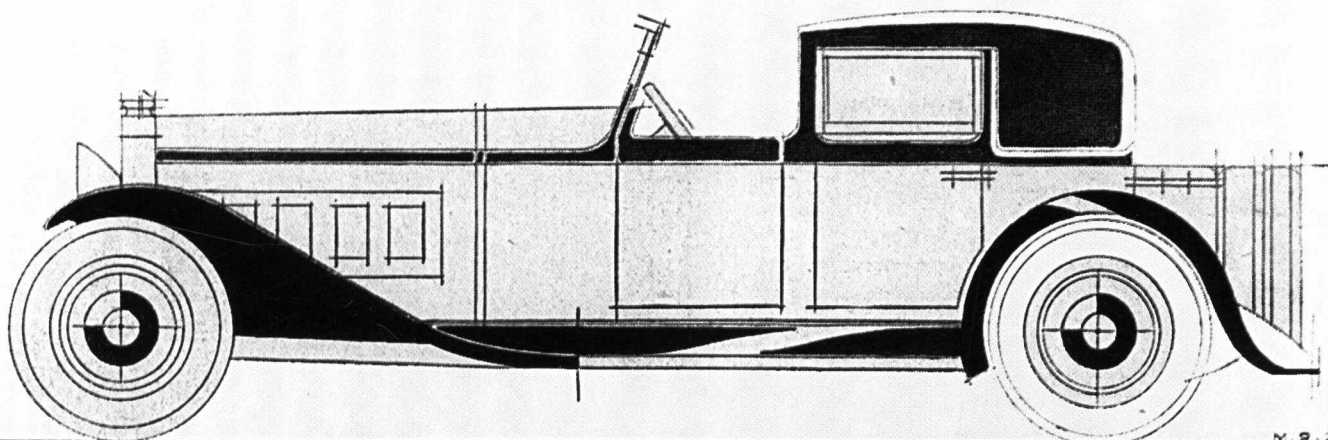


AUTOMOTIVE HISTORY REVIEW

Fall 2005



Issue Number 44



M. R. 28

A PUBLICATION OF THE SOCIETY OF AUTOMOTIVE HISTORIANS, INC.

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EDITOR'S NOTES, LETTERS and CORRECTIONS

First, a heartfelt *mea culpa* to *Tim Fijalkovich* whose by-line in the Table of Contents and as co-author of "Reo and Diamond Reo: The Rise and Fall of the World's Toughest Truck, Part 2" in Issue No. 43 was misspelled as "Falkovich" (though I did get it right in the Editor's Notes). Tim, you're welcome to spell my name "Vincent."

Next, an explanation about the mailing problems encountered with No. 43, alluded to in *SAH Journals* No. 216 and 217. Here's what happened: *Michael Bromley* and I bulk-mailed 624 issues to domestic destinations on May 2. My own copy took 15 days to travel the miles from the point of deposit to my home, and the rest of the deliveries to many of you in the United States were correspondingly slow. The explanation may be that the *Reviews* are no longer processed through a Northern Virginia facility, but through one in the District of Columbia (seat of the Federal Government, 'nuff said). Forty-five domestic copies were returned to me with their mailing labels missing, a half dozen of those with covers torn or smeared with grease. In the 14 bulk mailings of the magazine that I've conducted, this was an unfortunate first. The Useless Postal Service, of course, had no explanation, let alone words of comfort. Fortunately, *Tom Jakups* was able to prepare a notice in time for insertion in *SAH Journal* No. 216, asking members to let me know if their copies had not arrived by June 1. Some of those who did later reported arrivals after June 1. I think the Pony Express would have been faster. For this among other reasons, we have begun to use a professional mailing service for domestic issues, beginning with the Index Issue (Summer 2005). A further reason is that, beginning May 15, the local USPS now requires bulk mailers of magazines to do the bagging and labeling of bags that their employees used to do. In terms of the *Review*, this means that the previous task of filling seven bags and applying identical labels has been replaced by the need to fill 41 bags with 41 different labels. And for this, we get a first-class postage rate rise of two cents in 2006! No thanks!

As you know, the SAH Board of Directors conducts its spring meeting in

various auto-related locales. This year, the Board met at the Toyota USA Automobile Museum in Torrance, California. For the most part, the vehicles in the museum trace the history of Toyota in America, from 1959 until today. It is becoming increasingly apparent that THE automotive story of the first decade of the 21st century will be Toyota's displacement of General Motors as the world's largest motor vehicle manufacturer. Thus, the Torrance Museum is bound to grow in significance. Fortunately, it is in the capable hands of *Susan P. Sanborn* who recognizes the importance of her task. She would appreciate having any materials that members may have relating to Toyota's early years in the U.S. The Museum is open by appointment. I must add that the hospitality provided by Susan and Toyota, from provision of vans for transportation and gift bags to extensive wining and dining, exceeded that experienced in any other spring board meeting—and I have been to them all since 1987. Thank you again, Susan.

By now, all of you will have received the Index Issue (Summer 2005) covering all previous issues of the *Review*, and the brainchild of *Joseph R. Malaney*. When Joe approached me with the idea, I didn't realize that it would include an index of photographs as well. The compilation was truly a labor of love, and we are all the richer for it. I would hope that SAH will be able to publish an updated index periodically, say, every five or ten issues.

We turn now to the business at hand, *Review* No. 44. One of my initial thoughts as editor years ago was that there are a number of articles published in languages other than English which would be of interest to you in translation. This issue sees the publication of three of these, as well as articles originally written in English which have European themes. Thus, the overall cast of this issue is Europe-oriented. I must say, in retrospect, that the task of translating and polishing from French and Italian has proven more time-consuming than I initially thought. Literal translations often make no sense and the equivalent in English must be discerned.

We begin with "Demandez à Celui Qui en Possède Une: Packard in Paris," by

Marc-Antoine Colin, formerly a member of SAH, and "Editorial responsible" of the splendid periodical *Automobilia*, which won the Brigham Award for the best magazine on automobile topics published in 2003. This article was published in *Automobilia* No. 37, in May 1999. Marc-Antoine is a prolific writer; I am especially impressed with his "Hotchkiss: L'âge classique 1935-1955," published in 1998 by E.T.A.I. The article was translated by *Yann Saunders*, who spent much of his professional life in Geneva as a translator for the International Labor Organization. Yann, sometimes called "Mr. Cadillac," was awarded the Ingersoll for his extensive Cadillac internet data base. I might also add that he is the brother-in-law of one of my two sisters. I consulted *Brooks Brierley* on this article as far back as 2000, and regard him as the peer-reviewer with his helpful comments.

The second of the three articles, "The Fascination of 12 Cylinders" by *Valerio Moretti*, was sent to me by *Laurent Friry*, and was originally published in *Auto d'Epoca* for April 1995. Sig. Moretti, an architect by profession, is the author of several books, including *Grand Prix Tripoli 1925-1940* (reviewed by *Griffith Borgeson* in *SAH Journal* No. 155 (March-April 1995) who thought of the author as "one of Italy's best automotive historians, researchers, and writers."). This article was translated by my other sister, Betty Jane Helander, to whom I am greatly indebted for what was literally a labor of love. *Ferdy Hediger* also helped; he and I went over it one October morning last year in his kitchen, finding the right idioms, or so we hoped.

Now comes a story truly typical of SAH. The racer at the center of the story, the V-12 Liberty-engined Packard 299, was sold to an Italian driver, Baroness Avanzo. Knowing that *Pat Yongue* is interested in early female race drivers, I sent her a copy of the translation, asking if she had heard of the baroness. Pat replied that a friend of hers, Jim Dillon, an authority on early racing and himself the owner of a 299, was of the opinion that the car was, in reality, not the 905 as the article stated, but another V-12 Liberty-engined Packard 299. Sure enough,

continued on page 12

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Editor's Notes, Letters and

Corrections Inside front cover

Demandez à Celui qui en Possède Une:

Packard in Paris 4

by Marc-Antoine Colin, translated by Yann Saunders

The Fascination of 12 Cylinders 14

by Valerio Moretti, translated by Betty Jane Helander

Louis Renault and Adolf Hitler:

Their First Meeting 21

by Patrick Fridenson, translated by Dick Dillenbach

Kaiser Assembly in Rotterdam 27

by Frans Vrijaldenhoven

Roman S.A.: Medium and Heavy Duty Trucks in Romania 32

by Tom Brownell

The Early Years of Fiat in the Italian

Royal Army 36

by Alessandro Sannia

Front Cover: Image from 1929 ad by Barbezat, importer and distributor of Packard in France. For the complete ad, see p. 9.

Rear Cover: This Packard 120 convertible is about to participate in the concours d'elegance organized in June 1939 by the monthly magazine *L'Auto*. From "Packard en France, *Automobilia* No. 37, May 1999.

Acknowledgments: Messrs. Vrijaldenhoven, Brownell, and Sannia provided the illustrations for their articles. Jim Dillon furnished the illustrations for Sig. Moretti's article. Some of the illustrations from M. Colin's "Packard in Paris" appeared in *Automobilia*. The remaining illustrations in that article, and for M. Fridenson's article were furnished by the editor.

Back Issues of Automotive History Review

We can offer sets of the 23 issues remaining in stock (numbers 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 23, 29, 30, 31, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43 and the Index) for \$115.00 postpaid in the USA. Single copies are \$8.00 each plus \$2.00 postage, \$5.00 postage internationally. All payments in US funds, please. Mastercard and Visa accepted as well as checks. Orders and inquiries should be sent to Fred Roe, 837 Winter Street, Holliston, MA 01746-1159. Make check or money order payable to Society of Automotive Historians, Inc. Inquire for shipping costs outside the USA. This supersedes all previous lists and prices, which are no longer valid.

Demandez à Celui qui en Possède Une: Packard in Paris

by Marc-Antoine Colin, translated by Yann Saunders

From 1899 through 1958, Packard was one of America's finest automobile manufacturers. In France, from just after World War I and up to 1956, the Packard enjoyed favor with a faithful following of buyers who were attached to high-quality automobiles.

The company's history goes back to the final years of the 19th century. In association with his brother William Doud Packard, James Ward Packard headed a small electric company, the Packard Electric Company in Warren, Ohio. In 1893, he started to look into the manufacture of a gasoline-powered automobile but the latter was to remain on the drawing boards.

The Best of Luxury

Nonetheless, James Ward Packard was enthralled with this new means of transport and he kept abreast of progress achieved in the automotive field, both by the pioneering European manufacturers and those in his native America. In 1898, when he learned that a cycle manufacturer by the name of Alexander Winton, in neighboring Cleveland, had begun to build automobiles, he immediately ordered one for himself. Unfortunately, despite the close ties that developed with the Cleveland manufacturer, the Winton turned out to be a most unreliable automobile, so unreliable in fact that Alexander Winton who was known to be irascible became so annoyed on account of his car's many mechanical failures that he is said to have told an irate client "if you're so smart, why don't you build a better car?" However we should not give too much credit to the story for it is highly possible that James Ward Packard's interest in the automobile was such that he was ready for the adventure even if the Winton had been an excellent automobile.

