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Introduction by Kenneth Mouré

**Talbot Imlay and Martin Horn. *The Politics of Industrial Collaboration during World War II: Ford France, Vichy and Nazi Germany*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014. ISBN: 9781107016361 (hardback, \$110.00).**

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**Introduction by Kenneth Mouré, University of Alberta**

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‘Collaboration’ in World War II quickly became a dirty word in wartime conduct, condemning those defeated Europeans who chose to work with the Germans in Occupied Europe. The Germans imposed collaboration in the terms of the armistice agreement France signed in June 1940. In June 1941, Winston Churchill characterized European collaborators as “a vile race of Quislings,” using the eponym for those he predicted “will carry the scorn of mankind down the centuries.”<sup>1</sup> Political and ideological collaboration was highly visible in public statements and conduct, drawing verbal and physical attacks during and after the war. Economic collaboration, while less visible, could spring from political conviction as well as economic interest, and facilitated the extraction of enormous wealth from the occupied countries in Western Europe.

France offered Germany the most advanced, diverse, and accessible economic resources of all the defeated nations.<sup>2</sup> The choices made by firms, and thus by their directors and owners, to work with and for the Germans were based on a range of considerations. These could include ideological sympathy, the opportunity for profit, and the elimination of rivals and increase of market share. But collaboration also could be unwilling, accepted in order to preserve business assets and protect markets and workers from German depredation. “The politics of industrial collaboration” is a subject with great potential to address major questions on the nature of Franco-German collaboration during the Occupation: the business interests that fostered collaboration with the Germans at the level of individual firms; their alignment or conflict with the political, ethical, and moral interests that might otherwise influence business behaviour; the local politics of collaboration and resistance; and the character and efficiency of the Nazi administration as it extended its reach into the economies of occupied countries. On each of these counts, Talbot Imlay and Martin Horn deliver new evidence, analysis, and insights. In previous work they have provided authoritative analyses of collaboration in its positive sense: Franco-British financial diplomacy in World War I,<sup>3</sup> and Franco-British

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<sup>1</sup> Martin Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill* vol. VI *Finest Hour 1939-1941* (London: William Heinemann, 1983), 1108.

<sup>2</sup> For German success in extracting resources from the French economy, see Filippo Occhino, Kim Oosterlinck, and Eugene N. White, “How Much Can a Victor Force the Vanquished to Pay? France under the Nazi Boot,” *Journal of Economic History* 68, no. 1 (2008): 1-45, and Marcel Boldorf and Jonas Scherner, “France’s Occupation Costs and the War in the East: The Contribution to the German War Economy, 1940-4,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 47, no. 2 (2012): 291-316.

<sup>3</sup> Martin Horn, *Britain, France, and the Financing of the First World War* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 2002).

war preparations in the late 1930s,<sup>4</sup> and they have collaborated in assessing French financial preparations for the two world wars.<sup>5</sup>

*The Politics of Industrial Collaboration during World War II* is focused on the operations of Ford *Société Anonyme Française* (SAF), the French subsidiary of Ford USA. As a multinational in a key sector for national war production, Ford was of great interest to the French government in its rearmament campaign in the late 1930s, and to the German occupation authorities for its potential to contribute to their on-going war effort. It is not typical of French firms in being a multinational enterprise, and one that needed to prove it was 'French' to obtain contracts during the French rearmament phase. But Ford's international character adds an extra dimension to the 'politics of collaboration.' In addition to Ford's relations with other automobile manufacturers in France, and with Vichy authorities negotiating on behalf of French industries for their role in the German-controlled economy and the Franco-German negotiations, attention must also be paid to Ford SAF's relations with the U.S. headquarters and with other Ford firms in Europe. The complexity of these relationships and their evolution during the war provide fascinating terrain from which to explore entrepreneurship in wartime, the tensions between political and commercial interests, and the nature and limits of German economic power in exploiting French industry. The authors divide their work chronologically, keeping track in each chapter of German policy and French state policy, particularly the *Comité d'organisation de l'automobile et du cycle* created in October 1940 to coordinate the French auto industry and negotiate on its behalf with the Germans. *The Politics of Industrial Collaboration* joins a cluster of new works that draw on extensive research in German and French archives to develop both sides of the wartime 'collaboration,' with collaboration tilted so heavily to German interests that the very meaning of the word was altered (the Oxford English Dictionary added a second definition of collaboration after the war, "to co-operate traitorously with the enemy," with their earliest example in usage dating to 1941).<sup>6</sup>

The three reviewers for this H-Diplo Roundtable praise the book as an original and important contribution to our understanding of economic collaboration under German domination of Europe in World War II. Ray Stokes and Peter Hayes have both written notable works on German industry during the Nazi years, and they read *The Politics of Industrial Collaboration* in the light of a well-developed literature on German firms under Nazi government. Both are struck by the degree to which Ford France was able to pursue its own ends, and are persuaded by one of Imlay and Horn's central arguments, that German control in the process of 'collaboration' had to depend on compliance and cooperation from French managers. The increasing urgency of military needs, particularly in 1943 and 1944, gave French 'collaborators' increasing room for maneuver because Germany needed war materiel more than it needed tight control. Effective control would require

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<sup>4</sup> Talbot Imlay, *Facing the Second World War: Strategy, Politics, and Economics in Britain and France 1938-1940* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), and "A Reassessment of Anglo-French Strategy during the Phony War, 1939-1940," *English Historical Review* cxix, no. 481 (2004): 333-72.

<sup>5</sup> Martin Horn and Talbot Imlay, "Money in Wartime: France's Financial Preparations for the Two World Wars," *International History Review* 27, no. 4 (2005): 709-753.

<sup>6</sup> Notable recent examples include Marcel Boldorf's essays on economic exploitation -- in *Economies under Occupation: The Hegemony of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan in World War II*, ed. Marcel Boldorf and Tetsuji Okazaki (New York: Routledge, 2015) and Boldorf and Scherner, "France's Occupation Costs and the War in the East;" Barbara Lambauer, *Otto Abetz et les Français ou l'envers de la Collaboration* (Paris: Fayard, 2001); and Gaël Eismann, *Hôtel Majestic: ordre et sécurité en France occupée (1940-1944)* (Paris: Tallandier, 2010).

managers with thorough knowledge of the French auto industry; better to leave it to French managers. Peter Hayes terms it “an ironic tale of amoral corporate calculations interacting with shifts in the wartime balance of forces to give Ford France remarkably beneficial maneuvering room.” A key element in this freedom of maneuver was Ford France’s ability to thwart the German Ford subsidiary, Ford-Werke, in its efforts to organize European production under its control with an eye to dominating post-war European markets. Both reviewers praise the multi-archival basis of the book, which combines sources in private and public archives in the United States, France, and Germany. Both would have liked to see more attention to the interactions, cooperation, and tensions between Ford’s U.S. headquarters in Dearborn, Michigan, and the Ford subsidiaries not just in France and Germany, but in Belgium and the Netherlands, as well as comparison with Ford in Britain.

Patrick Fridenson, the third reviewer, is an eminent historian of French business history with an exacting knowledge of French business in the twentieth century and the French auto industry. In his detailed evaluation, Fridenson finds *The Politics of Industrial Collaboration* “a superb book” for the originality of its contribution, the depth and breadth of its research, and the quality of analysis and exposition. Fridenson stresses the importance of the work for its success in integrating business history and international history, and for its careful delineation of what he terms “relational history:” the complex interactions on and between differing planes of activity between the different branches of automobile manufacturers, between businesses and state authorities, and between the different states. The complexity of these interactions is dealt with very well by the authors; Fridenson observes that “it is a pleasure to follow them in the maze of these relationships,” and lists a series of major historical themes to which these relations contribute, ranging from Second World War concerns for collaboration, resistance, and economic exploitation by an occupying power to broad themes on the relations between business, society, and the state.

