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bestimmten Umfeld sich behaupten mußten. Das gelang weder den deutschen noch den französischen.

Ein Dickschiffsenthusiast war auch Darlan, der nicht von ungefähr im Mittelpunkt des Massonschen Interesses steht, denn zum ersten Mal in der französischen Geschichte wurde ein Admiral Regierungschef – merkwürdige Parallele auch hier zu Deutschland, denn dieses Kunststück gelang bekanntermaßen auch Dönitz. Das Charakterbild Darlans schwankt in der französischen Geschichtsschreibung wie eh und je; Massons Argumente, die in den »Pariser Protokollen« doch mehr als bloße Taktik sehen wollen, überzeugen durchaus – vor allem wenn man die deutschen Quellen hinzunimmt, was Masson leider nicht getan hat, wie sein Buch überhaupt die deutsche einschlägige Literatur zum Thema (zuletzt Kowark) nicht zur Kenntnis nimmt – offensichtlich ein Sprachproblem. »Pour moi, mon choix est fait, c'est la collaboration« – so hat es Darlan selbst auf den Punkt gebracht. Sehr einfühlsam versteht Masson die Zwangslage des Admirals darzustellen: Gerade im Mai 1941 (zwei Tage vor dem Untergang der »Bismarck«!) schien es, als stünde der Zusammenbruch Englands definitiv vor der Tür, und Darlan wußte nichts von Hitlers Rußlandplänen. In seinem Berchtesgadener Gespräch mit Hitler (»cordial«) wiederholte sich letztlich das, was auch im Juni 1940 ausschlaggebend gewesen war: Frankreich, durch Darlan eher als Pétain repräsentiert, glaubte sich vor die Wahl zwischen nationalem – wenn auch arg beschränktem – Leben oder Tod gestellt. Ganz richtig verweist Masson darauf, daß Darlan alles andere als ein Nationalsozialist war – er verstand nichts davon, wie er überhaupt ein eher mittelmäßiger Geist war, in diesem Punkt übrigens ganz ähnlich Raeder.

Hat die französische Flotte einen »verkehrten« Krieg geführt? Mers el-Kébir folgten bekanntlich andere tragische Ereignisse, vor allem Dakar, und noch heute kann man auf manchem französischen Friedhof Grabsteine finden, die den Gefallenen von Mers el-Kébir oder Dakar gewidmet sind. Massons Urteil überzeugt: Solange die Flotte existierte, gehorchte sie einem Régime, das in der längsten Zeit des Krieges auch von den übrigen Mächten, also nicht allein dem Deutschen Reich, anerkannt worden ist – und der Masse der Franzosen selbst, was entscheidend ist. Nur weil die Sieger die Geschichte schreiben, konnte sich das »freie Frankreich« unter de Gaulle später retrospektiv so aufblähen. Mit der Flotte verfügte Pétain über den einzigen Trumpf im politischen Spiel – sei es im Zusammenwirken mit Deutschland, sei es in der Perzeption der französischen politischen Möglichkeiten durch England und die USA. Als die Flotte sich in Toulon selbst versenkte, war das deswegen auch die symbolische Versenkung des Vichy-Régimes selbst: Nun war es nicht mehr legitim. Daß Masson diese politische Geschichte der französischen Marine so abgewogen, so problemorientiert und mit soviel Emphatie geschrieben hat, wird wie schon die erste Ausgabe dieses Buches dazu beitragen, die Wunden zu heilen, welche die Tragödie der französischen Flotte zwischen 1939 und 1944 dem historischen Selbstverständnis der Nation geschlagen hat. Eine deutsche Übersetzung wäre sehr wünschenswert.

Michael SALEWSKI, Kiel

François DELPLA, *L'appel du 18 juin 1940*, Paris (Bernard Grasset) 2000, 314 p.

François Delpla's *L'appel du 18 juin 1940* offers an interesting and informative exploration of the origin and events surrounding the historic gesture of General Charles de Gaulle's call for continued French resistance at the time of the unexpectedly rapid collapse of the French army before the Nazi invasion in the spring of 1940. As is often true with other famous events in history, outward appearances, popular memory, and official commemoration may conceal a more complex reality. The author demonstrates that historical representations of de Gaulle's call for resistance over the sound waves of the BBC the evening of June 18, 1940, have partially masked a whole series of complex and contradictory



intentions, the very real potential for alternative outcomes, and the fact that de Gaulle's future on that famous night, and that of his embryonic Free French movement, were far from certain until the evolution of events over the next few weeks sealed his alliance with the British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill. This alliance of convenience, of necessity, and of common resolve on the fundamental determination to continue the fight at all costs, would be at times difficult; but it brought together at a crucial juncture in world history two men of exceptional talent and farsighted perceptions with regard to the ultimate outcome of the war. According to the author such exceptional leaders were required if the ambitions of Adolf Hitler, portrayed here as an extremely shrewd, manipulative and effective adversary, were to be checked.

