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Patrick Fridenson and Pascal Griset, eds., *L'industrie dans la Grande Guerre*. Paris: IGPDE, 2018. 552 pp. Tables, figures, notes, and index. €40.00 (pb). ISBN 978-2-11-129428-8.

Review by Charles Sorrie, Trent University

Patrick Fridenson and Pascal Griset's meticulously researched edited volume on French industry during the First World War is an informative read for those broadly interested in the French war effort and is an invaluable research tool for academics of early twentieth century wartime industry. The book is divided into four interrelated thematic sections: Blockade, Transportation and Energy; Science and Innovation; Combat; and Living in War. Most of the chapters are between ten and twenty pages, though a few are longer. The contributing authors are respected historians from various international backgrounds (though the majority are French) and are in varying stages of their academic careers.

French industry during the war was directed as part of a previously unprecedented "total war" effort. As Ruth Oldenziel notes in her introductory analysis, "it is difficult to conceive that anything positive could have emerged" from such a situation (p. 2). But the war quickly revealed France's relative industrial strengths and weaknesses and forced French industry to rapidly modernize and accelerate its pre-war production methods by adapting to and compensating for dependences on foreign capital and natural resources; both of which were exacerbated by Germany's occupation of the industrial north-east. Indeed, a common theme throughout much of this book is the extent to which the war accelerated pre-war methods of industrial production. Much of this was accomplished through clever planning in Paris, and this book does a good job of demonstrating the importance of individual organizers such as Albert Thomas, Louis Loucheur, Étienne Clémentel, and scientists like astrophysicist Charles Nordmann.

L'industrie dans la Grande Guerre is not only about wartime France but also pre-war French industrial practices. The book discusses Allied co-operation related to marine transport (much of the book's first section), Franco-Russian co-operation over aerospace development and production (Pierre Grasser), the wartime legalities of patents (Gabriel Galvez-Behar), the manufacturing of wool (Jean-Claude Daumas), and includes a chapter on the Belgian headquartered multinational chemical group Solvay (Kenneth Bertrams). Fridenson and Griset's conclusion connects these highly specific studies on certain industries or regions into a broader historiographical theme—the importance of the First World War as a "unique moment" within French industrial history (p. 517).

The historiography of French industry during the First World War has focused heavily on Paris. The second section of this book includes three important provincial studies: one on the Schneider factories in the Creusot (Jean-Philippe Passaqui), another discussing the Guillet machine tools company in Auxerre (Jean-Charles Guillaume), and a chapter on the industrial transformation of traditionally agricultural Savoie during the war (Yves Bouvier). These studies contribute to our understanding of the importance of regional industry to the war effort and further demonstrate the societal impacts of rapid industrialization. It would have perhaps been interesting to have included studies on the Loire Basin (St. Étienne, St. Chammond, Roanne) or Toulouse because of their importance to war production and to the

development of French working class identities.

L'industrie dans la Grande Guerre presents an encyclopedic panorama of French First World War industrial studies. It follows a standard format for edited volumes, similar to, for example, the *Encyclopédie de la Grande Guerre*, which was directed by the Historial de la Grande Guerre.[1] While most of the articles contribute to the analytical historiography of the subject (Fridenson's article on Albert Thomas and Louis Loucheur stands out in particular), this work will perhaps be most useful as a source of statistical information for researchers. Most of the authors make excellent use of international, national, regional, and personal archival materials and use easily accessible charts and graphs to present complicated statistical analyses. This collection's greatest strength is its presentation of dense material in an accessible fashion. This is particularly impressive given the book's relatively short chapter lengths.

It is not the editors' stated intention to cover all aspects or implications of First World War French industry in 515 pages--that would be a near impossible task. Rather, this volume displays the high number of industries, industrialists, policy makers, and diplomats that reacted to the new challenges imposed by the war. Industrial historians will find that this work contributes analytically to the field and will see it as a useful resource for academic research. Upon discovering new edited volumes, historians admittedly are inclined to suggest potential additional subject materials reflecting their own academic interests. If the book were to be thematically expanded, labor and gender histories could be further incorporated. The popular stereotype of industrial workers as "shirkers," widely prevalent until 1917, has been covered extensively by Charles Ridel,[2] but would provide an interesting topic for a chapter here. Patrick Fridenson's article discusses Albert Thomas's impact upon labor relations in 1917 and 1918, a period of heightened strike activity. Some of the strikes from this period would themselves prove interesting chapters. The short-lived impact of gender relations within the French labor movement of the Spring 1917 "midinettes" strikes is important as part of a broader discussion about women in the wartime workplace and the importance of textile manufacturing. Another understudied strike movement manifested itself in the Loire in spring 1918.[3] Its significance has usually been acknowledged by historians for its anti-war flavor and the anarcho-syndicalist leanings of its leaders. But it would also be important to this book because it coincided with the Ludendorff Offensives and took place in an important area for shell manufacturing. Other topics that are discussed in the book but could perhaps have been allotted their own separate studies are the importance of POW laborers or the role of the CGT, France's most important labor union.