Fridenson comments as well on gaps in the authors’ contextualization of their work in the historiography, their differences of interpretation with other authors, the breadth of their use of archival sources in contrast to French historians who have covered neighbouring terrain, archival sources they missed, and the utility of the data in their statistical appendices. He also addresses the issue of how representative the Ford case is in French wartime experience, particularly with regard to individual firms’ freedom of action and the important evidence on how managers’ views and operational strategies evolved as the prospects for war and future peace changed from 1940 to 1944.

In their response to the reviewers, Imlay and Horn acknowledge limitations to their work and clarify the archival resources available for some of the areas on which reviewers would have liked to know more, particularly for the operations within Ford SAF and its relations with the other Ford subsidiaries. They agree on the opportunities for further research in areas they did not cover in depth.

In sum, *The Politics of Industrial Collaboration* offers an original and significant contribution to our understanding of the nature, power, and limits of German exploitation of French industrial resources during the Occupation. It is particularly rewarding in its analysis of the intricate negotiations between Ford firms, French state administrators, and the German armaments officials who were seeking to maximize the French contribution to the German war effort. It clarifies the extent of Ford France’s underproduction in the last two years of the Occupation, but rather than “resistance” this was determined by the firm’s attention to its own interests: “Ford SAF was never opposed in principle to producing for the Germans.” (268) Company interests came before politics or national loyalty.

Participants:

**Talbot Imlay** teaches in the History department at the Université Laval in Québec, Canada. He is currently writing a book for Oxford University Press entitled *The Practice of Socialist Internationalism: European Socialists and International Politics, 1914-1960*.

**Martin Horn** is an Associate Professor of History at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. He is the author of *Britain, France and the Financing of the First World War* (2002) and various articles on international financial relations in the first half of the twentieth century. Presently he is working on a study of J.P. Morgan & Co. during the 1930s.

**Kenneth Mouré** is Professor of History at the University of Alberta. He holds a Ph.D. in European History from the University of Toronto. He has written on French economic policy in the interwar period: *Managing the Franc Poincaré: Economic Understanding and Political Constraint in French Monetary Policy, 1928-1936* (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) and *The Gold Standard Illusion: France, the Bank of France and the Gold Standard 1914-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). His current research explores French experience with economic controls and black markets during and after the Second World War, including most recently “*La Capitale de la Faim: Black Market Restaurants in Paris, 1940-1944*,” *French Historical Studies* 38, no. 2 (2015): 311-41.

**Patrick Fridenson** is an Alumnus of the Ecole Normale Supérieure, Ph.D. in economic history at University of Paris VIII (1971). He is Emeritus Professor of International Business History at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS), Paris, France. He is the co-founder and the editor of the quarterly journal *Entreprises et Histoire*. He is the author, co-author, or editor of several books, including *The Automobile Revolution* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1982, and now available on Internet), *The French Home Front, 1914-1918* (Oxford, Berg, 1992), *Thomson's First Century* (Jouy-en-Josas, Campus Thomson, 1995), *Histoire des usines Renault*, vol. I: 1898-1939 (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Paris, Le Seuil, 1998). His latest book (co-authored with Philip Scranton) is *Reimagining Business History* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013). He is the co-editor of two books edited with Japanese colleagues: (with Tsunehiko Yui) *Beyond Mass Distribution. Distribution, Market and Consumers. Proceedings of Two Japanese-French Business History Conferences* (Tokyo, Japan Business History Institute, 2012) and (with Takeo Kikkawa) *Gappon Capitalism: The Economic and Moral Ideology of Shibusawa Eiichi in Global Perspective* (Tokyo, Toyokeizaishinposha, 2014) (the latter in Japanese). He is working on volume 2 of his *Histoire des usines Renault*, covering the period 1939-1975, when the company faced the growing influence of the national state and the attraction of international markets.

**Peter Hayes** is Professor of History and German and the Theodore Zev Weiss Holocaust Educational Foundation Professor of Holocaust Studies at Northwestern University. He holds degrees from Bowdoin College (A.B), the University of Oxford (M.A.), and Yale University (Ph.D.), and is the author or editor of eleven books and some seventy articles or book chapters. His publications include monographs on the IG Farben and Degussa corporations in the Nazi era, *The Oxford Handbook of Holocaust Studies* (co-edited with John Roth), and *How Was It Possible? A Holocaust Reader* (University of Nebraska Press, March 2015).

**Ray Stokes** is Professor Business History and Director of the Centre for Business History in Scotland at the University of Glasgow. He is the executive editor of *Business History* and the current president of the European Business History Association (EBHA). His most recent publications include *The Business of Waste:*

*Great Britain and Germany since 1945* (Cambridge University Press, 2013) (with Roman Köster and Stephen Sambrook) and *Building on Air: The International Industrial Gases Industry, 1886-2006* (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming [2015]) (with Ralf Banken). His research interests center on comparative business history, history of technology and innovation, and environmental history. He is currently completing a co-authored book on corporate irresponsibility in the origins, unfolding, and aftermath of the thalidomide disaster.

**Review by Patrick Fridenson, Emeritus Professor of International Business History at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS), Paris, France**

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In 1707 the French novelist Alain-René Lesage published his first novel, which immediately made him famous: *Le diable boîteux*, soon translated into English as *The Devil upon Two Sticks* or as *The Lame Devil*.<sup>1</sup> A limping devil thanks a student who has liberated him by removing the roofs from various houses of the city of Madrid to show him the secrets of what passes in private lives. When I read Talbot Imlay and Martin Horn's book, I was immediately reminded of Lesage's novel. Thanks to the authors we can see through the roofs of the main companies, administrations, and military or political authorities of both France and Germany, and even the United States, upon which the strategy, performance, and everyday life of Ford France was dependent during World War II. This is quite a feat. The rapprochement with Lesage may be all the more licit, as the managing director of Ford France, Maurice Dollfus, wrote Edsel Ford in September 1940: "The history of our company during the war seems like a novel."<sup>2</sup>

Beyond this sustained focus on an almost simultaneous view of the main actors, *The Politics of Industrial Collaboration during World War II. Ford France, Vichy and Nazi Germany* is a superb book in its own right, by the novelty of its information, by the coherence of its approach, by the clarity of its writing, and by the wealth of its sources. But it is also living proof that business history and international history can be more interconnected, and that such an interrelation will be mutually beneficial.<sup>3</sup> In my view, in recent years, among books dealing with France only two have met such a challenge: the book under review and Laurence Badel's volume on diplomacy and major business contracts from 1914 to 1990.<sup>4</sup> Without jingoism I suggest that the importance of both books goes way beyond French or even European history.

*Why does this book matter so much?*

Over and above, it offers a relational history. The strategic thinking as well as "the down-to-earth calculations and manoeuvres of Ford's French management and its Vichy French and German Interlocutors" (to quote Robert O. Paxton's remarks on the blurb) are continuously related to one another. Corporate choice is not only seen as a series of moments in a flow of decisions, as business historians worldwide have known since the late 1960s, but it is also depicted as part of a highly complex relational process. During the German occupation of France multiple actors were in contact, and the actors at the multiple layers of each organization may have had influence on the actors located above them or in other organizations. The fact that the company under survey was the subsidiary of a major American multinational adds to the complexity of

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<sup>1</sup> Alain-René Lesage, *Le diable boîteux* (Paris: Veuve Barbin, 1707), and *The Devil upon Two Sticks* (London: Jacob Tonson, 1708).

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Albert J. Baime, *The Arsenal of Democracy: FDR, Detroit, and an Epic Quest to Arm an America at War* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014), 78. Despite the title this book is about the actions of the Ford family.

<sup>3</sup> Laurence Badel, "Milieux économiques et relations internationales: bilans et perspectives de la recherche au début du XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Relations internationales*, 41, No. 157, April 2014, 3-23.