In any event, the first Packard was born in November 1899. It was powered by a big, single-cylinder (142.6 cu. in.) engine and immediately showed much promise.

In 1903 the firm's reputation became firmly established when "Old Pacific," model F, crossed the American continent from the west to the east coast in 61 days, despite a paucity of paved roads. This feat was enough to demonstrate the quality of Packard construction and gave the company a decisive boost. Packard left Warren and moved to Detroit.

Ten years later Packard's reputation had become firmly established. Now, all its cars were powered by a refined and flawless in-line 6-cylinder engine. In America and throughout the world, the Packard was a symbol of the best in luxury automobiles.

Discovering the French Market

French buyers became aware of the Packard in the early teens when they were imported by The Packard Motor Car Company of Paris. We know very little about this company whose headquarters were located, first at 177 Boulevard Pereire

Fig. 1 – This ad indicates that Packards were sold in Paris as early as 1911-12. (From the editor's collection)

Packard

La "38" Packard

Double phaeton torpédo, 5 places.....	24,000 fr.	Landaulet.....	30,350 fr.
Limousine.....	29,850 fr.	Runabout.....	23,400 fr.

Châssis seul tous modèles. 20,250 fr.
comportant phares, lanternes, pneus, marchepieds, ailes avant, outillage complet.

VOITURE PARFAITE de VILLE et de TOURISME comprenant : Mise en marche automatique électrique, double allumage, éclairage électrique par dynamo. Toutes les commandes de ces appareils sont groupées dans un dispositif spécial placé sur le tablé au direction, à la portée de la main. Conduite à gauche, jantes amovibles, équipement complet.

Téléphone : 690 42 **PACKARD MOTOR CAR C^o of Paris, 5, Rue Newton, PARIS** Téléphone : 690 42

Fig. 2 – This ad appeared in L'illustration on January 11, 1913, showing that the company had moved to its new location on rue Newton, complete with new telephone number. Prices ranged from 23,400 francs (\$4,521) for the runabout to 30,350 francs (\$5,864) for the landaulet; consequently, only an elite group could afford them. (From the editor's collection)

(Fig. 1), and, after 1912, at 5 rue Newton in Paris' 6th arrondissement (Fig. 2). However, the company name would seem to indicate a direct link to the firm's headquarters in Detroit.

It would be an exaggeration to state that in those days Packard enjoyed high-volume sales in France; their reputation as luxury automobiles precluded volume sales at a time when even owning the smallest and cheapest of automobiles was a sign of considerable wealth in France. To state that Packards were expensive would be to state the obvious; in 1913 the new Type

38 with landaulet body sold for a princely 30,350 francs (\$5,864) . . . at a time when the smallest De Dion Bouton model cost only 5,100 francs (\$985) and the most expensive one on the Puteaux manufacturer's price list was 26,000 francs (\$5,024). We should add for good measure that at the time the Belle Epoque was drawing to a close, anyone with a well-invested capital of 30,000 francs could live a life if not of luxury at least of relative ease.

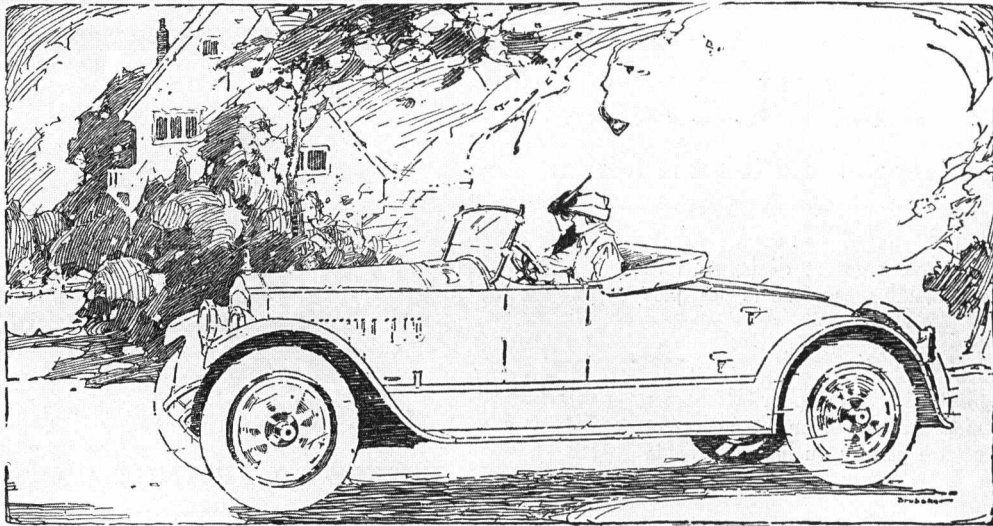
Despite their high cost, Packards could hold their own with the stiffest competition. In addition to such refinements as electric lighting and electric starting, they were exceptionally well built of choice steel that was vastly superior to that used by France's automobile industry. The use of such materials was made possible by automated rather than manual production methods. On the eve of World War I, the Packard factory was turning out ten cars a day; in 1914 it built a total of 3,441 Model 3-48, 2-38, and 4-48 cars. Naturally, this kind of production volume helps returns on investments, but such a volume of luxury automobiles was unthinkable in France at the time. Long before its European competitors, Packard was well aware that by building more you could build better!

Growth is Interrupted

The start of World War I in Europe did not greatly affect U.S. car production. Packard continued to grow. In 1915 the

firm brought out its Twin Six, a world première V-12 model. One year later the Twin Six was the only model in the company catalog. In France, at this time, the Packard name was best known for the heavy duty trucks the firm supplied to the French armed forces.

Automobile production slowed somewhat when the U.S. entered the war in April 1917. Nonetheless, Packard production of Models 2-25 and 2-35 totaled 8,999 units in 1917-18. This number takes on added significance when compared to the 5,500 cars built by Renault, France's largest automobile manufacturer.



Qui doit être le juge du bon goût?

“LE BON goût est formé de sagesse et d’inspiration”, a dit une fois un grand artiste dessinateur. Que dire du dessin de la moyenne des voitures automobiles?

Est-il la création du génie artistique ou du désir d’originalité?

C’est une question que l’acheteur d’une voiture automobile doit considérer. Sa voiture sera-t-elle démodée dans peu de temps?

Packard, aussitôt, donne la réponse. Le dessin de la Packard forme un tout avec la voiture, — ce n’est pas une greffe rapportée.

La ligne peut changer; elle a changé. Le caractère de la Packard, lui, pendant seize ans, n’a pas varié.

Chez Packard, la distinction recherchée a pour premier principe la qualité. Des cuirs

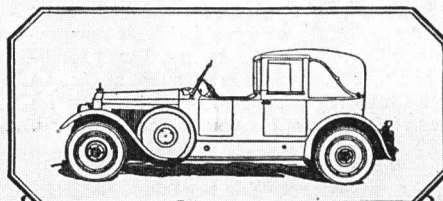
travaillés à la main, peau entière, pour le capitonnage, et non pas des “refendus” à la machine. Capotes en double épaisseur. Garnitures en bronze nickelé dessinées et exécutées avec la finesse de l’orfèvrerie. L’artisan carrossier a été choisi de préférence à la machine.

Un Anglais rendit hommage à la façon dont Packard avait su construire des voitures de haute valeur lorsqu’il écrivit dans le *London Daily Mail*: “Pour l’Amérique, c’est une voiture de haut prix, mais, quand nous la comparons avec celles de même classe chez nous, elle est décidément moins chère.”

La vérité est que: si les Douze cylindres étaient construites en Europe par les méthodes européennes, leur prix serait plus élevé que celui de la voiture européenne la plus chère.

PACKARD MOTORS EXPORT CORPORATION

1861 Broadway, New York, U. S. A.



Apparence: Bien des artistes ont conçu et dessiné pour la Douze cylindres des carrosseries au cachet individuel, mais chacun et tous ont invariablement, conservé le caractère de la Packard.

Fig. 3 – This ad appeared in *L’Illustration* on December 4, 1920, indicating that the Packard Motors Export Corporation in New York had taken over the company’s advertising in France. (From the editor’s collection)



Fig. 4 – With an engineering degree from France’s renowned “Centrale” [a French MIT], Maurice Barbezat (1884-1959) guided Packard’s destiny in France for more than 30 years.

When peace returned, the company resumed automobile production and began to diversify it. In 1920 the opulence of the Twin Six was complemented with new, more affordable in-line six models, called the Single Six. Finally, in 1924, the V-12 models were dropped in favor of a new in-line or straight eight. With regular improvements the new eight was bound for a lasting career. These powerful cars, with their uncontested reputation, had a following of French buyers at that time. All that was needed then was a dynamic importer to ensure their distribution in France. In the years after the war, advertising efforts seem to have been directed from New York (Fig. 3).

Maurice Barbezat, Importer

Maurice Barbezat was born in 1884 and graduated with an engineering degree from Paris’ “Centrale” school of Engineering (Fig. 4). His career began with the Gobron Automobile Company located at 13 Quai de Boulogne in Boulogne-sur-Seine. The latter company made a name for itself early in the century with its Gobron-Brillié cars powered by opposed-piston motors. When Barbezat went back to his Gobron job at the end of World War I, there was no doubt that this French auto manufacturer’s heyday was over. The Gobron family

realized this and decided it was in its best interests to pursue metal girder framework construction in the suburbs of Lyon instead of automobile production. The officers in charge offered Maurice Barbezat an opportunity to take over the premises at Boulogne, an offer that Barbezat was quick to accept (Fig. 5). He too was convinced that the future was uncertain for automobile production on the scale of the Gobron model and decided to go off in another direction. Why not specialize in the import and maintenance of foreign-built cars, in this case, American cars? Indeed, since the end of hostilities and with the sale of military surplus material, there was a relatively high number of American cars in France where they enjoyed a fine reputation for reliability and power.

Maurice Barbezat did not hesitate very long before launching in this venture. Initially, the former Gobron workshops took in American cars and trucks of various makes. Barbezat did not take long to realize it was in his best interest to specialize in cars of a single marque. After mulling over the matter he decided on the Packard, an understandable choice; with a production volume of over 15,000 cars that year, 1924, Packard was the top among manufacturers of luxury automobiles.

The Good Years

In a short while, under the aegis of Maurice Barbezat, the marque gained an enviable place on the French market. True, the time was right. After the difficult times of the early post war period, followed by the financial vagaries of the left wing Cartel, France enjoyed an era of prosperity from 1926 to 1930. After Raymond Poincaré stabilized the French franc and with the hope born of France’s collective, that brought the country a certain serenity. This climate was of course propitious to the sale of luxury automobiles. Seduced by the quality of service that was being provided by the Barbezat company (Fig. 6), customers were eager to acquire cars with coachwork from the factory or bare chassis supplied to the most well known custom carrossiers. Their job was made easy by the sheer size of the Packard chassis enabling them to design bodies that were both majestic and in perfect harmony. Designs by Binder, Kellner, Letourneur & Marchand, Franay (endnote 1) but also by Maurice



Fig. 5 – In the early '20s, the Gobron facilities located at 13 Quai de Boulogne in Boulogne-sur-Seine (a suburb north of Paris) were taken over by Barbezat. At the time this photograph was taken, the buildings did not yet carry the Packard name.



