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Hervé Joly, Ed. *Faire l'histoire des entreprises sous l'Occupation: Les acteurs économiques et leurs archives.* Paris: Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques, 2004. 375 pp. €23.00 (pb). ISBN 2-7355-0559-6.

Hervé Joly, Ed. *Les archives des entreprises sous l'Occupation: Conservation, accessibilité et apport.* Paris: IFRÉSI, 2005. 319 pp. €20.00 (pb). ISBN 2-9119-7530-8.

Review by Kenneth Mouré, University of California at Santa Barbara.

Historical attention to the French economy during the German Occupation has been revitalized in recent years by a surge in new research, chiefly by French historians, who are reassessing state policy, the spoliation of Jewish businesses, and the commercial and industrial responses to the Vichy economy of penury and ruthless German economic exploitation, particularly the nature of economic collaboration. A CNRS research initiative, begun in January 2002 with the creation of *Groupement de recherche* [GDR] no. 2539, is specifically devoted to the history of French business during the Occupation. These two volumes are the product of GDR conferences in Paris in October 2002 and Roubaix in March 2004, with contributors reporting the current state of access to archival records held by the state and in business archives.

The first volume, *Faire l'histoire des entreprises sous l'Occupation*, reviews the range and quality of sources in state archives. It provides a survey of available resources with commentaries by archivists and historians on the nature of the sources available, their extent, and the subjects they cover. The contributions vary widely, from hasty comments to detailed descriptions of series contents and citations. The intention is to provide more extensive description for materials that have not been inventoried elsewhere, but the resulting imbalance in coverage is unfortunate, as researchers would benefit from thorough review of all available materials in one volume. The most useful essays are those that provide detailed analysis. Notable, in this regard, are the essays on financial administration archives by Agnès d'Angio and Laure Quennouëlle (for which a guide to the extensive inventories at the *Service des archives économiques et financières* would be a great boon), on culture industries and commerce by Agnès Callu, and on aryanization by Cécile Simon and Philippe Verheyde. In a class by itself, Arne Radtke-Delacor's contribution provides an overview and a detailed inventory of German archival records (150 pages) on the French economy under occupation, including German records in the *Archives Nationales* in Paris and the Russian military archives in Moscow. For this entry alone, the volume should be in all research libraries used by students of Vichy and the Occupation. Hervé Joly's contribution on the purge of professionals in industry also provides a valuable inventory, listing sources in departmental archives grouped according to the zones administered by *Commissaires de la République* after liberation. The volume includes just one short contribution covering business records in the *Centre des archives du monde de travail* [CAMT] in Roubaix, leaving a big gap concerning the records of private firms that have not been deposited in (or in some cases have been taken back from) public archives. The second volume, *Les archives des entreprises sous l'Occupation*, fills that gap admirably, with a collection of short essays detailing the sources available, their accessibility, their quality and their importance. Contributors range from doctoral students completing theses and reporting on sources they have used, to business historians and economic historians with substantial breadth of experience, and archivists who give overviews of the collections they manage. Hervé Joly states in his introduction that the purpose of the volume is to demonstrate the variety and the quality of resources available, and to publicize the fact that in the past fifteen years the possibilities for research into the behavior of and within business enterprises in the

Vichy period have improved dramatically. Rather than a shortage of accessible resources, there is now a need for researchers ready to engage with a wealth of archival opportunities.

The essays cover materials ranging from the relevant business archives at CAMT, the press archives at the AN in Paris, transport archives for the RATP and SNCF, and public works archives, to private industry and bank archives, regional archives, and foreign archives with materials relevant to the French occupation (particularly in Belgium and Germany). Contributors report on the availability of inventories, the ease of access, the content of particularly interesting series, and occasionally the history of record preservation by individual enterprises. Access to business archives has improved in recent years in part through changes in state legislation, but more significantly through take-overs and bankruptcies that have put business archives in the hands of new owners less hostile to allowing public access.

Content in essays varies according to the contributors and their range of expertise. The doctoral students provide detailed accounts of available resources in their research area and good comment on accessibility. The archivists often give interesting short histories of the preservation of documents and the development of archival policy as well as overviews of the range of materials available for research. Both perspectives are valuable for researchers in the Vichy period. Most interesting, however, are the comments from veteran researchers in economic policy and business history on the strengths and limitations of the resources available. For example, Patrice Baubeau, writing on business archives as a source for research into the aryanization of Jewish firms, comments on the erratic nature of archival preservation, and the importance of business records to understanding the process of aryanization. State records, particularly in the AJ 38 series at the AN, tend to record actions taken by the state as rational and procedurally correct, fitting into approved categories of policy application. Private archives provide some corrective in revealing inaccuracies and injustices assumed away or misrepresented by the state. But they generally provide this perspective after the fact; their records, too, reflected only legal behavior. Evidence of extra-legal transactions intended to meet the letter of the law but frustrate its intent, particularly “fictive aryanizations” to transfer ownership in a way that would allow easy restoration of ownership, were generally concealed until they would no longer incur a penalty. Baubeau urges confrontation between a variety of sources in order to seek out the gaps, inconsistencies and inaccuracies that occur in particular types of records, and which only become apparent when working from sources covering the same ground from a different perspective.

Also worthy of note are the stories about the preservation of archival materials. Several contributors observe that the wartime paper shortage influenced the preservation of evidence in different ways. The SNCF adopted a policy to recycle all paper considered to have no value; this pushed it in 1943 to adopt a conscious policy on preservation of records in order to determine which records were worth saving. In private firms, the shortage of paper could result in re-use of the blank sides of documents that might otherwise have been destroyed. Destruction of archives by Allied bombing receives consideration from Alain P. Michel, who argues that Renault’s main store of records at Boulogne-Billancourt, supposedly lost in bombing raids in 1942 and 1943, were not completely destroyed. He explains how bomb damage prompted the creation of new records to preserve the knowledge of greatest interest to the firm.

Given the range of economic activity and the many business archives across France, the collection is necessarily incomplete, but it shows the richness of resources available. An index would have been very helpful, and even more important, a guide to the many abbreviations. The lengthy names for archives, firms and business associations require the use of abbreviations: a key to comprehending those less well-known when they occur in mid-volume would have been an easy tool to include. But for knowledge of the availability and importance of these rich resources for business history, these two volumes are essential aids to research. The economy of penury and the importance of the social, economic and

entrepreneurial adaptations to the constraints of the German occupation are fundamental to understanding Vichy experience; these guides signal noteworthy avenues for new research.

NOTES

[1] See their website for information on their publications, conferences, and bibliography at <http://gdr2539.ish-lyon.cnrs.fr>.

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