<sup>4</sup> Laurence Badel, *Diplomatie et grands contrats. L'État français et les marchés extérieurs au XX<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2010).



this relational history in two ways: in comparison with earlier researches that focused on French businesses under German rule, particularly the major research program which Hervé Joly led for 8 years,<sup>5</sup> it includes an American company and the book depicts the evolution of a triangular relationship between Germany, France, and the United States; it also depicts the antagonism between two members of the same family, Ford Germany and Ford France. Whereas Henry A. Turner only dealt with General Motors and the Nazis in his well-known book of 2005 (to which a reference is made only in a footnote and in the bibliography), the task of the authors was even more difficult.<sup>6</sup> They have fulfilled it. And it is a pleasure to follow them in the maze of these relationships between the new powers which dominated business in France and the former powers.

This relational history brings about major themes of interest for historians and other social scientists: the shifting frontiers and connections between public and private; the central place that scholars now accord to the history of dictatorships, wars, occupations;<sup>7</sup> the dilemma of collaboration with the enemy or resistance; the postwar redefinitions of politics, business and society; the navigations of the military in civilian matters, and the adjustments of businessmen to political risks.

*What are the takeaways of the book in my view?*

It casts new lights on Germany at war. It gives a wealth of new details on the polycentric nature of the Nazi regime during World War II and the instability, precariousness, oppositions and contradictions of its subsystems. It confirms the interpretation recently provided by Adam Tooze of the continuous asymmetry of resources between the Germans and the Allies and of the Germans' failure to mobilize the economic potential of Western Europe.<sup>8</sup> But while Tooze's fundamental book is relatively thin at the level of companies, this book fills that gap. At this micro-economic level, the book's interpretation is that, despite the building of "an extensive economic administration" (15-16) by the Germans, "the ability of the occupiers to compel French industries and companies to work for them" declined over time as "industrialists and workers were losing interest in industrial collaboration", and "companies had more and more reasons to limit their efforts" as their interests "increasingly diverged from the occupiers" (13). It confirms that the Germans tried to overcome another obstacle: the national divisions within Europe by promoting a continental level of coordination and cooperation. It therefore adds new details to what one already knew about the European Automobile Committee<sup>9</sup> and rightly concludes (64, 79, 80) that at this macro level the Germans, for all their efforts, were

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<sup>5</sup> *Les entreprises françaises sous l'Occupation* (2002-2009). See [www.gdr2539.ish-lyon.cnrs.fr](http://www.gdr2539.ish-lyon.cnrs.fr)

<sup>6</sup> Henry A. Turner, *General Motors and the Nazis: the Struggle for the Control of Opel, Europe's Biggest Carmaker* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).

<sup>7</sup> On dictatorships, see, for instance, Christopher Kobrak and Per H. Hansen (eds.), *European Business, Dictatorship, and Political Risk, 1920-1945* (New York: Berghahn, 2004); on wars and occupations, Jean-François Chanut and Jean-François Eck (eds.), "Occupations militaires et entreprises en Europe occidentale," *Entreprises et Histoire*, 20, No 62, April 2011 and 21, No 68, September 2012.

<sup>8</sup> Adam Tooze, *The Wages of Destruction: The Making and the Breaking of the Nazi Economy* (London: Allen Lane, 2006).

<sup>9</sup> The authors, however, do not mention the previous information on this Committee provided respectively by Robert O. Paxton, *Vichy France: Old France and New Order, 1940-1944* (New York: Knopf, 1972) and by Patrick Fridenson, "Les entreprises automobiles sous l'Occupation," in Olivier Dard, Jean-Claude Daumas, and François Marcot



no more successful. Historians now know that similar European initiatives in other industries also ended in a fiasco.

For France the relational perspective of the book illuminates what I would call the relative power of the weak in a totalitarian regime. The in-depth pictures of two business leaders, Maurice Dollfus and François Lehideux, and of their two institutions, Ford Société Anonyme Française (SAF) and the Automobile Organization Committee (COA), show the (growing) ability of French companies to determine the extent of their collaboration with the Germans and therefore their full responsibility. All the more as, at the local and factory levels, the Germans “never found a satisfactory solution [...] to ensure the effective oversight of French companies” (16). Here are two of the original theses of the book. On one side, Ford Germany, under the leadership of Robert Schmidt and Heinrich Albert, an unfriendly duo, failed to get the full control of Ford France it was seeking and, although intercompany tensions abated, “well before the end of 1943,” it took the opposite course, limiting its involvement with Ford France, which, Imlay adds, “would likely not have succeeded.” Pages 232-233, which detail and weigh this turnaround, are superb. On the other side, the authors argue that in the final years of the war, “Ford SAF did under-produce,” but “that under-production of this type did not constitute resistance since Ford SAF was not opposed in principle to working for the Germans” (10-11). They suggest that this may have been the case for many large French companies.

On the role of the United States companies, the relational perspective of this book brings about many elements but fewer surprises. At a time when our knowledge of the behavior of Ford Germany had considerably increased thanks inter alia to the research of political scientist Simon F. Reich, historian Steven Tolliday and of German historians, Mira Wilkins demonstrated in an essay of 2004 (not mentioned in this book) how after the Nazi seizure of power all the American multinationals which were present in Germany chose to maintain their activities and adapt themselves in many ways to the constraints and orientations of the regime, and to substitute “domestic output for imports.”<sup>10</sup> It seems clear from German historians’ works<sup>11</sup> and from this book that these constraints and adaptations increased the autonomy of Ford Germany in relation to the headquarters in Dearborn, Michigan. The same point was simultaneously made by the young American independent scholar Scott Nehmer in his book, well-researched in the Ford archives, but sometimes a little weird, on Ford, General Motors, and the Nazis.<sup>12</sup> The originality of the book under review for the war period is thus threefold. It does not separate the Ford-Werke from the other European subsidiaries and thus is able to show, as alluded above, that by their own choice, the German managers of the Ford-Werke for a

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(eds.), *L'Occupation, l'État français et les entreprises* (Paris: ADHE, 2000), 328-329. Annie Lacroix-Riz also adds new details in *Industriels et banquiers français sous l'Occupation*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Paris: Armand Colin, 2013), 231-234, but does not acknowledge earlier research either.

<sup>10</sup> Mira Wilkins, “Multinationals and Dictatorship: Europe in the 1930s and early 1940s,” in Christopher Kobrak and Per H. Hansen (eds.), *European Business, op. cit.*, 22-38.

<sup>11</sup> See for instance Johannes Reiling, “Eine transatlantische Irrfahrt: Zur deutschen Geschichte Unternehmungen Henry Fords von 1924 bis zum Ende des Zweiten Weltkriegs,” in Michael Walla and Reinhard R. Doerries (eds.), *Gesellschaft und Diplomatie im transatlantischen Kontext. Festschrift für Reinhard R. Doerries zum 65. Geburtstag* (Stuttgart: Steiner Verlag, 1999), 149-164.

<sup>12</sup> Scott Nehmer, *Ford, General Motors, and the Nazis: Marxist Myths about Production, Patriotism, and Philosophies* (Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2013).

while wanted to refashion Ford's European empire just as the Nazis aimed at dominating Europe. As a twist of the relational perspective, it might be observed here that one of the reasons why Ford Germany did not succeed is that the German High Command itself resisted the plan ("fearing it would reduce output").<sup>13</sup> In addition to the well-known difference of size between Ford Germany and Ford France, the book under review stresses a major contrast: American subsidiaries working in Germany were confronted with the use of slave labor, and American subsidiaries working elsewhere in Europe "could focus more single-mindedly on the benefits and risks of producing war matériel for the Germans," a process "more revealing of business calculation in wartime" (19). Third, both the German and French managers continued to report to Dearborn until quite late in the war, a point equally made by Nehmer. Thus "from September 1939 Ford Motor Company's huge British company was producing to aid the British cause, while its smaller German affiliate was on the other side of the war."<sup>14</sup> This was by no means peculiar to Ford. For instance, Standard Oil of New Jersey did the same. After December 7, 1941, Ford stood firmly on the Allied side, yet Dearborn kept a close watch on the reports and information it received from its German subsidiary until May 15, 1942, and from its French subsidiary until July 1942.<sup>15</sup> Then, to quote again from Wilkins's reflections on multinationals at war, "Ford US was no longer in control. The business had fragmented."<sup>16</sup>

Finally, I want to stress the plurality of the archives used, which is one of the main assets of this book. It is a geographic plurality: French, German, British, and American sources are mobilized. It is a functional plurality: military and civilian archives are combined, political and administrative archives are connected with business archives. By contrast, the position of the French historian of World War II industrialists and bankers in France, Annie Lacroix-Riz, appears remarkably fragile: for years she has refused to use business archives as a matter of principle and her use of the German archives is very partial.<sup>17</sup> In the same vein, the historian of Ford France (and of the French automobile industry) Jean-Louis Loubet never uses American and German archives.<sup>18</sup> Among other things, this gap kept him from seeing the priority granted by the Germans to Ford for the production of trucks in Western Europe, which might have led ultimately such large scale enterprises as Renault or Citroën to become at least partly subcontractors of Ford's European subsidiaries.

