some of Hassell's writings in a useful appendix. He successfully conveys the strengths and limitations of Hassell's conservatism.
Hassell's ideas underwent remarkably little change from the beginning to the end of his career. A 'child of the Bismarck era' and Tirpitz's son-in-law, he remained convinced of Germany's destiny as the strong centre of Europe and as a world power. The economic organization of Europe under German leadership was an important theme. His periods of service as minister to Copenhagen and Belgrade in the 1920s and early 1930s strengthened Hassell's belief in the importance of economic and political co-operation with the countries of the Baltic and the Balkans as a means towards the reconstitution of German power in Europe. As ambassador in Rome from 1932 to 1938, Hassell saw the latter region as a fruitful field for German–Italian collaboration. After his dismissal from the diplomatic service, Hassell's membership of the Mitteleuropäischer Wirtschaftstag (Central European Economic Forum) from 1940 to 1943 served as a cover for his resistance activities but also reflected his continuing interest in economic collaboration with the countries of south-eastern Europe. Hassell's ideas on domestic politics were deeply conservative. Although he was not hostile to the working class—who would, he hoped, find a home in his organic 'people's state'—he had no faith in parliamentary democracy. While he favoured the restoration of the monarchy, his wartime plans for a future German constitution had no place for a restored Reichstag, even in its Bismarckian form.

The relationship between Hassell and the National Socialist regime was ambivalent. Both the ambassador and his wife were openly contemptuous of the Party and its hangers-on, yet for a long time Hassell tried to persuade himself that Hitler's policies were compatible with his own brand of cautious revisionism. He was dismissed early in 1938 for his criticism of the growing extremism of German foreign policy, and yet as late as September 1939 he undertook a diplomatic mission to the Scandinavian countries on behalf of the regime. During the war, Hassell was a brave but indiscreet opponent whose activities became increasingly circumscribed by the security services, but he was not arrested until after the failure of the July plot. Schöllgen touches briefly on Hassell's strong religious beliefs and acknowledges his revulsion against the mass murder of the Jews, but his biography remains very much focused on Hassell as political thinker and actor. Since the book is short (and expensive), one feels that the author could have allowed himself space to give a clearer picture of Hassell the man. Nevertheless, there are still too few scholarly biographies of German diplomats—even though few compare with Hassell in tragic stature—and we must be grateful that Schöllgen's book has been translated so quickly and competently into English.

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I was born, raised, and even have lived most of my life in Australia. And yet, even in that most distant of continents, old Europe played a major role in my making as a European historian. As an undergraduate, my most inspiring and demanding teacher was Ernest K. Bramsted, author of Aristocracy and the middle-classes, biographer of Goebbels, and a Jew who fled Nazism after 1933. My MA was supervised by Fred Stambrook, of a Viennese Jewish family, as a boy lucky enough to be packed off to