Fig. 6 – Towards the end of the '20s, Barbezat staff numbered around 30. The cutout models on the office furniture in the administrative services would make some collectors very happy today.

Proux and Gallé gave shape to Franco-American automobile styling that achieved miracles at the concours d'elegance (Fig. 7). Barbezat who had an acute sense of public relations filled magazines of the time with pages of ads. The Packard slogan, "Ask the Man Who Owns One," attained great popularity, while the advertising copywriters waxed lyrical about the marque. In October, 1928, readers of *L'Illustration* were informed that "Demanding, difficult buyers with eclectic taste choose the Packard because chassis and bodies both are perfectly presented." A new showroom at 102, Avenue Champs-Élysées, was positioned in the heart of fashionable Paris.

One year later that well-known French weekly asserted that "Packard was among the first auto manufacturers to champion the V-8 motor (sic) which currently enjoys great popularity. Their outline has become familiar on account of the number of them seen in Paris where they have found favor among elegant buyers. "Numerous in Paris, they are found also in large numbers all over the world." With an annual production of 49,698 cars, that single American manufacturer held more than half the market for prestige automobiles. In the United States, its closest rival was Cadillac, with sales totaling 41,172 units (production figure for 1928).

A New Impetus

The fall-out from the Wall Street crash of October 1929 put into question Packard's former success (Fig. 8), but Barbezat soldiered on (Fig. 9). As Brooks T. Brierley indicates in "Packards in Paris" (*Special Interest Autos* #180, November/December 2000, p. 23), registrations of Packards in France reached 133 in 1930, only to decline to 76 in 1931, 26 in 1932, and 7 for the first four months of 1933; eventually, the Barbezat showroom was moved to 150, Avenue Champs-Élysées, to share space

with the prestigious French makes Delage and Hispano-Suiza. In the United States, Packard production declined dramatically. In 1933, despite the launching of a more affordable "Light Eight" one year earlier and of a new Twin Six designed to attract buyers of prestige models, sales dwindled to only 9,608 units. With losses totaling \$8,000,000 it became evident that Packard's survival was seriously threatened.

The design section immediately began to work on a model which it was hoped would give new impetus to the prestigious name. The Packard 120 introduced in January 1935 drew lessons from the Depression and its effects. It was aimed at a less affluent clientele and offered traditional Packard quality at Buick or Chrysler prices. Technically speaking it had numerous strong points. In addition to the straight eight engine, the 120 models had hydraulic brakes and, in particular, a remarkable independent front suspension system that was subsequently copied by many other manufacturers (endnote 2). The new arrival was very favorably received, to the extent that Packard production immediately increased from 8,000 units of the Eleventh Series in 1934 to 31,949 of the Twelfth Series in 1935.

From then on, the 120s were very popular. In France it was even more favorably received; unlike most American buyers, the French did not draw nearly the same distinction between it and the larger, traditional Packard models such as the Eight, Super Eight and of course the Twelve. From 1936 to 1939, therefore, the majority of Packards imported into France were 120 models. Their buyers represented a cross section of the population in which nobility mingled with business tycoon and stars of show business. On the Barbezat books were such names as those of Princess Caraman-Chimay, the actress Arletty and singer-actor Tino Rossi, as well as that of Marcel Bloch (endnote 3). All were attracted to the car's perfect overall appointments, reliable performance and absolute comfort. On the eve of World War II, Packards enjoyed enormous popularity in France. Sales figures speak eloquently: in 1937, 407 Packards found buyers, that is just a fraction less than the total combined production figures of Panhard and Talbot, and far more than Delaunay-Belleville or

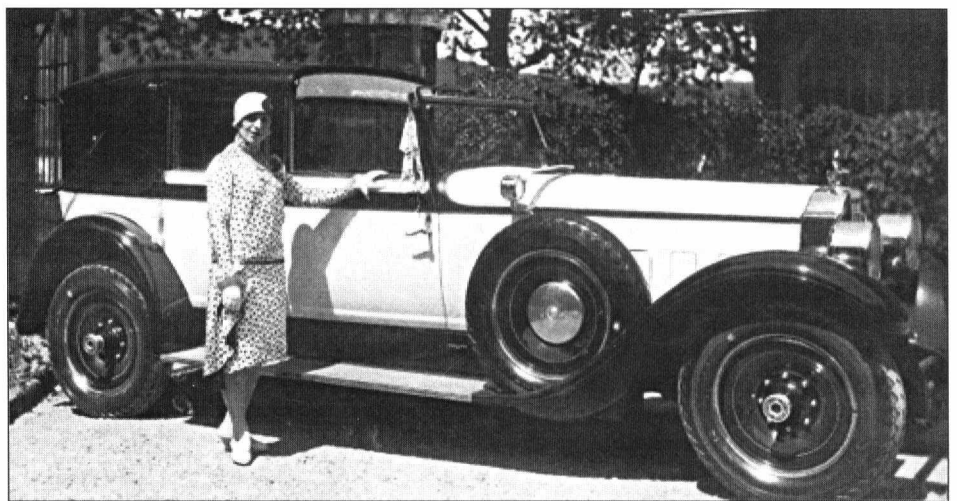
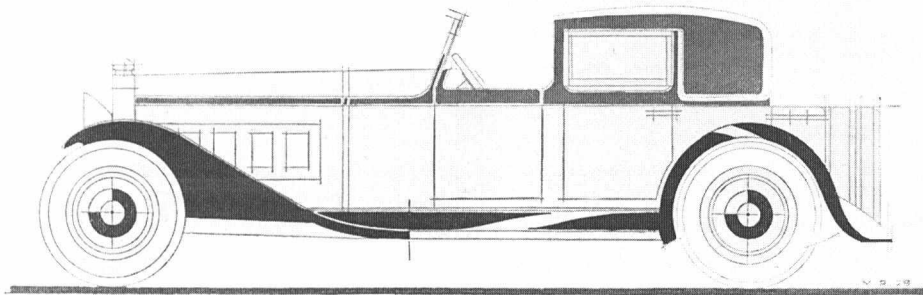


Fig. 7 – Photographed at the entrance to the Barbezat premises, this 1928 Packard Eight features a town car body by Hibbard and Darrin, the "Americans of Paris." Judging by the bunting on the windshield pillar this car and its owner just participated in a concours d'elegance.

"ASK THE MAN WHO OWNS ONE"



Il est utile de rappeler que Packard a toujours été en tête de toutes les améliorations apportées à l'automobile. Depuis cinq ans, Packard a adopté le graissage central qui assure, au moyen d'un seul coup de pompe, le graissage de toutes les articulations et de tous les organes de la voiture.

Après avoir construit pendant plusieurs années les moteurs en V, Packard fut le premier à marquer un progrès nouveau en adoptant la 8 cylindres en ligne.

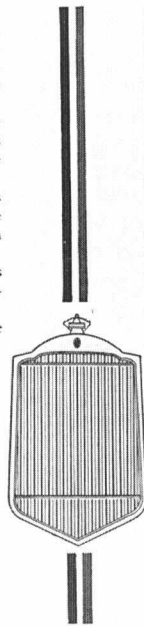
Le plus grand nombre des constructeurs suivirent rapidement cet exemple et abandonnèrent définitivement les moteurs en V.

On sait aussi que la multiplicité du nombre

des paliers supprime complètement les vibrations. Le vilebrequin Packard supporté par 9 paliers est infiniment mieux soutenu que les vilebrequins des 8 cyl. en V, lesquelles ne comportent que 5 ou 5 paliers.

La joie de conduire un engin aussi parfait est telle que rares sont les propriétaires de Packard qui laissent cette satisfaction à leur chauffeur. Vous verrez presque toujours le propriétaire d'une Packard au volant.

Dans toutes les réunions mondaines de la Grande Saison de Paris, aux courses, au Bois, à la sortie des ballets russes, les Packard sont de plus en plus nombreuses. Leur belle ligne et leur sobre élégance séduisent les plus difficiles. Le confort et la beauté de la carrosserie vont de pair avec la perfection mécanique du châssis et du moteur.



PACKARD

SEUL DISTRIBUTEUR POUR LA FRANCE :

BARBEZAT

15, Quai de Boulogne, BOULOGNE-SUR-SEINE

et 102, Avenue des Champs-Élysées, PARIS

Fig. 8 – An example of Packard luxury just before the Depression, this ad appearing in L'Illustration on July 20, 1929. (From the editor's collection)

Packard Trucks in France

As Marc-Antoine Colin writes, Packard supplied some heavy duty trucks to the French Army during World War I. Jacques Fritsch has compiled registration figures for the Seine et Oise département (think of it as a donut surrounding Paris) representing the registration of Packard trucks in the first half of the 1920s, which he surmises are military trucks registered by civilian owners. Jacques' figures show the registration of 14 and possibly 17 Packard trucks in 1920, 9 trucks in 1921, 36 in 1922, 35 in 1923, 42 in 1924, and 22 in 1925. By far the greater number of these were the model 3E (20 French fiscal horsepower).

An Early News Account of Packard in Paris

Brooks Brierley provided a photocopy of an article that appeared in *The New York Herald, Paris*, for October 3, 1913, illustrated by a "New Packard '38' Touring Chassis. Seven Passenger Standard Touring Body." The article is an interesting period piece, reading more like a press release than an interview, and is reprinted in full below.

PACKARD MOTOR COMPANY IS PREPARING INTERESTING DISPLAY FOR PARIS AUTO SALON

"Ask the Man Who Owns One" is the Motto Which Sells These American Machines.

When a *Herald* correspondent, continuing his round of inquiry as to the display which well-known firms propose to make at the coming Paris Auto Salon, called upon Mr. R. A. Goode, the managing director in Paris of the Packard Motor Car Company of Detroit, Mich., he found him at the telephone arranging for the delivery of a 48 h.p. Packard touring automobile, which had just arrived from America, and was destined for Mr. Charles Denby, the United States Consul-General at Vienna.

When Mr. Goode was free, he told the *Herald* correspondent what the Packard Company proposes to do in Europe. He said: "Foreigners are showing quite a sense of appreciation and respect for our machines, and it is a continual surprise to French manufacturers that the American automobile is such a high quality machine. They had not at first taken into account the severe test our automobiles have gone through in America. The fact is, the American customer is very difficult to please, and consequently our incentive is all the greater, for we realize that we must build a machine with a greater margin of security and solidity than anywhere in the world.

"Really, the main difference between American and foreign manufacturers is that the American lays the greater stress upon the application of devices and developments for the utility and comfort of the driver, the owner and the passengers. Our latest model has special devices, by which all the controlling features of the machine are grouped together on the steering-wheel, at the convenience of the driver. This advantage is felt by the driver, who is getting his maximum pleasure and recreation out of his automobile. He takes his place, and his friends get in and close the door. He then, by pressing the heel button, turns over the engine, which immediately starts firing, and off they go."