At this juncture, French historians usually turn to their readers and say: 'After the rose, let us look at the thorns.' I shall not use this rhetoric. What follows are not thorns, but constructive remarks and open questions. However, I cannot refrain from mentioning the fact that the authors' editing of the manuscript and of the proofs could have been better. Garbled are several family names [even the pioneer author on the topic,

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<sup>13</sup> Simon F. Reich, *The Fruits of Fascism: Postwar Prosperity in Historical Perspective* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 120.

<sup>14</sup> Wilkins, 32.

<sup>15</sup> For France, see Daniel Warsh, "The Silent Partner: How the Ford Motor Company Became an Arsenal of Nazism," senior honors thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 2008, 119-125.

<sup>16</sup> Wilkins to the author, e-mail, July 29, 2015.

<sup>17</sup> Lacroix-Riz, *Industriels et banquiers, op. cit.*

<sup>18</sup> Jean-Louis Loubet and Nicolas Hatzfeld, *Les 7 vies de Poissy. Une aventure industrielle* (Boulogne-Billancourt : ETAI, 2001), 40-46.

who is called Wilkens (291)], first names (the female German historian Heidrun Homburg is called “Heinrich” (9 and 281); “Granf” (61 and 287) is not a first name, it is a deformation of Graf, which means Count, places [Renault’s central factory location is called “Billarcourt” (275)], and here and there various German or French words are misspelt. I mention these points because with both e-books and Google books such typos will reappear worldwide.<sup>19</sup>

A much more important question relates to historiography. How do the authors situate themselves in relation to earlier work? In my view, the main gap here is with regard to American and English historians. Let us first talk about the American automobile multinationals during this period. The reader will miss a frank assessment of the interpretation of Ford as a multinational that the American historians Mira Wilkins and Frank Hill produced in their book of 1964, at a time when they could mobilize much fewer sources (basically the archives of the Ford Motor Company) and a different one (oral history interviews with a number of characters now deceased) and a scholarly literature on the era which was less developed; the book was conveniently reprinted in 2011.<sup>20</sup> We only learn in a footnote that a limit of the book is to deal separately with each European subsidiary and it once contradicts the parent book of Allan Nevins and Frank Hill. But seen from today what are the pros and cons of the use of oral history practiced by these authors? Similarly there is no assessment of the strength and possible weaknesses of Turner’s *General Motors and the Nazis*. The book is in the bibliography, but neither the author nor the firm are in the index. A comparison between Ford and General Motors would be welcome. Also, Imlay and Horn might have mentioned that the case of Ford France under Nazi rule was reopened in 2000 by an American investigation journalist and, a few months later, by a group of German historians, all of them dealing with American automobile multinationals and forced labor in Germany<sup>21</sup>. On a broader level, Alan Milward’s pioneering history of German exploitation of the French economy is called “classic” in the introduction,<sup>22</sup> but we have to wait until page 195 before learning that his conclusions are now challenged by a German historian.

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<sup>19</sup> Plus minor details: the book by A. Lacroix-Riz was published in 2013 not 2014 (3 and 282); the index saying that there is a reference to her work on page 28 is erroneous, it also omits the presence of Plenipotentiary for Automotive Affairs General Adolf von Schell on pages 62, 83 and 89 and of Ford’s African project on pages 93-94; Laurent Dingli’s analysis that is criticized on page 8 appears on page 470 of his book, not 468.

<sup>20</sup> Wilkins and Frank E. Hill, *American Business Abroad: Ford on Six Continents* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1964; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. with a new introduction: Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011). See Patrick Fridenson, “Review essay: Mira Wilkins and Frank Ernest Hill, *American Business Abroad: Ford on Six Continents*,” *Business History Review*, 88, 4, Winter 2014, 791-797.

<sup>21</sup> Ken Silverstein, “Ford and the Führer,” *The Nation*, 136, January 24, 2000 (accessed on line). Reinhold Billstein, Karola Fings, Anita Kugler and Nicholas Levis, *Working for the Enemy. Ford, General Motors and Forced Labor in Germany during the Second World War* (New York-Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2000). This book is mentioned in the historiographical review of Imlay and Horn, however in a footnote: (18) footnote 41.

<sup>22</sup> Alan S. Milward, *The New Order and the French Economy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970). For a balanced reappraisal of his entire work, see the 130 page introduction to Fernando Guirao, Frances Lynch and Sigfrido M. Ramirez Perez (eds.), *Alan S. Milward and A Century of European Change* (New York-Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), and several essays therein.

Regarding several French historians, the criticisms made in this book, particularly on pages 7-9, are generally well taken. It is certainly true that the affirmation by French historians of World War II automobile industry, Emmanuel Chadeau, Gilbert Hatry, Jean-Louis Loubet, and François Marcot, that the main French car makers “deliberately under-produced” needs “more skepticism” and that in “in a new and profoundly different economic situation [...] to compare production figures before and after 1940 is misleading” (9). However, a cultural history approach would also emphasize that a number of actors after the Liberation such as judges, chartered accountants, and fiscal experts kept making such comparisons. It is also true that Laurent Dingli’s assessment of a “deliberate and sustained ‘policy of reduction’”<sup>23</sup> is unfounded (8). Yet in his case it might also be mentioned that his biography of Louis Renault produced archival documents which helped researchers to revise the historical interpretation of the Vichy régime’s meanderings on the production of war matériel by French companies (a letter from Léon Noël, general delegate of Maréchal Pétain for the occupied zone, to Pétain; the deal between German military officials, Renault and baron Petiet on August 4, 1940; and the discussion after Renault’s first bombing by the RAF in March 1942): the book under review does not acknowledge his work (69, 73-74, 140-142); he commented on the meaningful speech of the German Colonel Thoenissen at the Chamber of deputies on July 10, 1940 calling French car makers to collaboration, which is not mentioned in this book, if I am not mistaken. And on page 242 my co-author Jean-Louis Robert and I are (kindly) criticized for having written that a fraction of French workers restricted their output for economic and/or political reasons.<sup>24</sup> Given that in our article we also mentioned all the other factors which limited production, I do not see why we should definitely discard the reality of a practice that was acknowledged by some members of the U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey after the Liberation and which was long familiar to a minority of skilled workers worldwide.

Chapter 1, by Horn, deals with “Ford SAF: 1929-1940.” Yet a fundamental source for its final pages dealing with the period of the phony war and of the German invasion was not consulted: at the French National Archives, the 31 boxes of the papers of the 1939-1940 minister of Armament Raoul Dautry.<sup>25</sup> There is only a cursory mention of Raoul Dautry himself (42), an ambitious but not always successful technocrat, despite his role not only in armament but also in war planning.

On wartime production and profits, the book publishes two outstanding statistical appendices on pages 270-273.

Appendix A is called “Ford operations in France 1929-June 1946.” It reproduces a table of 1946 found in the Benson Ford Archives in Detroit. The immediate message of this appendix is very clear. Out of the 10 years before the Occupation, 5 incurred losses. But the years 1940, 1941, 1942, 1943 and the first half of 1946 brought profits. The authors should make clear why the net result of 1944 and even 1945 is zero. A detailed analysis of the evolution of the respective share of the sales, costs, commercial expenses, other charges in the net result would be welcome. Moreover all figures are in current French francs. Given the inflation since 1936 and even more during the Occupation, it would be good to have the figures deflated in order to make real

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<sup>23</sup> Laurent Dingli, *Louis Renault* (Paris: Flammarion, 2000), 470.