The author addresses several issues in this work, including an intriguing piece of historical detective work tracing the multiple renditions of the famous call to resistance, a demonstration that both the French and British governments at the moment of the crisis in May–June 1940 were torn by factions working at cross purposes, and that Churchill, as well as de Gaulle, had to be wary of significant opposition to his ambitions to pursue the war vigorously. In the process Delpla asserts that some important figures in these events, including Robert Vansittart in England and Paul Reynaud and Georges Mandel in France have been portrayed by other historians and memorialists in an overly favorable light as part of determined, anti-Nazi »resistance« factions, when their actions at the moment of crisis were less firm and resolved than often suggested, each having entertained at some point as legitimate the prospect of a compromise peace. This perspective serves in part to emphasize the truly exceptional nature of de Gaulle and Churchill's actions and outlook on the rapidly unfurling events, but other historians may find Delpla's judgment of Reynaud, Mandel, and Vansittart overly harsh, and perhaps too reliant on isolated bits of evidence or particular circumstances interpreted rather cynically. Even if one accepts the legitimacy of a modest revision of the received stereotypes of a party of resistance and a defeatist camp in the two countries, the real differences among individual members of the British and French cabinets in confronting the crisis surrounding the request for Armistice terms appear excessively diluted in this author's account. The general reader, as well as the specialists, will probably find more original and compelling the author's description of a strong faction around Lord Edward Halifax who from the first signs of the collapse of the French army were entertaining seriously the possibility of a compromise peace with Germany. This was at a time when Churchill was speaking of Britain's »finest hour« and when the image outside of Britain (and certainly in the United States) was of a gallant, united, British determination to resist, if necessary all alone, the Nazi onslaught. The author makes it clear that Churchill and de Gaulle both had much work to do in order to convince their contemporaries that their cause was not lost, and that a continuation of the fight was essential for the future of their countries.

Delpla's exploration of the genesis and the multiple modifications of the text of de Gaulle's call for resistance is fascinating and instructive. He argues that de Gaulle was prepared by June 17 to condemn unequivocally Marshal Philippe Pétain's decision to request an armistice from Germany, and to appeal for continued French resistance as a clear act of military and political rebellion against what was to become the Vichy government. He emphasizes particularly a partial draft, written in London the evening of June 17, in which de Gaulle noted that the mechanized force of the Germans had crushed the morale of the French high command and government, leaving two options open for the country. These two choices were the path of »abandonment, and despair ... leading to capitulation« – the choice that had been made by Pétain's government – or the choice made by de Gaulle and his companions, »that of honor and hope« (p. 34–35), which required the continuation of the war at the side of France's allies. However, because of Churchill's concern that the French fleet might be turned over to Germany, and the hope in some circles in Britain that a more



prominent French political or military leader would step forward to lead the French resistance, de Gaulle's *Appel* was first delayed and later censored by the British authorities. The message that de Gaulle delivered on the BBC the night of June 18 muted what he had intended to be a sharp rebuke of Pétain and spoke only of a »request from the enemy of honorable terms for ending the fight«, suggesting that the battle would continue if the conditions demanded were »contrary to the honor, dignity and independence of France«. This statement, at least in theory, left open the possibility that Pétain's government might continue to resist the Germans. Moreover, his statement on the BBC that »Tomorrow, as today, I will speak on the radio from London«, was eliminated from the printed version of his text which was authorized for publication June 19 in British newspapers (p. 221). This revision reflected the unwillingness of Lord Edward Halifax and his followers to concede to de Gaulle the opportunity to speak daily on the BBC. Only with the passage of time would Churchill efface those like Halifax who still considered a compromise peace possible. Similarly, de Gaulle, in the absence of other prominent French personalities volunteering to head the resistance from North Africa or London, and faced with opposition from several French critics in London, would need time to establish himself as the officially recognized leader of a French National Committee, symbol and organizer of a continuing French presence in the war against Hitler and the Nazis. Over the days, weeks, and months following June 18, 1940, de Gaulle, in press releases, radio messages, and posters displayed in London, would modify his original call for resistance in words that were truer to his original intent. Delpla demonstrates that his biographers, and de Gaulle himself in his memoirs, have sometimes partially misrepresented the exact text of the authentic *Appel du 18 Juin*, and the author details where and why these revisions occurred.

Still, Delpla concludes, ultimately, de Gaulle's famous call for resistance, which was to define him, for many French people, above all, as »the Man of June 18,« deserves to be highlighted, not so much as an exact formula carved in stone, as a sacred text pronounced on a certain day, but as the symbol of »a Frenchman who refused defeat and called upon his compatriots to do the same« (p. 295). Perhaps more than any other event in French history, argues Delpla, the circumstances of France's defeat in 1940 called for an exceptional person who would not only speak but act as the nation's leader, and she was fortunate to find, in de Gaulle, one who was up to the task.

The general reader will find this book to be interesting and informative. He or she will discover valuable insights into the complex dynamics of the internal politics and the diplomatic relations of France and Britain during the rapidly evolving Battle of France, and will be fascinated with Delpla's description of the origin and evolution of de Gaulle's classic *Appel*. Historians who are specialists of the period will appreciate these positive aspects of the work also, but may have some quibbles with the author's assertion that Hitler was the clear-sighted and master manipulator of both French and British developments, consistently following a plan laid out years before in his *Mein Kampf*, the author's acceptance of the unsubstantiated testimony of an anti-Gaullist aviator about a plan to return de Gaulle to Bordeaux two days after his call for resistance, and his rather casual method of citation of sources. For example, the specific references to the critical Swiss version of the original *Appel* are not given in the footnotes in the text where the quotations appear, although the author of the work in which the document was first published is named (p. 215–218). Despite a few reservations which one may have concerning the author's interpretation of particular episodes, or the significance he ascribes to the actions of particular individuals, *L'appel du 18 juin 1940*, is a noteworthy and welcome addition to the literature about the career of Charles de Gaulle and France's experience during the Second World War. For the most part the work is well researched and the author's arguments are convincingly articulated with an attempt to introduce in a balanced manner all sides of the issues addressed.

John SWEETS, Lawrence