"Auto of Comfort and Luxury"

Speaking of the *Herald's* interview with the manager of Rolls-Royce Company, Limited, Mr. Goode said: "The American has stopped buying high-priced foreign machines, and there must be a reason. Although our machine is not as high-priced as many European first-class marks (sic), the Packard is regarded in the United States as the representative automobile of luxury and comfort. In Canada we have no trouble in competing directly and successfully with the luxurious Rolls-Royce. We pay high Canadian duties—I think 25 per cent—which Rolls-Royce, being an English company, does not. We are therefore competing with this company in Canada upon equal terms, selling our machines for about the same price.

"We mean to give the maximum of all the qualities in a high-priced machine—silence, smooth running, good suspension, power and acceleration. We do not limit ourselves to developing one quality to the disadvantage of another.

Our offices in Paris, 5 rue Newton, were primarily established for taking care of Packard machines for Americans on the Continent and for foreigners. Every year between 400 and 600 Americans come here with Packard automobiles, and we must look after them. We have a full stock of spare parts, and I think are better prepared than foreign manufacturers in this respect. Machine development in the United States has reached such a stage of perfection that an owner of a Packard machine can replace a part without asking the aid of a mechanical fitter and adjuster.

Inducements to Travelers

"Our rental service, thanks for the advertisement we place in the *Herald*, has developed, and is now one of the most important branches of our foreign business. Owning our own machines, we are able to give a maximum guarantee and satisfaction to the traveler, who so often hesitates to assume the responsibilities of bringing his own automobiles abroad.

“It may interest Americans to know that we exercise special care in the selection of our drivers, whom we trust with all the practical details of the trip.

“We have just furnished the wife of the president of our company, Mr. H. B. Joy, with a machine and driver, to visit the chateaux in Touraine.”

The correspondent then spoke of the coming Salon, and referred to the New York exhibitions, where everything is for the American exhibitor, the foreigner having a separate building to himself. Mr. Goode said:

“This being the case, the American manufacturer cannot expect favors over here. However, Americans are treated on a par with European manufacturers, who have not displayed for three consecutive years. Our exhibit at the Salon this year will be at Stall 47, in the main hall. We will show one model, 38 H.P., which embodies a number of very interesting features. The motor presents a wonderfully clean appearance, free from all wiring and oil tubings.

“What will probably strike the fancy most is the perfectly protected motor, with mudguards under the front springs, protecting the radiator from all splashing.

“All the talking in the world will not convince a buyer. The Packard sells on the strength of its motto: ‘Ask the man who owns one.’”



Fig. 9 – At the start of the '30s the Packard stand was a focal point of Paris' Salon de l'Automobile. During his annual inaugural visit the President of the French Republic would not fail to stop there. In this photograph taken in 1931, Maurice Barbezat extends a warm welcome to President Paul Doumer.

Voisin (endnote 4). Taking into account that Packards were not the only American cars to be imported, it is easier to understand how French manufacturers of luxury automobiles found the competition “demanding.”

Decisive Years

In Packard history the decisive years were the '40s. When the United States entered the war in 1941, the company was without doubt on a roll. The model range comprised two main series of models: on the one hand were the Packard 110 and 120 series; these cars competed with Buick and Chrysler models. On the other hand were the Packard Senior models, the 160 and 180, which were very luxurious cars. Constructed in numbers infinitely fewer than their sisters, they maintained the tradition of prestige on which their manufacturer had based its reputation.

Finally, launched in the spring of 1941, the new Clipper line immediately won the votes of the public. However, it did not prevent, at the end of the decade, the future of the company becoming dark once again. There were three reasons for this. The first is that the company had discontinued its top-of-the-line 160 and 180 models, leaving to Cadillac the domain of the high-luxury car; the manufacturer was mistaken to remain faithful to the philosophy of the 120. Secondly, in the realm of engineering, Packard's attachment to the eight in-line engine immediately became old-fashioned once General Motors introduced the high-compression V-8 in the 1949 Cadillac. Finally, in the realm of esthetics, the bodies of the 1948-50 models were a matter of dispute among many observers, who judged the all-new 1951 models to be too conservative and boring. In an increasingly competitive market, these faults had heavy consequences.

The end of a tradition

In France, these faults did not have the same impact. After having been heavily afflicted by the war, in 1946 Barbezat resumed importing Packards (Fig. 10). The first one, a Clipper of course, was delivered to the happy owner on April 4, 1946. By the end of the year, 31 had been delivered, followed by 124 more in 1947, 78 in 1948, and 37 in 1949 (Fig. 11). That such sales occurred until the beginning of the '50s attest to the loyalty of a certain French clientele, necessarily very well-to-do. On the other hand, in the United States, Packard's situation deteriorated. As with the other independents, Packard faced the might of General Motors and Ford. In 1953, the arrival of a new president, James J. Nance, coincided with a late effort to regain lost ground, to once more make prestige automobiles. This effort was launched with a V-8 engine in 1955 to replace the venerable in-line eight. In addition, the top-of-the-line cars were equipped with an innovative suspension system. In the French market,



Fig. 10 – The Barbezat facilities were not spared from the allied bombing of Boulogne on April 4, 1943. Inside the devastated buildings among the automobile carcasses may be seen, on the left, two Buick models beside an Auburn. On the right, a Packard Eight presumably with a body by Franay, also has taken a beating.

they were an immediate success with Barbezat's clientele, 65 models finding owners. Jean Marais was one of these, taking delivery of a spectacular Caribbean. But on the other side of the Atlantic, the wheel turned. In 1954, Nance agreed to a merger of Packard with Studebaker, and at that moment, Packard was no longer the master of its destiny. The disappointing sales of the 1956 models led to the end of the production of the true Packards, and the introduction of the Studebaker-based 1957 and 1958 models.

Epilogue

Only 26 Packards were imported into France in 1956. Edith Piaf was one of the last to own one. The last one, a Patrician, was delivered on July 10, 1956, to the Embassy of Mexico, putting an end to the story of Packard in Paris. The decision to end production of the true Packards was the epilogue of the importation of the marque. For his part, Maurice Barbezat

EDITOR'S NOTES—continued

comparing the photos in the original article with those in the comprehensive *Packard—a History of the Motor Car and the Company* (1978), edited by Beverly Rae Kimes, the truth became known: the car was a 299. Sig. Moretti and Bev graciously conceded the point, and we have substituted the correct number in his text, with no harm to his thesis that a Packard V-12 may have influenced Enzo Ferrari's later choice of engines for his cars. Thus, a minor correction to automotive history has come about with this article. Now, go make a correction to page 747 of your Packard book! I regard the article as having been vetted, if not peer-reviewed, by Pat, Jim, and Bev. Jim had some interesting comments which have been appended as a sidebar following the article. He also furnished the illustrations for the article as the ones that accompanied the original article were no longer available, noting that those that comprise Figures 11 and 12 of the article came from Baroness Avanzo herself to Brad Skinner, the prior owner of Jim's 299.

Patrick Fridenson of the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales never misses the SAH dinner in Paris. One year, Patrick presented me with a copy of his "La première



Fig. 11 – Parked in front of the Barbezat facilities, these two 1948 Packards await delivery. Where is this Super Eight convertible today?

was at a crossroads. At 72, he hesitated to pursue further opportunities. It was suggested to him that he become the Volkswagen importer for France. He refused, then changed his mind, only to learn that it was too late. He retired, after having rented his facilities on the quai de Boulogne to Saprar (Société anonyme pour la réparation des automobiles Renault).

Endnotes

¹cf. *Automobilia* #34

²Such as, for example, Rolls Royce, or Hotchkiss in France

³Better known as Marcel Dassault following the liberation of Paris

⁴Despite the nasty remarks made by Gabriel Voisin about American cars some ten years earlier.

rencontre de Louis Renault avec Hitler," published in 1998 by the Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, as part of its series on "Les entreprises et leurs réseaux: hommes, capitaux, techniques et pouvoirs XIXe-XXe siècles." A friend of *Frank Gump's*, Dick Dillenbach of Old Lyme, Connecticut translated the article into English, and it appears as "Louis Renault and Adolf Hitler: Their First Meeting." This was the fruit of Patrick's labors in the German government's archives in Berlin. Patrick is a co-author with *Jim Laux* of "The Automobile Revolution: the Impact of an Industry." I have assumed that the original article was peer-reviewed and that further such is not needed.

Turning to an article originally written in English, "Kaiser Assembly in Rotterdam," we are indebted to *Frans Vrijaldenhoven* of Den Haag. Frans grew up in the Netherlands during the 1930s, the son of "one of the five official Dutch car brokers." He spent 18 years with GM in the Netherlands, from 1955 to 1973. Frans has written for a number of automotive publications, including this one (see "The Cars of Kaiser Bill," *Review* No. 31, Summer 1997. Frans seems to like "Kaiser") as well as being the author of a book on the cars of the Dutch royal family. The Kaiser article was adapted from one which appeared

in *Kaiser-Frazer Quarterly*, Vol. 30 No. 2 (1994), published by the Kaiser-Frazer Owners Club. Ric Dias, professor of history at Northern State University, Aberdeen, S.D., who lists Kaiser-Frazer as one of his interests in the Members Directory reviewed this article. Indeed, he commented that he has a Kaiser in his garage.

Next is "Roman S.A.: Medium and Heavy Duty Trucks Built in Romania" by *Tom Brownell*. Tom is a professor at Ferris State University, Big Rapids, Michigan, in the College of Technology (Automotive and Heavy Equipment). He is Editor-at-Large of *Vintage Truck* and does a Q & A column for *Old Cars Weekly* as well as the "Nice Rides" feature for *Michigan Auto & RV*. Tom has presented papers at three of our Automotive History Conferences. Tom wrote this article after a sabbatical in Romania in 1996, and a Romanian friend has updated it. I have also added a note, based upon a 2003 article in *The Wall Street Journal*. *Robert Przybyski*, who wrote on "The Jelcz Truck and Bus of Poland" (Issue No. 31, Summer 1997) served as the peer reviewer of this article.

Finally, we are pleased to present "The Early Years of Fiat in the Italian Royal Army" by new member *Alessandro Sannia* of Italy, from his book on off-road Fiats, "Le fuoristrada Fiat," published in 2002. Like Valerio Moretti, Alessandro is a graduate in architecture. He works as a stylist and designer in the automotive field and as a freelance journalist. He has written 13 books among which is a series covering special-bodied and custom-built Fiats. Born in Turin 31 years ago, his interest in Fiat therefore seems to be a birthright. *Arthur Jones*, author of "For Official Use Only: The Army Goes Car Shopping" (Issue No. 42 (Fall 2004), p. 28) was a natural to review this article for us.