<sup>24</sup> Patrick Fridenson and Jean-Louis Robert, “Les ouvriers dans la France de la Seconde Guerre mondiale. Un bilan,” *Le Mouvement Social*, 51, No 158, January-March 1992, 117-148.

<sup>25</sup> Archives Nationales, 307 AP 104 to 135.

comparisons about the performance of the company. Therefore the assessment that the authors give on page 137 of the growth of profits of Ford France during the years 1940 and 1941 is certainly excessive, and their comparison with 1930 should be revised.

Appendix B presents Ford France's production during the German occupation. It combines German and French archival documents. For trucks it shows the actual decline of production during the Occupation, with variations and much uncertainty in the periods covered. For engines and parts it shows the gap between what Ford France promised the Germans and the goods actually delivered. It is one of the bases for the authors' claim that in 1943-1944 Ford France limited its cooperation with the Germans' European truck program. It is difficult here not to remember the authors' earlier warning against the comparisons of figures and their advice to consider the obstacles to production. They take earnest precautions (see the second paragraph on page 236) before putting forward their thesis that Ford France then reassessed its best interests and possibilities and "scaled back its efforts" without joining the resistance at all. Frankly speaking, a detailed analysis of the German orders and of the correspondence related to their execution would be welcome and it would probably need the reading of other types of archives. Nevertheless historians should not be tepid in the course of a major scholarly controversy. At this stage I have been convinced by the authors and I personally support their interpretation, which challenges conventional wisdom.

The brilliant final chapter, "From Liberation to Disappearance: 1944-1953," which is very much in keeping with the modern scholarship on 'war exits' and on the medium-term consequences of wars,<sup>26</sup> studies the loss of trust of American owners and managers in the future of Ford's subsidiary in France and, in the short term, the Americans' agreement to the appointment of no other than Vichy's François Lehideux as the new general director. Another gap should be noted here. I am stressing its importance all the more as we are discussing the book on H-Diplo. It is the relation of Ford's postwar story to transatlantic networks and the emergence of a liberal vision of the economic unification of Europe, a topic that has been explored since 1993 by several international historians, initially Belgians<sup>27</sup> who were relayed by a Spanish historian<sup>28</sup> and by a French independent scholar.<sup>29</sup> The conjunction between an association of business leaders, the Committee for Economic Development, founded in 1942, and the broadened vision of the Ford Foundation led them to

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<sup>26</sup> For France see Olivier Dard, Hervé Joly and Philippe Verheyde (eds.) *Les entreprises françaises, l'Occupation et le second XX<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Metz: Centre de recherche universitaire lorrain, 2011).

<sup>27</sup> Anne-Myriam Dutrieue, "Le CEPES, un mouvement patronal européen ? 1952-1967," in Michel Dumoulin, René Girault and Gilbert Trausch (eds.), *L'Europe du patronat de la guerre froide aux années soixante* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1993), 213-230. Thierry Grosbois, "Ford's strategy towards European integration after World War II," in Hubert Bonin and Ferry de Goey (eds.), *American Firms in Europe 1880-1990. Strategy, Identity, Perception and Performance* (Geneva: Droz, 2009), 459-483.

<sup>28</sup> Sigfrido M. Ramirez Perez, "The European Committee for Economic and Social Progress: Business Networks between Atlantic and European Communities," in Wolfram Kaiser, Brigitte Leucht, Michael Gehler (eds.), *Transnational Networks in Regional Integration: Governing Europe 1945-1983* (Basingstoke-New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 61-84, and "Proyectos de globalización económica e integración europea : las empresas multinacionales entre guerra fría y tercer mundo (1950-1970)," *Puente@Europa*, 9: 2, December 2011 (on-line).

<sup>29</sup> Jean-François Colas, entry "Comité européen pour le progrès économique et social," wikipedia.fr (accessed on June 5, 2015).

create and finance in 1952 a European counterpart of their network, the *Comité européen pour le progrès social* (CEPES). It “favoured liberalism and free-trade in Europe, as well as a unification of European currencies,” all objectives which were very much in keeping with Ford’s industrial wish-list in Europe.”<sup>30</sup> Headed by the CEO of the Italian automaker Fiat, Vittorio Valletta, it was composed of national chapters. It achieved the *tour de force* of attracting mostly ‘anti-Hitlerites’ in Germany and a number of followers of Maréchal Pétain in France. The Americans appointed as one of the two European vice-presidents and president of the French chapter François Lehideux, then CEO of Ford France, who was very active until 1958. Lehideux brought with him his PR attaché at Ford France, Claude Popelin, who had been one of his aides during the Occupation period. As regards Ford Germany during the same period, the authors might have mentioned the fact that, as Mira Wilkins had already shown by 1964 in her book with Frank Hill, Ford rehired Robert Schmidt in 1950<sup>31</sup>, and that six of the “key executives from the Nazi era” occupied posts “on Ford Werke’s eight-member board of managers as of 1956,” Schmidt being deputy chairman.<sup>32</sup>

The question of Africa also needs more space or emphasis. To be sure, as the book says, Dollfus had wanted to erect “an African subsidiary since the 1930s.” (93). But he was not at all alone. The book should add here that the French Army itself in 1938 had sketched a plan to industrialize Algeria, as Daniel Lefeuve has shown.<sup>33</sup> The Army’s plan was the basis of Vichy’s plan to ‘modernize’ Algeria. Dollfus’s positive answer cannot be reduced therefore, as the book does, to a defensive “alternative to Ford-Werke’s ambitions” (93). His vision of a “post-war European-African economic union” was genuine. Nehmer’s book reached the same conclusion in 2013 with other documents from 1941 which he found in the Benson Ford archives.<sup>34</sup> He shows with which various considerations Dollfus got a green light from Dearborn. He concludes that “Dollfus had aspirations to be to the continent of Africa what Perry [the British top manager] was for continental Europe before the war.”<sup>35</sup> Dreaming of assembling in Oran (136) trucks and tractors from parts made by all the European subsidiaries of Ford, Dollfus enlisted the support of François Lehideux and the COA in 1941. Although the foundation of Ford Afrique finally attracted a French government contract of 30 trucks instead of 400, his hopes were most certainly dashed by the liberation of North Africa in November 1942. The book indicates that reanimating the project after the liberation of France was on the agenda of his first trip to the U.S. in December 1944 (251). We do not know what happened next. It would have been useful to mention that this window of opportunity for the development of the Algerian economy reappeared after quite a while: the idea of a factory to assemble trucks in Algeria was taken up by the French truck maker Berliet, which in 1957 created a production site in Rouiba, near Algiers, that is still producing. And Oran came back on the

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<sup>30</sup> Grosbois, “Ford’s strategy,” *op. cit.*, 475-476.

<sup>31</sup> Wilkins and Hill, *American Business Abroad*, *op. cit.*, 391.

<sup>32</sup> Silverstein, “Ford and the Führer,” *op. cit.*; Karola Fings, “Forced Labor at the Ford Werke in Cologne,” in Billstein *et al.*, *Working for the Enemy*, *op. cit.*, 160-161. These authors do not refer to Wilkins and Hill.

<sup>33</sup> Most recently in Daniel Lefeuve, *Chère Algérie. La France et sa colonie (1830-1962)* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Paris: Flammarion, 2005).

