



# **Diamonds and War: State, Capital, and Labor in British-Ruled Palestine**

*David De Vries*

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The mining of diamonds, their trading mechanisms, their financial institutions, and, not least, their cultural expressions as luxury items have engaged the work of historians, economists, social scientists, and international relations experts. Based on previously unexamined historical documents found in archives in Belgium, England, Israel, the Netherlands, and the United States, this book is the first in English to tell the story of the formation of one of the world's main strongholds of diamond production and trade in Palestine during the 1930s and 1940s. The history of the diamond-cutting industry, characterized by a long-standing Jewish presence, is discussed as a social history embedded in the international political economy of its times; the genesis of the industry in Palestine is placed on a broad continuum within the geographic and economic dislocations of Dutch, Belgian, and German diamond-cutting centers. In providing a micro-historical and interdisciplinary perspective, the story of the diamond industry in Mandate Palestine proposes a more nuanced picture of the uncritical approach to the strict boundaries of ethnic-based occupational communities. This book unravels the Middle-eastern pattern of state intervention in the empowerment of private capital and recasts this craft culture's inseparability from international politics during a period of war and transformation of empire.

David De Vries is an Associate Professor at the Department of Labor Studies at Tel Aviv University, Israel. He studied history at the LSE and Warwick University. A social historian, his primary research interests are modern labor and business history of Palestine and Israel. His publications include *Idealism and Bureaucracy in 1920s Palestine: The Origins of 'Red Haifa'* (1999, in Hebrew) and *Dock Workers: International Explorations in Labor History, 1790-1970* (2000, co-edited). Currently he is writing on strikes in Israeli history and is involved in a project on new perspectives in the business history of the modern Middle East.

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