Kudos again to Mountain Laurel Press and Arena Press for the production and printing of this issue. Once more, *Kit Foster* and *Pat Chappell* suffered nobly through proof-reading of this issue. Finally, in passing, I'd like to note that October 2005 marks ten years since I took over as editor of the *Review*. No. 44 is the 15th issue to appear since then. It boggles my mind to think that this span comprises approximately one-third of all the *Reviews*. As they say, "my, how time flies when you're having fun."

Corrections:

Review No. 43 (Spring 2005)

The Rise and Fall of Hall-Scott, Engine Manufacturer

Endnotes (p. 62):

Endnote 1: The reference in the text to this Endnote is on p. 50. There is an erroneous citation to Endnote 1 on p. 51 which should be deleted.

Endnote 4: The Glidewell letter to Borgeson is in the San Diego Aviation Museum, not in the Bradford collection as stated.

Endnote No. 5: The first sentence is corrected to read: "Scott's early years are taken from Francis Bradford's "A History of the Hall-Scott Motor Car Company," unpublished manuscript, 1989, 4-5, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley."

Endnotes Nos. 9, 23, and 44: Replace references to "Glidewell" with "A Brief History of Hall-Scott Motor Company," unpublished manuscript, 1956, Francis Bradford Collection.

Letters to the Editor:

Review No. 37 (Spring 2001)

The Rocket Engine Story by One Who Was There (p. 34)

I take issue with the claim that "Oldsmobile outmaneuvered our sister division" in the development of the high-compression V-8 engine. The "sister division" is, of course, Cadillac. Please refer to my story on V-8 engine development in *Special-Interest Autos* for September/October 1974. That article was reviewed and approved by Harry Barr and Roland V. Hutchinson before publication. "Hutch" of course was mentioned in the article, as was T. A. Boyd whom I also knew.

Before I wrote the article, I also contacted John Gordon and Ed Cole, as well as Hutchinson who provided valuable data. The Rocket was a remarkable engine and all credit to those responsible. But its concept didn't originate at Olds, nor did it have industry-wide influence as claimed. That honor belongs to Cadillac. The Olds V-8 *itself* was influenced by Cadillac! Before they became aware of Cadillac's advanced high-efficiency, low-friction, oversquare full OHV V-8, Olds engineers were working on a heavier, bulkier F-head design—unsuited to the modern V-8 era. By their own admission, Olds engineers didn't begin work on a postwar V-8 until 1946. Cadillac began investigating designs for a successor to its prewar 346 V-8 the same year it was introduced, in 1936, ten years before Olds!

In March 1949, Barr and Cole presented their joint paper at the SAE National Meeting in Detroit, detailing the development of "The New Cadillac Engine." They noted that "many design features were in development from 1937 to 1942." Where was Olds? One of the vital factors in the new engine's compact design was the slipper position, allowing the piston to clear the crankshaft counterweights, enabling shorter conrods and a lower engine block height. Ernest Seaholm told me this was the work of Byron Ellis, who devoted years' research to the problem.

Two experimental V-8 engines, one a side-valve, the other an OHV incorporating slipper pistons, short stroke, and other new advancements, were both ready for test runs at Cadillac in December 1941. At that time, Olds was doing no work at all on V-8s, just making their ho-hum side-valve sixes and eights, which were as exciting as watching snail racing.

Cadillac's 346 V-8 served with great distinction in tanks in World War II, and new V-8 development began again at Cadillac in 1945. In 1946, C. L. McCuen, vice-president of GM's vehicle engineering staff, learned of the Cadillac V-8 project. Formerly general manager of Olds, McCuen got John Gordon, then general manager of Cadillac, to give permission to Olds engineers Tony Waters and Jack Wilson to examine the engine. "They took the design back to Olds and that's when Olds dropped its experimental F-head V-8 and started over again, basing their work on the Cadillac V-8," said Barr. So much for Oldsmobile claims.

The article contains a raft of erroneous "firsts" for the Rocket V-8:

1. *V-8 configuration with OHV*. Ex-Cadillac engineer Alanson Brush designed and built OHV V-8s for Hollier and

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR—continued on page 20

The Fascination of 12 Cylinders

by Valerio Moretti, translated by Betty Jane Helander

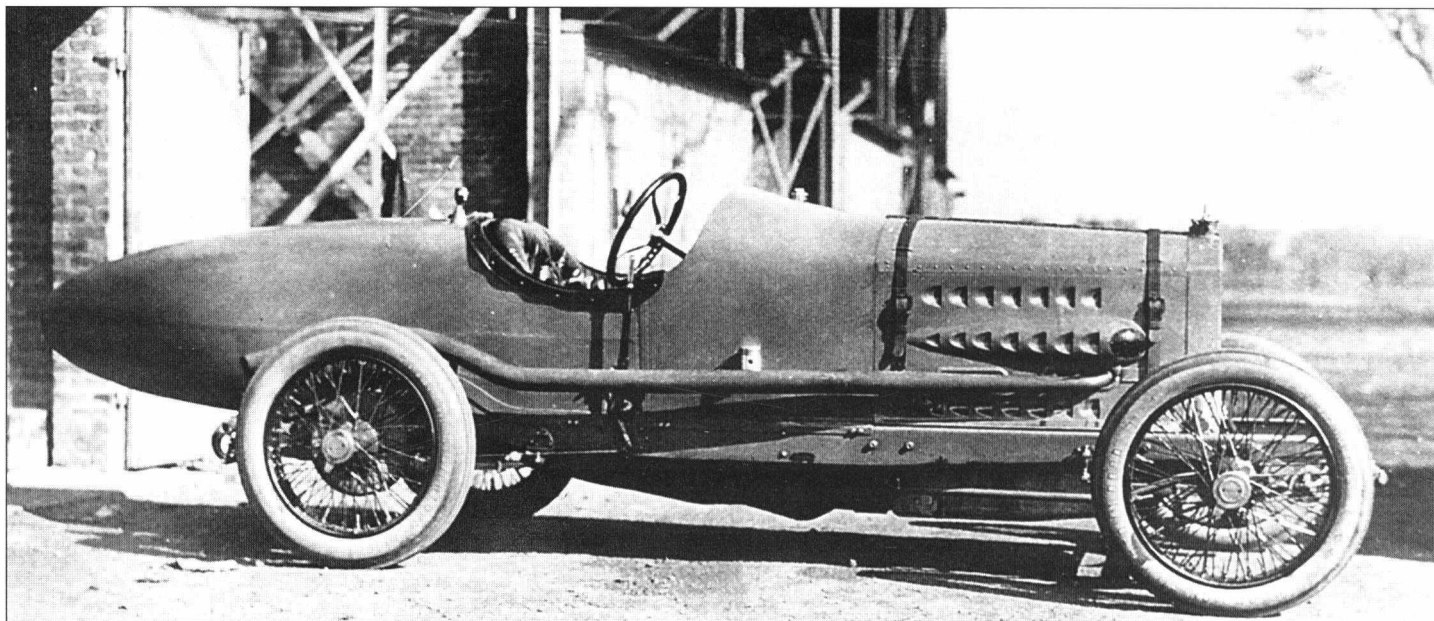


Fig. 1 – The first photo of the 299 racer, probably in grey, at Sheepshead Bay 1916. Note piston on exhaust pipe.

Certain automobiles have an extraordinary destiny: they have influenced the history of the automobile by succeeding on their own as one of a kind and not as part of a series. One of these exceptional vehicles was the Packard Twin Six Liberty 299, a racing machine that was repeatedly and explicitly acknowledged by Enzo Ferrari as the basis for his interest in the 12-cylinder engine. Therefore, this extraordinary automobile could be the origin of the Ferrari legend. Moreover, but this is a personal story, the Packard 299 was also the reason for a polite difference of opinion between writers and Enzo Ferrari; a difference in which traces were found in the notes of the volume *Enzo Ferrari, Driver*, edited in 1987 by Autocritica in which printed drafts were personally read over and annotated by Enzo Ferrari.

The Packard Twin Six 299 was a special racing machine that was assembled with a special motor, a 12-cylinder one with a displacement of 299 cu. in. (Fig. 1). A later engine, 12 cylinders of 905 cu. in. displacement, was developed by Packard. Both the 299 and 905 engines were prototypes and were not conceived for use in sports cars for racing; they were intended above all for aviation as an alternative to the highly respected Liberty engine.

However, Ralph De Palma, the celebrated Italian-American race driver, had been successful in obtaining the approval of the firm for the fitting out of these race cars.. Between the end of spring and the beginning of the summer of 1916 the type 299 engine had been ordered, and the car was off to a competitive career (Figs. 2 and 3).

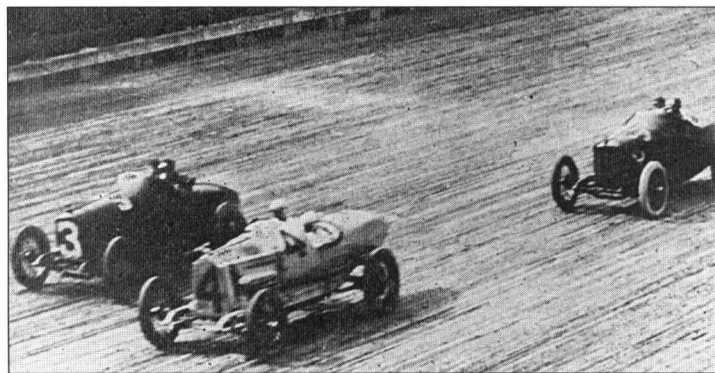


Fig. 2 – The 299 with its first body, in action on the boards (either 1917 or 1918), probably at Sheepshead Bay.

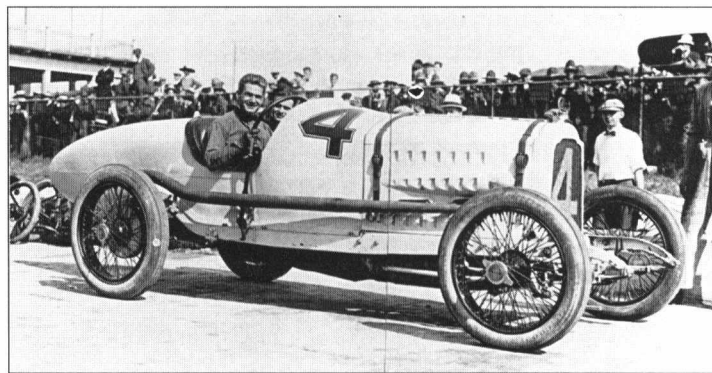


Fig. 3 – 299 as it looked with its first body (Packard crème with blue), 1917.