<sup>34</sup> Nehmer, *Ford, General Motors*, *op. cit.*, 184-185.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 185.



map as the site for the first assembly plant of cars in Algeria, a decision reached by Renault in 2012 with the agreement of the Algerian government. The plant opened in November 2014.<sup>36</sup>

Is the Ford case typical? For some elements this is sure. Both international and business historians will learn from the book about the behavior of the local subsidiaries of major multinationals during international conflicts. In a perspective parallel to the one Mira Wilkins stated in her 2004 piece on multinationals in Nazi Germany quoted above, the book poses in detailed and realistic terms the issue and the meaning of 'control', and it very specifically touches on the differences between "financial, legal, administrative and operational structures,"<sup>37</sup> as it considers the various issues of control in the Ford group during these years. And thanks to the intense correspondence that was exchanged, historians will learn how leading businessmen on both sides of the Atlantic speculated about the possible scenarios for business after the end of the war (despite the possibility of censorship for the Europeans). At another level, it is clear from Daniel Lefevre's publications that Ford France's interest in North Africa was shared by a number of major French firms, which led them to continue their expansion there after the end of World War II.<sup>38</sup> But what about what the main title of the book suggests: "The Politics of Industrial Collaboration during World War II"? In my opinion, historians should keep in mind the demonstration of such a relational history that during the course of the German occupation some large French firms' room to manoeuvre did not necessarily shrink, as is commonly believed, but that it may have increased after 1942. The authors take good care not to assert that the Ford case has a general value. Indeed there were not so many firms at the end of August 1940 whose managing director could write to his main shareholder: "I believe that as long as the war goes on and at least for some period of time all that we shall produce will be taken by the German Authorities. [...] in order to safeguard our interests – and I am here talking in a very broad way – I have been to Berlin and have seen General von Schell himself [...]. My interview with him has been by all means satisfactory," and Dollfus added in longhand: "I was the first Frenchman to go to Berlin."<sup>39</sup> To be sure, there were strong differences with other firms of the automobile sector, and there also were contrasts with other industrial branches. But it has been shown in the case of Peugeot how business leaders can change their view of politics during a war<sup>40</sup>. More generally, what could be

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<sup>36</sup> This information was known well before the book appeared in April 2014. For a later review of the automobile revolution in Algeria and its social cost see [Yassin Tlemlali, "L'âge d'or de l'automobile, une calamité pour l'Algérie," \*Orient XXI\*, November 19, 2014 : http://orientxxi.info/magazine/l-age-d-or-de-l-automobile-une,0749](http://orientxxi.info/magazine/l-age-d-or-de-l-automobile-une,0749) (accessed June 5, 2015).

<sup>37</sup> Wilkins, "Multinationals and Dictatorship," 38.

<sup>38</sup> Daniel Lefevre, "Vichy et la modernisation de l'Algérie. Intention ou réalité," *Vingtième Siècle*, 11, No 42, April-June 1994, 14-16 and *Chère Algérie*, *op. cit.*

<sup>39</sup> Maurice Dollfus to Edsel Ford, 31 August 1940, quoted by Silverstein, "Ford and the Führer," *op. cit.*, Billstein, "1945. How the Americans Took Over Cologne and Discovered Ford Werke's Role in the War," in *Working for the Enemy*, *op. cit.*, 105-106; Warsh, "The Silent Partner," 122-123, and Baime, *The Arsenal of Democracy*, *op. cit.*, 77. There are slight differences between their versions of the letter. It is the same letter which is mentioned in the book under review page 83 footnote 98 (the original copy in the Benson Ford Archives). The negotiations between Dollfus and von Schell are not at all mentioned in Loubet and Hatzfeld, *Les 7 vies*, *op. cit.*, 41-42.

<sup>40</sup> François Marcot, "La direction de Peugeot sous l'Occupation: pétainisme, réticence, opposition et résistance," *Le Mouvement Social*, 49, No 189, October-December 1999, 27-46.



typical not only of some large French firms but also, as the book boldly suggests, “of companies elsewhere in occupied Europe” is the process which could lead major business leaders not to commit themselves to cooperation with Nazi Germany to the same extent as before as a result of a strategic analysis of the logic of firms as firms (269).

Our team of Canadian historians, Talbot Imlay and Martin Horn, deserve thanks for producing a book which openly challenges the orthodoxy, expects debate and controversy, and, by systematically confronting the German and the French subsidiaries of the same American multinational, attempts to reinterpret the nature, variations, and horizons of capitalism at war.

Review by Peter Hayes, Northwestern University

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Talbot Imlay and Martin Horn have written an illuminating and original book, not only one of the first in-depth inquiries into the history of a multinational corporation in Nazi-occupied Europe, but also a very astute blend of micro- and macro-level analysis. In the course of lucidly tracing the multi-dimensional relationship among Ford's principal subsidiaries in occupied Europe and between them and the governments of Vichy France and Nazi Germany, the authors lay bare an ironic tale of amoral corporate calculations interacting with shifts in the wartime balance of forces to give Ford France remarkably beneficial maneuvering room. From a vulnerable enterprise that needed German goodwill and thus strove to satisfy the occupiers in 1940-1942, Ford France evolved in 1943-1944, thanks to Germany's increasingly desperate military position, into a company both protected from the empire-building aspirations of Ford-Werke, its German relative in Cologne, and able to get away with under delivering on German orders. Ever more eager to obtain whatever trucks, parts, and engines Ford France could provide as the tide of war turned, the Reich did not dare exert control over the enterprise in any way that might disrupt production. Consequently, the company's bargaining power rose as its output fell, and the firm experienced "a good war" (246). Buoyed by its profits early in the conflict and by its hoarding of raw materials and its defense of its autonomy and patriotic credentials thereafter, Ford France emerged in 1945 as a far larger presence in that nation's automobile industry than it had been in 1939. In another ironic twist, however, the company's success faded quickly. The same leaders who adroitly guided the firm in wartime ran up such heavy losses afterwards that Ford's Detroit headquarters decided to sell its French operations in 1953 to an Italian carmaker.

Thoroughly researched and smoothly written, this book is also full of the sort of mid-level insights that stimulate further reflection and, one hopes, research. One of the most revealing such perceptions concerns Ford France's much greater success than its German counterpart in preserving and exploiting relationships with Detroit and the international Ford network during the war. Ford's German subsidiary saw its American ownership as facilitating the expansion of German control over auto industries in occupied Europe. But Ford-Werke overplayed its hand in trying to subject other Ford holdings to German production norms, and Ford France persuaded both Vichy's and Germany's oversight agencies that decisions about the continental organization of Ford's European holdings should be put off and made by Detroit after the war. In the struggle for supremacy within Ford's European realm, the German subsidiary's increasing subjection to German attempts at rationalization and to the Reich's secrecy requirements cut Cologne off from the other Ford affiliates on the continent and undercut its efforts to exploit the Reich's political domination.

This pattern directs attention to another ironic aspect of the story told in this book, one that the authors might have developed more fully: the Ford subsidiary in initially victorious Germany did not have a much better war than the one in initially defeated France. The report on Ford-Werke in Nazi Germany prepared by a commission of scholars in 2001 parallels Imlay and Horn's account of Ford France's leaders in depicting Robert Schmidt, the German 'custodian' of Ford-Werke and of all Ford subsidiaries in occupied Europe, as an opportunist who exploited the Reich's power and possibilities as long as they advanced his career and the Nazis appeared to be winning, but who pulled back and actually held down truck production and delayed moving equipment toward the German interior once the war turned against Germany. He never even joined the Nazi Party.<sup>1</sup> At Ford-Werke sales rose every year from 1940 through 1943—that is, over a slightly longer

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<sup>1</sup> Ford Motor Company, *Research Findings about Ford-Werke under the Nazi Regime* (Dearborn MI: Ford Motor Company Archives, 2001), 12-13, 109-14.

period than at Ford France—before falling off. The Cologne plant suffered little damage from air raids, which proved especially fortunate because the Reich declined to pay compensation for such destruction to foreign-owned firms after 1941. Meanwhile, the tools and other production equipment became worn out. As a result, although Ford-Werke's assets rose in value from 43.5 million Reichsmarks in 1938 to 68.9 million in 1945, and net income over the same period came to 3.8 million Reichsmarks, the accumulated dividends to Detroit, following conversion of the Reichsmark to the Deutschmark, came to only \$60,000, to which one may add the \$1.1 million in compensation for war damage that the U.S. Congress awarded to Ford in 1967.<sup>2</sup>

Ford-Werke's history parallels that of Ford France during the 1930s in another major respect: both companies labored to overcome the impression that they were 'foreign,' an impression that for much of the prewar period led to their backhanded treatment by the respective national governments. In Germany, this meant increasing the number and presence of German managers, firing a Jewish one in 1936 (a decision that Ford headquarters in Detroit got reversed for a time), paying for and diverting to the government scarce imported raw materials, increasing exports, and finally, beginning production of military vehicles. In France, it meant trying to get the local operations out from under the supervision of Ford Britain and serving the armament effort in 1938-1940. In both countries, the firm's ultimate importance to the German war effort proved relatively slight, though much more so in the case of the French firm than the German one: Ford-Werke produced 10,000 to 15,000 trucks per year in 1940-1943, whereas Ford France made only 4,000 trucks and 4,100 truck engines in 1941, its most productive year during the war.<sup>3</sup>

Imlay and Horn's excellent book would be stronger still had it more regularly compared and contrasted Ford France's development to that of Ford's other European subsidiaries, not only Ford-Werke, but also the English offshoot at Dagenham, east of London. That said, this is a valuable, extremely well written and structured study and a model worthy of emulation.

