Edwin Black. *IBM and the Holocaust: The Strategic Alliance between Nazi Germany and America's Most Powerful Corporation.* New York: Random House, 2001. 528 pp. $27.50 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-609-60799-2.

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The indifference of today's global conglomerates to national interests was foreshadowed more than a half century ago by IBM's support of Hitler's Reich, mainly because of Thomas J. Watson's pursuit of total world market share as well as his personal avarice. The sordid primary records documenting this are marshaled in Edwin Black's IBM and the Holocaust, a doubly timely book because it also discloses the curse–as well as the blessings–of data processing technology. These primary sources had been sitting there worldwide for more than 50 years until Edwin Black uncovered them in this comprehensive and detailed account.

Since Herman Hollerith developed his punch card system at the turn of the 20th century, most major governments and industries have used it for various purposes, for example the United States for its decennial census. In Germany, its component states used Hollerith cards to manage–among other things–their tax systems, including religious taxes. Taxpayers earmarked their payments for the revenue to be allocated to their own denominations for maintenance of churches, synagogues, parochial schools, and subsidiary eleemosynary institutions, so the tax rolls registered the affiliation of the individual taxpayer. Although alien to American separation of church and state, this practice, and even the parallel compilations of the Reichssippenamt (Reich Genealogical Office) were useful and harmless in the hands of Weimar Republic–and even Imperial–officials.

Already during the First World War, Watson's CTR had subsidiaries in Germany, which were restored to his control after the Armistice, for which he proclaimed his gratitude. Like many domestic German monopolists, he exploited the Great Inflation of the early 1920s to buy out most of his German competitors at rock-bottom costs. Concerned that Nazi chauvinism might lead to nationalization of foreign holdings, he successfully flattered Hitler and the Nazis on their advent to power.

Once in power the Nazis applied the existing census and Sippenamt registers to enforce their anti-Semitic ide fixe, first implementing the Nuremberg racial laws, next coercing Jewish emigration and confiscating assets, and then inexorably to ghettoize and incarcerate European Jewry on the way toward mass murder. It is inconceivable that Nazi fanatics would not have applied the available technology to execute their paramount racial tenet. Edwin Black's IBM and the Holocaust documents the sequential convergence of technology and genocide in Nazi Germany from 1935 to 1945, an abomination which received an uncaring assist from Thomas Watson and his IBM.

Readers will find it fascinating that even when IBM New York lost day-to-day control of the Deutsche Hollerith Maschinen Gesellschaft M.B.H. (Dehomag), IBM's branch in Nazi Germany, Thomas Watson, head of IBM, and Hermann B. Fellinger, the Third Reich's appointed trustee for the "enemy property" of Dehomag, demonstrated a mutual overriding concern for retention of IBM's worldwide near-monopoly of data processing at the expense of the respective Second World War efforts of both the Allies and the Third Reich, to say nothing of their competing personal greed.

IBM and the Holocaust documents Watson's indifference to Nazi violation of civil and human rights, and his tacit condoning of indirect trading with the enemy after Hitler's declaration of war on the United States. Contrast this with the rebuke of Fellinger by his fellow-appointee, the Nazi administrator of Compagnie Electro-Comptable de France (CEC), the French IBM subsidiary: "Even though I am well aware of my obligations as administrative trustee of American interests, in my opinion these obligations do not go so far that I must put them ahead of greater German interests."

A staff member of Albert Speer's Maschinelles Berichtswesen (MB=Machine Reporting division), which controlled allocation of Hollerith machines throughout Nazi-occupied Europe, complained: "Fellinger's obligation as German administrator of enemy property. . . should meet German interests primarily, and those of

Dehomag secondarily. . . . Fellinger's demands would damage the interests of the Reich and enrich American property. An administrator of enemy property, in my opinion, does have an obligation to conserve that enemy property, but does not have the right to damage the Reich to increase that enemy property."

Had Thomas Watson and IBM shown as much concern for American wartime interests as Fellinger's critics did for German interests, he would have cut off the in-direct supply to the Nazi war machine of IBM-patented hardware and cardware. Instead, Watson's overriding concern was to preserve IBM patents and assets in order to assure IBM postwar monopoly profiteering regardless of who won the war. As it was, not only did his acquisitiveness and greed substantially aid and prolong the Nazi war effort, but according to the evidence, documented in coherent context by Edwin Black in IBM and the Holocaust, also enabled the Holocaust.

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