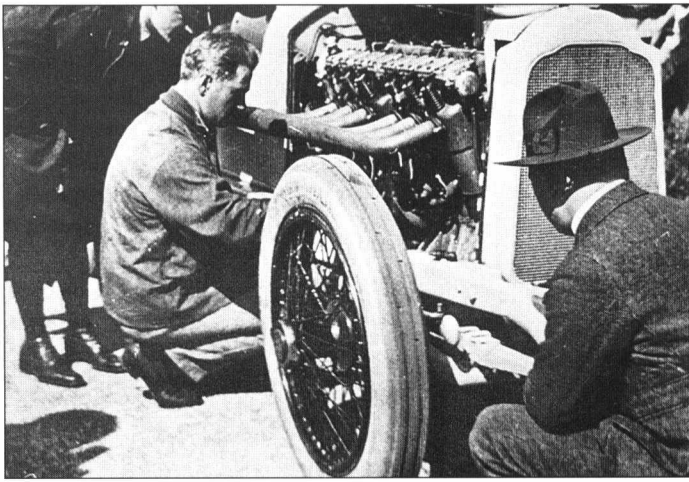


Fig. 4 – Ralph DePalma tinkering with the 905, possibly at the Santa Monica demonstration in 1919.

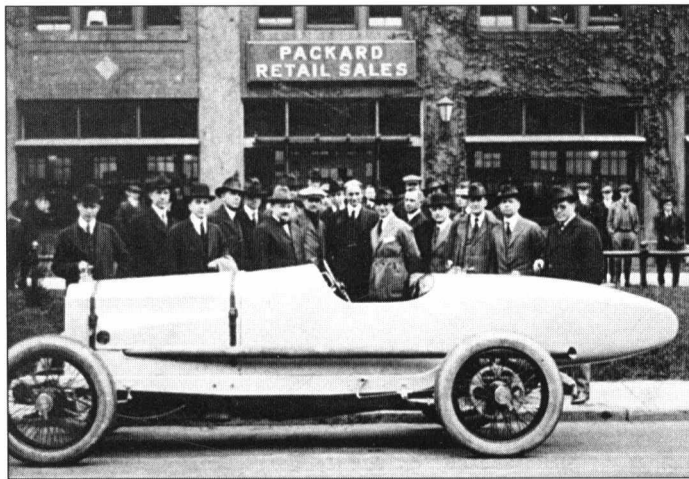


Fig. 5 – 299 rebodied for the 1919 Indianapolis race, parked in front of the Packard entrance on Grand Boulevard, Detroit. Behind the cockpit stand Jesse Vincent and Ralph DePalma. This is the first photo of the body that went to Europe.

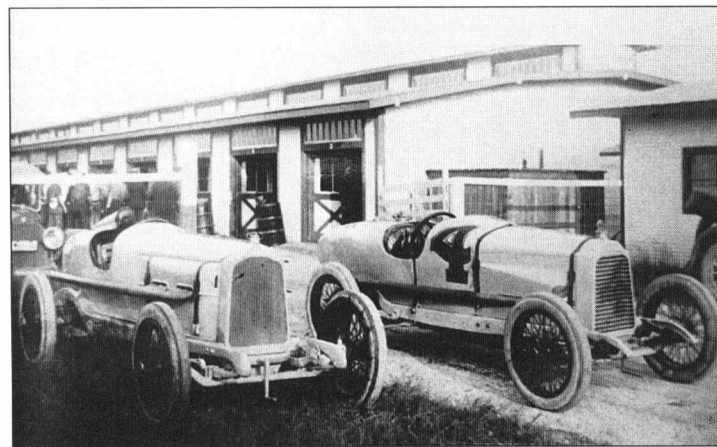


Fig. 6 – The Packard siblings at Gasoline Alley, Indianapolis Motor Speedway, 1919. The 905 as a single seater next to the 299 (No. 4) with its distinctive hood sides.

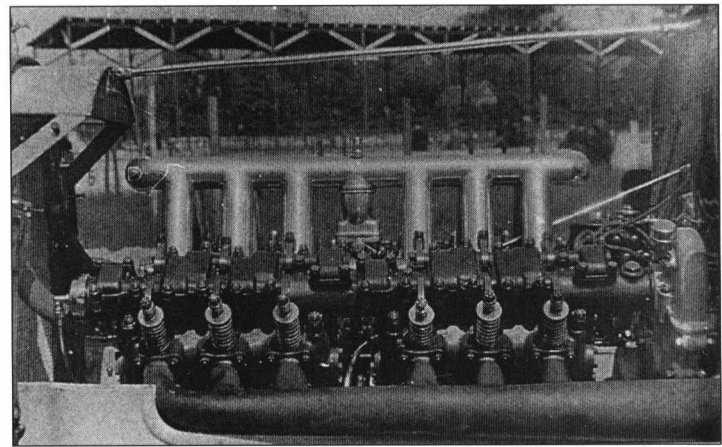


Fig. 7 – 299's engine at Indianapolis, 1919

Starting in 1919 three prototypes of the type 905 engine were manufactured. The American history of the Packard 905 engine began with three demonstrations conducted between February and March 1919. The debut took place in Daytona, Florida, February 12, 1919, where Ralph De Palma had to be satisfied with a simple demonstration. He succeeded, however in establishing the national record for a mile from a standing start; a record that, according to *Packard: A History of the Motor Car and the Company* (the volume coordinated by Beverly Rae Kimes in 1978 for *Automobile Quarterly*), still stood in 1952 (we have not been in a position to check if after this date a new record was established).

The second demonstration was at Santa Monica, California on March 15, 1919, De Palma not being able to participate in the scheduled race because the Packard 905 had only a single-seat configuration; the American regulations of the day required the presence of a mechanic aboard the car (Fig. 4).

De Palma's last demonstration of the 905 came at Ascot, near Los Angeles, on March 23, 1919. He then turned his attention to the Indianapolis 500 race at the end of May (Fig. 5), choosing to drive the 299 (Figs. 6 and 7). He managed a respectable sixth place, though it was not a smooth ride all the way (Fig. 8).

How and why the Packard 299, ex-De Palma, reached Italy is the first point of our search. It appears in fact very strange that such an important object both technically and economically had found a buyer in the immediate post-war period, in an Italy bleeding and still impoverished from the recently ended conflict. In truth, the automobile as sport was already renewed through the stubborn will of Vincenzo Florio, who in November 1919 had wanted to compete with his Targa. But the competition calendar for 1920 was very limited in the number of competitions with top prizes, offering little hope of adequate return on the purchase investment and for the importation of the splendid but costly American racer. Few reasons are available to us to try to understand the American car's arrival in Italy. In Milan there was a concession of Packard Motor Car Company of New York, located at via Boccaccio 17 managed by Alberto Chiesa. At the same location there were also the concessions for Italy and Switzerland of the Cole Aero

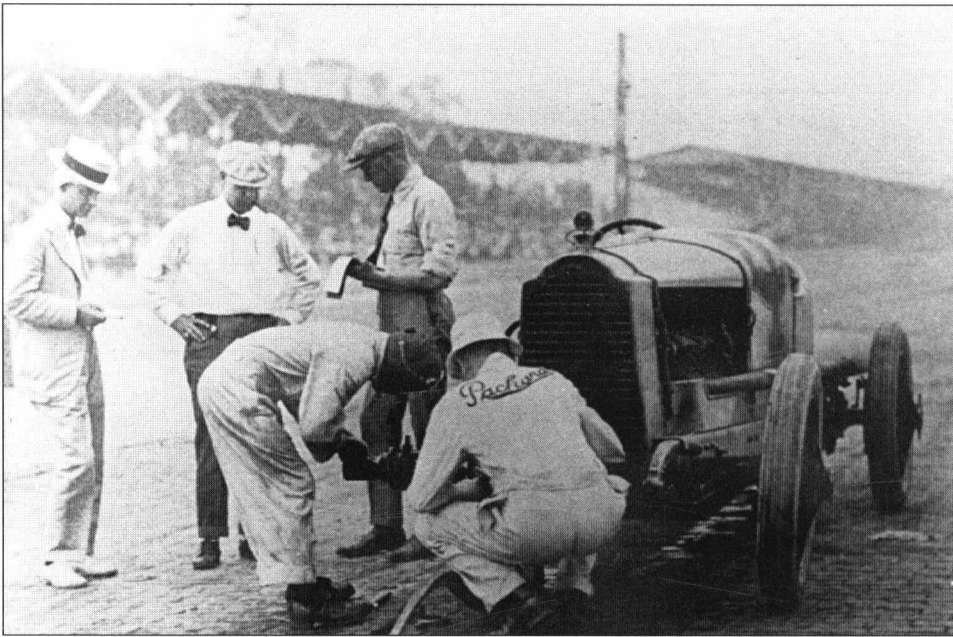


Fig. 8 – DePalma bending over 299, repairing right front wheel bearing, a 20-minute stop. A driver and his ride-along mechanic had to make their own repairs. Note that the sides of the hood have been removed, always done when the body was raced in the U.S.

Eight of Indianapolis and of Lee Tires, the well-known American manufacturer of “incomparable non-puncturable tires” as they were advertised. Both the Cole and Lee concessions were managed by Giorgio Giorgi. That the commercial activities of Chiesa and Giorgi had in common something more than the same address is demonstrated from the fact that the 299 immediately came to the attention of the sportswriters in the Italian automotive press, more for advertising Lee Tires than for promoting the Packard marque.

The first public outing of the 299 in Italy was set for the 4th Parma-Poggio di Berceto race, a hillclimb scheduled for May 20, 1920. The previous week in the review *Sport Gazzetta* there appeared in fact one promotional photograph of “the Great record-setting car, the 12-cylinder Packard mounted on Lee Tires: at the steering wheel, Mr. Ettore Osella.” Osella was an able businessman but surely not the best driver to succeed Ralph De Palma at the wheel of a machine which had only been demonstrated on American beaches and oval tracks, and never on Italy’s narrow and tortuous mountain roads. Osella himself, after having tried out the car on the hillclimb route, was convinced right away “to throw in the sponge.”

However, the Packard’s failure to participate in the Parma-Poggio di Berceto race was not all negative; indeed we can say that it was likely fundamental for the history of the Italian car. On that occasion Enzo Ferrari could surely have carefully observed the American 12-cylinder racer. Ferrari was at the wheel of an Isotta Fraschini in that race and would have had to enter the same category in which Osella had entered the 299. Therefore, if there was a lightning bolt of inspiration, this would have occurred on that occasion.

After the bad experience of the Parma-Poggio di Berceto, the Packard passed out of Osella’s hands. Taking it over was a person today little remembered in the Italian automotive world, the head of a special Fiat division, Eugenio G. Silvani. In his

workshop at via Modena 10, the Milanese technician quickly took charge of the refinements of the American motor. That was the seed of the first “mutation” of the Packard 299; the second and most famous, if we must credit it to Enzo Ferrari, would have been made by Ferrari himself. In fact, in the SB, the automobile that Silvani constructed some time later for Ferrari, derived from a Bugatti chassis Type 13, the influence of the Packard 299 was clearly evident: it is enough to look at the radiator to realize it.