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 116, 133, and 136.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 35-40, and Imlay and Horn, 272.

Review by Ray Stokes, University of Glasgow

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For a surprisingly long time after the end of the Second World War, scholarship focusing on the role of individual firms in the Third Reich was quite rare. This began to change only in the mid-1980s, in particular with the 1986 publication of Peter Hayes's study of the German chemical giant IG *Farbenindustrie* AG and its complex and evolving relationship with the National-Socialist regime.<sup>1</sup> The two decades that followed witnessed the appearance of scholarly monographs and articles on a wide range of German banks and firms, a vast and rich output that was fuelled in particular by public pressure on companies to come clean about their activities in the Nazi era and by the related increased willingness of top managers in those companies to commission independent historians to carry out extensive archival research and writing.<sup>2</sup> That same sort of pressure has formed part of the impetus behind the publication of critical scholarly examinations of the behavior of non-German (in particular Swiss and U.S. American) firms in Nazi Germany, while scholars also began to undertake detailed studies of business operations outside of Germany in Nazi-occupied Europe.<sup>3</sup>

Talbot Imlay and Martin Horn's investigation of Ford France (Ford SAF) during the Third-Reich era therefore joins a highly developed body of literature. And, like most of the earlier studies in this area, it focuses on the tension between business and commercial interests on the one hand and political and military interests on the other, an issue that is most frequently framed in terms of the extent to which individual firms and their managers enjoyed freedom of action in the context of the National Socialist dictatorship and the Nazi domination of large parts of continental Europe during the Second World War.<sup>4</sup> But it goes far beyond

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Hayes, *Industry and Ideology: IG Farben in the Nazi Era* (Cambridge University Press, 1986; 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2001).

<sup>2</sup> The majority of this very large scholarly output is in German, but a number of key texts have appeared in English. See, for instance, Neil Gregor, *Daimler-Benz in the Third Reich* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); Gerald Feldman, *Allianz and the German Insurance Business, 1933-1945* (Cambridge University Press, 2001); Peter Hayes, *From Commerce to Complicity: Degussa in the Third Reich* (Cambridge University Press, 2004); Raymond G. Stokes, "From the IG Farben Fusion to the Establishment of BASF AG (1925-1952), in Werner Abelshausen, *et.al., German Industry and Global Enterprise. BASF: The History of a Company* (Cambridge University Press, 2004; Harold James, *The Deutsche Bank and the Nazi Economic War against the Jews: The Expropriation of Jewish-Owned Property* (Cambridge University Press, 2006); Stephan H. Lindner, *Inside IG Farben: Hoechst during the Third Reich* (Cambridge University Press, 2008). On some of the reasons for the outpouring of scholarship, see the conference report on "Commissioning History in the United States, Germany, and Austria: Historical Commissions, Victims, and World War II Restitution," *GHI Bulletin* No. 2003 (Spring 2003): 170-179 (<http://www.ghi-dc.org/publications/ghipubs/bu/032/32.165-174.pdf>, accessed 6 December 2015).

<sup>3</sup> For Swiss business activity in (and business and financial relations with) Nazi Germany, see for instance *Switzerland, National Socialism and the Second World War: Final Report* (Zurich: Pendo, 2002); on U.S. business, see for instance Henry Ashby Turner, *General Motors and the Nazis: The Struggle for Control of Opel, Europe's Biggest Carmaker* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005); on business in occupied Europe, Joachim Lund, ed., *Working for the New Order: European Business under German Domination, 1936-1945* (Copenhagen: Copenhagen Business School Press, 2006).

<sup>4</sup> On the freedom of action of business in Nazi Germany, see the debate between Peter Hayes on the one hand and Christoph Buchheim and Jonas Scherner on the other in: *Bulletin 45 of the German Historical Institute, Washington,*

merely adding empirical detail to this relatively recent but still extensive historiography through yet another case study. Indeed, in many ways, the book is an essential and welcome addition to, and extension of, that literature. For one thing, it deals with the situation in occupied and unoccupied France, which is far less well developed in the historiography compared to Germany in particular. Second, it deals not only with a subsidiary of a U.S. company, but also with relationships between the parent's subsidiaries in other parts of Nazi-dominated Europe, and in particular with the Ford-Werke in Cologne. Third, and related to this, the archival base is extraordinarily broad, with major research conducted in several countries, in both public and private archives, and in three languages. Finally, the authors embed the story of Ford SAF not only in the historiography of Nazi-era business and the economy, but also in its full political, diplomatic, and military context.

Of necessity, a complicated story like this one involves sustained and detailed attention to the interplay of key actors from all of the constituencies that shared an interest in production and financial performance at Ford SAF from the mid-1930s through 1945, and the authors are particularly effective in characterizing these personalities and the intrigues and power plays in which they became involved against the backdrop of preparations for, and the onset and unfolding of, the war. But it is also a significant strength that the key contours of the story do not get lost in this detail. The authors describe convincingly how it was the Ford SAF managed to position itself by the late 1930s as a mostly French, rather than a purely American firm, thus gaining lucrative military orders from the French government while at the same time convincing its parent in Dearborn, Michigan, which was reluctant to engage in war production, to invest in an enormous expansion of capacity. They also present a fine analysis of the attempts by the Ford-Werke to assert its primacy among Ford subsidiaries in Nazi-dominated Europe – with the aim of assuming the mantle of the parent company of all Ford companies operating within the New Order – and of the ways in which Ford SAF, aided by French political allies in Vichy and occupied France (including German occupation authorities) was by and large able to thwart those attempts.

But the main story here involves a nuanced depiction and analysis of industrial collaboration with the Germans on the part of Ford SAF between the French defeat in 1940 and the end of the war in 1945. Engaging directly and carefully with such a politically and emotionally charged concept, the authors argue that collaboration certainly did exist, but that it was always tempered by Ford SAF's conceptions of its business interests, and not incidentally the desire on the part of its top managers to maximize independence from both its U.S. parent and its powerful German fellow subsidiary. What is more, the possibilities for Ford SAF to realize these business interests, the authors argue, grew over time: as the German military and economic situation deteriorated, the need for cooperation from French producers like Ford SAF increased, thus considerably enhancing the firm's freedom of action. And, although there is no evidence that Ford SAF engaged in sabotage, the authors make a convincing circumstantial case that the French-based subsidiary deliberately under-produced in 1943-1944. Still, Imlay and Horn argue, this was done primarily for business reasons rather than because of any principled resistance to German demands.

