

HEIDIHORTENCOLLECTION

The following is a **summary** of the expert report on Helmut Horten's asset and business accumulations in the context of "Aryanization" during the "Third Reich," prepared by Professor Dr. Peter Hoeres with assistance from Dr. Maximilian Kutzner.

The report examines Helmut Horten's accumulation of assets from 1936 to 1945. During this period, Horten was involved in acquiring department stores from Jewish owners in Duisburg, Wattenscheid, Marienburg, Marienwerder, and Königsberg. Furthermore, the company acquired shares in an armaments factory in Berlin-Johannisthal and served as a textile distributor in Duisburg. The attempted takeovers of a department store in Ostrava (Moravia) and of an Amsterdam share package did not materialize. The acquisition of department store real estate was a crucial component of Horten's wealth accumulation, which he mostly sublet to companies in which he himself owned equity stakes. Additionally, he bought a private residence in Duisburg from a Jewish family.

Helmut Horten benefited from the economic circumstances provided by the Nazi state. He did not, however, take active steps to exert pressure on the Jewish sellers. He took substantial economic and personal risks in carrying out his transactions.

It was Horten's strong fixation on economic issues that made his actions opportunistic. When the Jewish sellers' negotiating position conflicted with his business interests, he asserted his stance. When, however, the regulations and laws of the Nazi state hampered his interests, he undermined them when possible. Consequently, he became embroiled in numerous conflicts with the Nazi regime, leading to his expulsion from the NSDAP in 1944 and his brief imprisonment. On the one hand, he took a high personal risk by continuing to employ individual Jewish employees against the prevailing legal position or even participated in their going underground. On the other hand, he did everything possible to obtain formal recognition from the Nazi authorities for his business, which could include dismissing Jewish employees and renegotiating takeover terms with Jewish sellers.

During the reparations hearings in the British occupation zone (Duisburg, Wattenscheid), he was willing to offer generous compensation to the former owners of the companies. This was not the case, however, for claims asserted in connection with the takeover of the business in Königsberg. Horten was not charged with using forced labor for the Flugzeugwerk Johannisthal GmbH. Consequently, the Denazification Committee declared him exonerated. These proceedings did not, however, consider all aspects of Horten's economic activity from 1936 to 1945.