Eugenio Silvani, with the faithful mechanic Botta (the “B” of the acronym “SB”) by his side, introduced the Packard in the Susa-Moncenisio hillclimb. In spite of the favorable forecast it was another disappointment. In an article, “As I have lost the Susa-Moncenisio,” written purposely in order to excuse the debacle, Silvani asserted that “the reason I lost the race was an

irregular circulation of gas that provoked an uninterrupted series of explosions in the carburetor. I immediately realized that such a serious drawback would have led to an influx of water into the carburetor and I tried to lower the rpms by putting it into first gear. At this point the motor was so hot that the water was bubbling in the radiator. . . .” A more than understandable excuse; but at the kilometer flying start from Gallarte in November 1920, Silvani took revenge and won the race.

There was no argument about his victory, given the greater power of his machine as compared with that of the other contenders. Silvani was so proud of his vehicle that he had his wife sit in the car in place of the mechanic. Unfortunately, not even Silvani was able to make use of the excessive power of the American racer, and the race was comparatively slow. This time the press criticism was clear: “From Silvani’s 12-cylinder Packard frankly we expected more. Bad road conditions and adverse weather conditions contributed to the comparative slowness. But the average speed achieved by Silvani still does not surpass the Italian record of [1913] and of the average obtained on the road—on the Gaillon climb—recently by [Parry] Thomas on a Sunbeam.” The reason for the modest results of the Packard in the Italian races is certainly not in the handling or the driver. If Osella was not a champion, Silvani was. It is well remembered that the Milanese already had to his credit various victories and would be called by Gabriel Voisin to participate in the Gran Premio of Europe 1923, driving one of his extraordinary cars.

Paradoxically, it could be said that one of the causes of the disappointing performance of the 299 was from its being equipped with the Lee tires that it seems to have been imported to promote. For his demonstrations on American beaches De Palma adopted, naturally, smooth record-winning tires. On the narrow mountain roads of the Appenines and the Alps it is very probable that the Lees did not have sufficient traction for strong



Fig. 9 – The baroness and Silvani in 299 at the beginning of 1921, in the courtyard of Silvani's establishment in Milan.

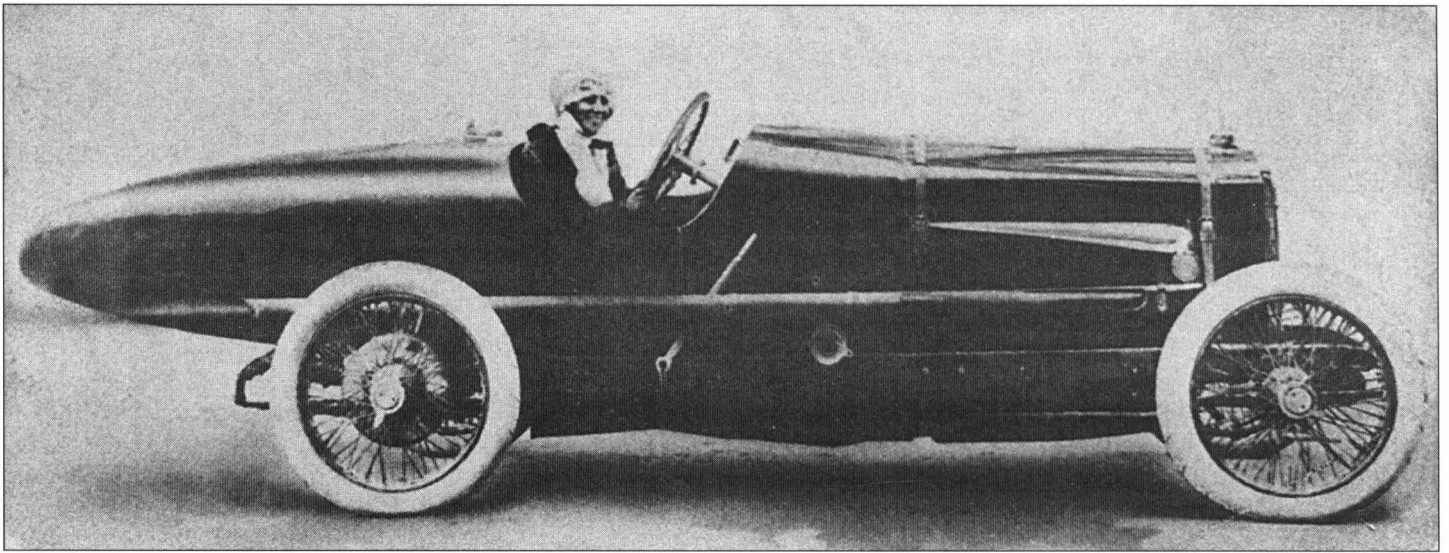


Fig. 10 – Baroness Avanzo and the 299 as it raced in Europe. Note hood sides and spare tire carrier.

acceleration. Also, we can note from a photograph the irregular wearing of the front left tire, which leaves one to suppose that the Lees were not ideal for the task. A month after Gallarate, however, Silvani succeeded in winning a most important victory in the first Vermicino-Rocca di Papa hillclimb. As Francisco Santovetti the official historian of that race noted, it would become a great classic among the mountain races on the Italian calendar. Few were entered in this first running, nearly all Roman dilettantes, and few (Masetti and Ascari) were prestigious. Therefore, an easy victory but none the less important for Eugenio Silvani who, for the occasion had climbed into the Packard with the studded tires.

Present for Silvani's arrival was a lady already famous in motor circles, Baroness Antonietta Maria Avanzo, on the arm of

Count Romeo Gallenga Stuart (who would later name the race after himself). The brave lady was already successful in the race, with her Diatto having placed third in its category, and she was searching for adequate means to better develop her potentiality as a driver. For her, the large red American two-seater was love at first sight. After the race a discreet transaction between gentlemen took place (280,000 lire changed hands, according to the baroness's account: an enormous amount!) and a few weeks later in Milan Antonietta Maria Avanzo took triumphant possession of her 12 cylinder Packard 299. Eugenio Silvani had pledged to deliver the machine in perfect order. The good job done in his workshop is well noted in photographs preserved by Silvani that document the day of the "turnover of the order".

The Packard, with the baroness and Silvani aboard, the two obviously pleased, appears shining brightly as if it agreed to being the car of a lady (Fig. 9). Strangely, however, the Lee tires had been remounted, having been removed after the victorious hillclimb from Vermicino to Rocca di Papa; it was an obvious sign that in the transaction between Silvani and Avanzo the Packard-Lee pair Chiesa-Giorgi had had their say (Fig. 10).

The first outing of Baroness Avanzo with her Packard was set in Denmark where, on July 2, 1921, on the beach of the island of Fanoe she took part in a very important gathering of the best drivers of northern Europe (Fig. 11). The competition was a run of a measured kilometer at full speed on the beach and we must recognize that it was a logical choice for her; it was a site closest to the American attempts for

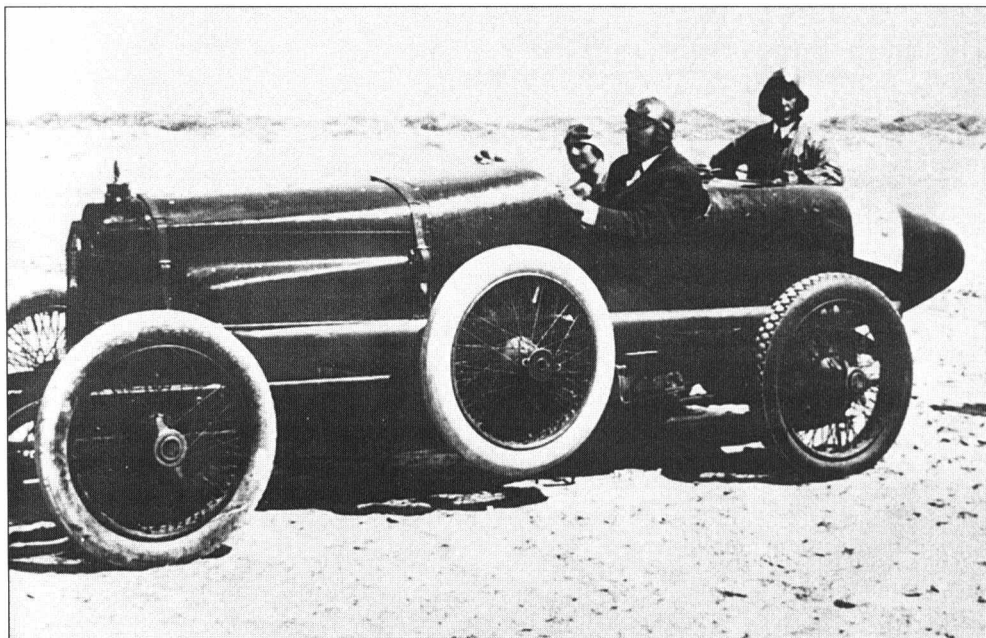


Fig. 11 – 299 on the sands at Fanoe, Denmark.

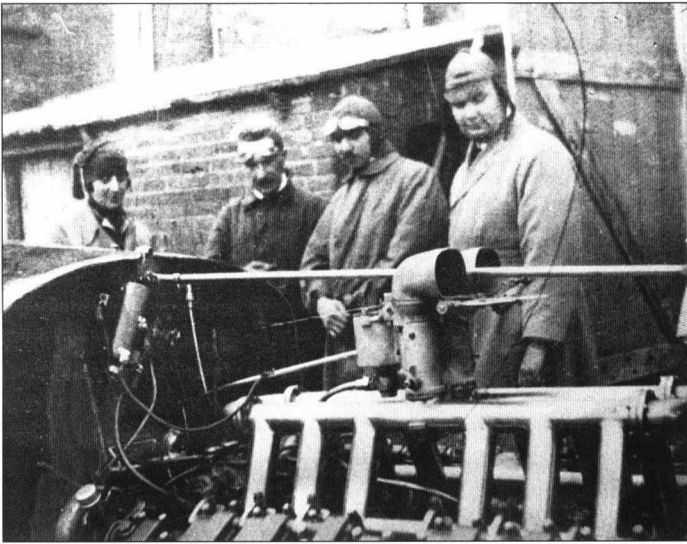


Fig. 12 – 299 at Fanoe. Note engine, but with carburetor on top of intake instead of below, the possible cause of the fire?

which it had been conceived, as contrasted with the problematical hillclimbs of Italy.

I visited the baroness in February 1969. The memory of the Danish adventure was still very much alive also for its dramatic conclusion. We recall once more, from the distance of time gone by, her words on that occasion:

At the urging of the Italian representative, I bought in 1919 [in reality 1921] a 12-cylinder Packard and decided to participate with it at the race on the beach of the island of Fanoe, close to Copenhagen. The Packard caught fire while I was at full speed, but since I was driving along the shore I thrust the car into the water, extinguishing the flames (Fig. 12). I was furious: with all that it had cost! I swore that I would have given it for one Fiat 501! Antonio Ascari, who was present at the incident, took me at my word. When I returned to Italy I found waiting for me a brand-new 501 that I have since used for traveling. The Packard passed from hand to hand but nobody succeeded in getting anything good out of it except Enzo Ferrari who says that it has given him inspiration for his future 12 cylinders.