All in all, then, this is in many ways a highly impressive effort, although there are some parts of the analysis that could have been cut back somewhat and other areas that could have been further developed. With regard to the former, the authors quite rightly insist on presenting the story of Ford SAF in the Nazi era in its

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*DC* (Fall 2009): 29-51. ([http://www.ghi-dc.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1003&Itemid=899](http://www.ghi-dc.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1003&Itemid=899), accessed 6 December 2015.)

political, diplomatic, and military context, but there are long passages where the much more well-known and less contested context diverts the focus away from the central issue at stake, i.e. Ford's French subsidiary and the way it managed its way through the Nazi era. Cutting back on the discussion of the context would have allowed more room to explore other business-related issues more thoroughly. For instance, although there is a fair amount of space devoted to Ford SAF's relationship with Ford Dearborn, in particular in the second half of the 1930s, there is far less attention to the ways in which that relationship changed following the French defeat, and in particular after the American entry into the war. Intriguingly, the authors cite a 28 January 1942 letter from Maurice Dolfus, Ford SAF's energetic managing director, to Edsel Ford (133), but do not indicate how, if, or for how long such direct interaction was maintained even further into the period of active involvement of the U.S. in the war against Nazi Germany. More generally, the authors could have spent more of their analysis considering in a more nuanced way what exactly the phrase "business interest" means. Here, conflicts *within* firms over commercial, technological, and other aspects of strategy are important to highlight and unpack, something that may have been done by exploring more about the mechanisms of, and limits to, parent company control over its subsidiaries and by deploying the concept of subsidiary entrepreneurship.

Still, it is particularly by virtue of the focus on business-government relationships that this book makes a major contribution to conventional political historiography on France's relationship with Germany during the Nazi era, while the authors' deft and subtle handling of the evolution of industrial collaboration between France and Germany adds significant dimensions to the historiography on the freedom of maneuver of companies in the private sector within the highly politicized and militarized context of the Nazi era.

**Author's Response by Talbot Imlay, Université Laval, and Martin Horn, McMaster University**

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**W**e would like to thank Professors Patrick Fridenson, Peter Hayes and Ray Stokes for their thoughtful and generous reviews. It is certainly a privilege to have comments from three such distinguished scholars, each of whom has made major contributions to the field of business history.

For brevity's sake we will focus on their principal comments. Stokes would like to have had more information on the contact between Ford *Société Anonyme Française* (SAF) and Ford Dearborn after France's defeat. Here, the paper trail is scanty but it does appear that the two companies kept in touch through letters, occasional personal emissaries, and, to a limited extent, the U.S. embassy in Vichy. Ford Dearborn later claimed that communication was broken after France's defeat, but this was clearly not the case, though it did end sometime in the second half of 1942. After France's defeat, Ford SAF was largely on its own and Ford Dearborn could offer little help. Interestingly, Ford Dearborn appears to have accepted the assurances of both its German subsidiary, Ford-Werke, and Ford SAF that they were working in its best short-term and long-term interests, but it is difficult to imagine that Ford Dearborn had any choice. Stokes also regrets that there was not more discussion of possible conflicts within Ford SAF over commercial, technological, and other issues. The problem here is the lack of sources. Unfortunately, the wartime records of Ford SAF, now housed at the Peugeot archive in Hérimoncourt, are notably scanty. It is clear that a good deal has been lost. This scantiness also explains another significant absence in the book: conditions within Ford SAF's factories. We tried to glean what we could from departmental and Gendarmerie archives but the results were meagre. What went on in French factories during the occupation is, generally speaking, an area that needs more work.

Hayes remarks that we could have said more on Ford-Werke and Ford's other European subsidiaries. This is true. Hayes' brief comparison of Ford-Werke and Ford SAF's wartime experiences is intriguing, suggesting that Ford-Werke, for all its apparent initial advantages, emerged in a weaker position than its French counterpart. A more systematic comparison would be worthwhile, especially if Ford Dagenham (Britain) is included. Indeed, Ford Dearborn and its European (and perhaps even non-European) subsidiaries could conceivably be used as an organizing tool for a comparative study of wartime political-economic regimes on both sides of the belligerent divide. There is a good deal of material in the Ford Dearborn archives, which could be supplemented by research in several other countries.

Fridenson's more extensive comments require a bit more space. We apologize for the errors and typos in the book. We should have been more attentive in going over the page proofs. Fridenson is also right regarding the historiographical omissions. Given Mira Wilkins and Frank Hill's pioneering work on Ford's multinational empire and Wilkins's work on American multinationals in general, more discussion of her work in juxtaposition with our own would have been helpful. In our defence, we felt that Wilkins generally tended to skip quickly over the wartime years. Perhaps more importantly, our historiographical focus was (perhaps excessively) influenced by the issue of under-production, which led us towards a scholarship largely dominated by the German case and the question of the room for manoeuvre of companies under the Nazi regime. This being so, we should have said more about Henry Turner's study of General Motors (Opel) during the Third Reich, even if Turner was understandably interested in the use of slave labour, which was never an issue for Ford SAF, though it was of course for Ford-Werke. Fridenson points to a possible comparison between Ford and General Motors, and this is certainly worth considering. In the case of France, although General Motor's French subsidiary was far smaller than Ford SAF, it did work for the Germans,



making truck parts and repairing engines.<sup>1</sup> On the French historiography, Professor Fridenson is right that we dealt too cursorily with the contributions of several scholars, including Laurent Dingli, Alan Milward, Jean-Louis Robert, and Fridenson himself. Once again this is partly attributable to our focus on under-production, which is a subject that we believe French historians have not sufficiently grappled with. There is a tendency to accept claims of deliberate under-production at face value. Fridenson suggests that a cultural history approach would be useful to explore why so many of the French after the Liberation found such claims convincing. This is an intriguing suggestion and the subject merits further study. The question that motivated us, however, was how to go about testing the validity of these claims given the sources available.

Fridenson rightly questions some of the figures in our tables on Ford SAF's profits and production. The vagaries and shifting nature of Ford SAF business history (its pre-war merger with Mathis, a struggling French automobile company, the shift to military contracts in the late 1930s, and then the German occupation) make comparisons difficult. What we sought to do was to provide a very general portrait of the overall health and productive activities of Ford SAF rather than a complete overview of its business history. The point about deflation is a good one, but it does raise the question of which year to choose as a baseline. Overall, we gathered together what we could and our intention was not to convey the impression of exacting accuracy regarding the figures.

Fridenson makes two additional and important points. One concerns Ford SAF's interest in North Africa. Fridenson is absolutely right that we should have provided more context to show that Ford SAF's interest was more widely shared within French official and business circles. The origins of French post-war visions of an economic *Eurafrique* can be traced back to the wartime and pre-war years. But surely the enthusiasm for the project in 1940-1941 of Maurice Dollfus, Ford SAF's managing director, cannot be separated from the need to react to Ford-Werke's post-war plans that would leave the French company at the mercy of its German counterpart. Ford Dearborn, in any event, responded tepidly to Ford SAF's proposals, and especially from 1942 onwards when the U.S. State Department signalled its doubts about participation in what it viewed as a Vichy inspired, collaborationist endeavour. The second point concerns the post-war activities of François Lehideux, the head of the French automobile industry during the occupation, in European and trans-Atlantic networks promoting Europe economic unity built on liberal foundations. We were unaware of this aspect, but it is a fascinating one. During the occupation, Lehideux favoured more cartel-like approaches to the organization of the post-war European automobile industry – hence the Automobile Organization Committee. That afterwards Lehideux appeared to have distanced himself from this approach raises interesting questions about the continuities and discontinuities not only in Lehideux's thinking about Europe but also in that of French business and industrial groups in general. This is yet another subject that deserves more work.

It is in the nature of reviews that they arrive too late. In reading the comments of Professors Fridenson, Hayes, and Stokes, we are very much aware that we could have written a better book than we did. But that is entirely our fault. If there is ever a second and revised edition, we will closely follow their suggestions. In the

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<sup>1</sup> See Archives nationales, Paris, AJ 40/608 B, "Bericht über die im Auftrag des Militärbefehlshabers in Frankreich durchgeführte Überprüfung der Geschäfts- und Amtsführung des kommissarischen Verwalters der Firmen General Motors (France S.A. und Bougie A.C. erstattet von Dr. Hans Buwert Wirtschaftsprüfer...", November 29, 1943.

meantime, we would like to thank all three once again for taking the time to read and to comment on *The Politics of Industrial Collaboration during World War II*