L'industrie dans la Grande Guerre demonstrates the significance of the First World War as a transformative event in French industrial history. For the casual reader who is unfamiliar with French First World War history this book will perhaps prove daunting. For readers with an interest in the modes of industrial production, French industrial relations or the industrial, commercial and, to some extent, the diplomatic histories of the First World War, this book provides an interesting read and a useful resource. For academics conducting research on French First World War industry, it is an invaluable tool.

LIST OF ESSAYS

Ruth Oldenziel, "Introduction"

Françoise Berger, "Le ministère français des Affaires étrangères face au blocus économique contre l'Allemagne: objectifs et stratégie"

Jean-Philippe Dumas, "La contribution du Bureau d'études économiques à la préparation des conférences interalliées (1916-1919)"

Marie-Françoise Berneron-Couvenhes, "Les transports maritimes dans la guerre: contraintes et

adaptations”

Bruno Marnot, “Les ports: bases arrière stratégiques de l’effort de guerre industriel”

Pierre Grasser, “Aider la Russie à construire des avions français”

Anne Callite, “L’industrie ferroviaire en territoire occupé”

Jean-François Grevet, “Les camions de la victoire’: retour sur la mobilization industrielle du monde automobile dans la Grande Guerre”

Arnaud Passalacqua, “Les transports urbains français pris dans la guerre: un secteur industriel résilient?”

Pierre Chancerel, “L’approvisionnement en charbon de l’industrie française pendant la Première Guerre mondiale”

Alan Beltran, “L’industrie pétrolière en France pendant la Première Guerre mondiale: une prise de conscience tardive”

Anne-Laure Anizan, “La politique des inventions intéressant la défense nationale au cœur des reconfigurations de l’État en guerre”

Gabriel Galvez-Behar, “Des brevets en guerre: science, propriété industrielle et coopération interalliée pendant la Première Guerre mondiale”

Pascal Griset, “Académie des sciences et mobilisation industrielle”

David Aubin, “Les rôles du savant en guerre: l’exemple de l’astrophysicien Nordmann”

Alex Bostrom, “1916: année charnière?”

Patrick Mortal, “Les arsenaux de la grande guerre ou la raison dans l’État”

Clotilde Druelle-Korn, “De la visite des arsenaux au bilan de 1919: Étienne Clémentel et l’industrie pendant la Grande Guerre”

Patrick Fridenson, “Albert Thomas et Louis Loucheur: organiser et rallier les producteurs”

Danièle Fraboulet, “Les organisations patronales de la métallurgie et la Grande Guerre”

Jean-Philippe Passaqui, “Mobilisation des facteurs de production et coordination de l’activité industrielle aux usines Schneider du Creusot de 1914 à 1918”

Jean-Charles Guillaume, “L’activité d’un constructeur de machines-outils pendant la Grande Guerre: l’entreprise Guillet à Auxerre”

Yves Bouvier, “Mobilisation industrielle et territoire: l’industrie de Savoie dans la Première Guerre mondiale”

Philippe Mioche, “L’industrie de l’aluminium dans la Première Guerre”

Erik Langlinay, “Les entreprises chimiques françaises et la Première Guerre mondiale”

Kenneth Bertrams, “Une multinationale sur tous les fronts: le groupe chimique Solvay”

Jean-Pierre Daviet, “Le verre dans la guerre”

Louis André, “L’industrie papetière pendant la Première Guerre mondiale: entre pénurie et stratégie”

Pierre-Antoine Dessaux, “Les industries alimentaires et la Grande Guerre”

Stéphane Le Bras, “Une industrie patriotique? La filière des boissons alcoolisées pendant la Grande Guerre”

Jean-Claude Daumas, “L’industrie lainière dans la guerre (1914-1918): anatomie d’une mobilisation”

Jean-Luc Mastin, “Délocalisations de guerre et multinationales textiles dans la mobilisation économique: industriels et négociants du Nord occupé et bombardé (1914-1920)”

Stéphanie Le Gallic, “Révéler pour mieux cacher: le faux Paris de Fernand Jacopozzi”

Patrick Fridenson and Pascal Griset, “Conclusion générale”

NOTES

[1] Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Jean-Jacques Becker, *Encyclopédie de la Grande Guerre: 1914-1918* (Paris: Bayard, 2014).

[2] Charles Ridet, *Les embusqués* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1996).

[3] See forthcoming article: Charles Sorrie, “Industrial Unrest in France 1917-1918, Two Departments Compared,” *French History* (2019).

Charles Sorrie
Trent University
cwnsorrie@gmail.com

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