As far as we are concerned the “Italian” adventure of the Packard 299 ended instead on the beach of Fanoe. And again Beverly Kimes supplies us with the continuation of the story. Returned to the U.S., the machine’s motor was placed in the entrance hall of the Packard offices, while the chassis, modified and with a Stutz motor (later a Hupmobile) came to be used for the races on a sand course in New Jersey. The 299 was finally, sold in 1925 to producer Jesse Lasky of Los Angeles and was transformed into a speedster.

It remains today to remember the most important part of the story of this car is not that it participated in European competitions but that had indirectly influenced Enzo Ferrari. As he states on page 35 of his memoir *My Terrible Joys*: “In the years immediately after the war I had the means to observe the new Packard 12-cylinder motors on the cars of the higher American officials, and I remember that one of these 12-

cylinders was acquired from Antonio Ascari in 1919 and from him turned over to Antonietta Maria Avanzo, the first brave woman driver of the post-war period.”

As you see, there is some marginal discrepancy between Baroness Avanzo’s version and that of Ferrari: Antonio Ascari, according to the magician of Maranello, would not have been the purchaser but the seller of the car. On the other hand, Baroness Avanzo, whose acquisition of the Packard from Silvani is evidenced by photographs, implies that Antonio Ascari bought the car from her. Before his death in 1988, Enzo Ferrari returned several times to this point, correcting in his own hand our notes on the subject in order to return them to his own version. Corrections that, naturally, once and for all we refute strongly out of our own convictions from reporting the text in its original form. A controversy at a distance, silent, stubborn and polite that, like all stubborn and polite controversies, left each of us to his own opinion.

The reasonable assumption that Ferrari was influenced by the V-12 Packard has been neglected and not taken seriously into account by Ferrari historians in creating the myth of Ferrari, even though Ferrari himself admitted the influence.

Comments by Jim Dillon:

A number of writers have stated that Enzo Ferrari was inspired to a degree by the Packard Twin Sixes, which may be the case, but I cannot see any similarities between the Twin Six Packards and any Ferrari other than that they have the same number of cylinders. On the other hand, the 299 is a 60-degree overhead cam 12-cylinder hemispherical design, which may have a ring of familiarity with Ferrari enthusiasts. I, like Enzo Ferrari, have heard a number of antique (and some new) 4, 6, 8, 12, and 16-cylinder engines and in my opinion the sound of a 12 racing engine is unmatched for its melody, and they have been known to run pretty competitively as well. Peter DePaolo in his article on his board track exploits made mention of Uncle Ralph’s (DePalma) 299 as being the loudest car on the track. The first time I heard the “noise” that it makes left a lasting impression on me and I would assume that Enzo Ferrari would have been similarly impressed. The racing adventure of the Packard in Europe as pointed out by Sig. Moretti is probably as accurate as can be expected by today’s historians, and I applaud his research in this regard. There was at least one time and probably a few more that the 299 and Ferrari crossed paths, and since there were so few racing 12s that Ferrari encountered prior to his own incarnation he probably took a bit of inspiration either knowingly or otherwise from each.

As to some background information on the Packard racing 12s, both the 299 and 905 racers had two sets of bodywork: original and the 1919 streamlined efforts. The 299 was built shortly after the 1915 Twin Six but owes little if anything to the passenger car powerplant. The 299 was an aero-inspired engine that I am sure contained design elements of a number of cars, as well as theories of Packard’s chief engineer, Jesse Vincent. It is no secret that Packard had acquired and studied the 563-cubic inch 12-cylinder English Sunbeam racer in 1915. They also ran this car at speed at Sheepshead Bay against various speed cars including the Blitzen Benzes. In addition, the 1914 Grand Prix Mercedes that had been acquired by Ralph DePalma

immediately following the French Grand Prix at Lyon, was rebuilt four times (that I know of) in the Packard shop from late 1914 through 1916. The Packard engineering staff rebodied and readied it for its victorious outing at the 1915 Indianapolis 500 (with a Packard-modified carburetor). Not surprisingly, Jesse Vincent was DePalma's manager in the pits during the race. Mercedes placed several of its new aero-designed overhead cam 4-cylinder engines in race car chassis and went on to sweep the top three spots at Lyon.

Jesse Vincent was a boat racer at heart, but I am sure that speed in any form was an elixir and I do not believe it was happenstance to find Packard's first prototype aero engine, the 299, in a racing chassis less than a year after the 1915 Indy victory, when the AAA limitation at the time just happened to be 300 cubic inches. The war had a sobering effect on any plans that Packard had to go racing and the effort expended in producing the actual Liberty aircraft engine necessitated that others such as DePalma represent Packard on the racetrack. Two 299 race cars were finished in the spring of 1916 but, except for some record runs and testing sessions, actual racing of one of the 299 cars had to wait until 1917.

During the interim, in 1916 and 1917, Packard was working on its second aero-engine prototype, the 905, several configurations of which were produced. The 905 2 model was chosen to be tested in a race car chassis. During the summer of 1917 it was also tested and used for some record runs, mainly at the Sheepshead Bay board track, where Packard had a dedicated racing garage. We did not hear much more of any 905 exploits until 1919. The 299 on the other hand was front and center before the racing public, although like many racing cars there were some teething problems at first (in 1917), but in 1918 the 299 did not take a back seat to any car and was looked at as a real contender to take the top spot when racing resumed at Indy in 1919.

With the end of the war in late 1918, Packard speed aficionados were allowed to put their speed cars in the limelight and the 905, which had earlier been a two-man car, showed up at Daytona with a streamlined one-man configuration with a substantial effort expended to cheat the wind. It succeeded sufficiently to set the straightaway speed record, just shy of 150 mph. Obviously Packard took what it learned from the streamlining of the 905 and built a new body for the 299 for the 1919 Indianapolis classic, early in 1919. It is this distinctive body with the distinctive hood blister (for the 299 overcam setup) that became the subject car of Sig. Moretti's piece. The 299 led the 500 race for the first half but valve and wheel bearing gremlins relegated it to a respectable sixth place finish. The 299 minus the hood sides (as it had raced at Indy) raced three times that summer at Sheepshead Bay, winning once and experiencing engine problems on the other two occasions. The 299 suffered connecting rod trouble in its last outing and its American career came to an end. The new AAA limitation called for 300 cubic inches and DePalma who rarely owned his racing cars (but had owned the 299) parted ways with the 299 to make room for his new Ballot. I have read that DePalma received a goodly sum so I must assume he pieced a pretty good mount together from the spares (the second 299 engine they had built was more than likely not so tired). Although I have read that the

Packard had some piston trouble in its first European outing, I believe that it was probably a decent effort that would and did hold up the pride of the Packard engineering staff.

As to what happened to the 299 engine #2 which raced in Europe, it most likely met the same sad demise that befell numerous other jeweled race car engines that ended up on the scrapheap of history. Although we do not know the full extent of the journey of the 299 engine after its last race, I would assume and hope that it served a useful purpose. The second 299 resides where it is cherished most, in my garage. The only remaining 905 #2 engine is housed in the catacombs of the Smithsonian and it may be the record-setting DePalma engine. The Jesse Lasky Packard speedster referred to in the article may have been the reincarnation of the 905 two-man car body but that's another story which we can't write here.

Sig. Moretti had a purpose when he wrote his article and though others have relayed the same basic premise, Moretti correctly was the first to give proper credit where credit is due. Good job!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR—continued

Scripps-Booth back in 1918, and there were other OHV V-8s in Europe pre-World War II. Also, the Brush-designed V-8 had unit-block/crankcase plus ball-stud OHV rocker gear eliminating the rocker shaft (also erroneously claimed as Olds' firsts).

2. *Hydraulic valve lifters.* These were pioneered by Carl Voorhies of Pierce-Arrow on the 1933 models. Both Cadillac and Lincoln also had similar hydraulic lifters pre-World War II.

3. *Full-flow oil filter.* This goes with hydraulic lifters and was used by Pierce-Arrow from 1933.

4. *6-weight crankshaft.* Used on both Ford and Cadillac V-8s in the 1930s and 1940s.

5. *Oversquare bore/stroke.* First used on Oakland/Pontiac V-8 in 1932 (3.438" x 3.375").

The article also claimed that the Olds V-8 was used as a "design standard" by Chevrolet and Buick. The Chevy V-8 was designed by Cole and Barr, the men responsible (along with Gordon) for the OHV Cadillac V-8. In Anthony Young's very authoritative book on the Chevy small-block, Olds is practically never mentioned.

As for Buick, it began work on a high-compression V-8 as far back as 1944—before Olds! This was directed by the very able engineer Joe Turlay, and I find it hard to see much Olds influence in Turlay's "nailhead" V-8 with 4.0" x 3.2" bore/stroke and 8.5 compression ratio.

Maurice Hendry
New Zealand

Louis Renault and Adolf Hitler: Their First Meeting

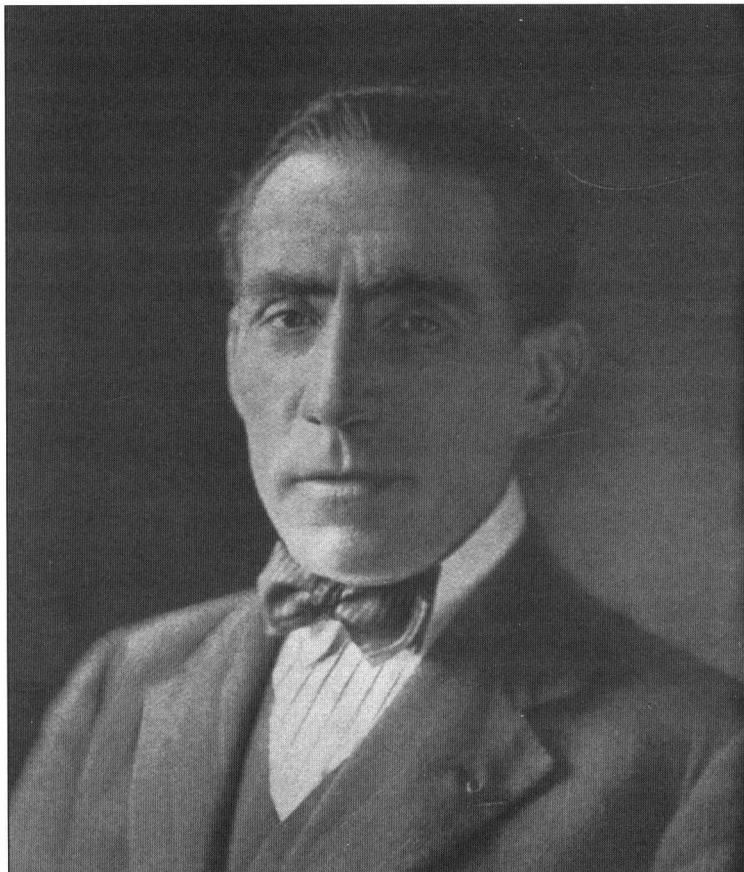
by Patrick Fridenson, translated by Dick Dillenbach

That Louis Renault met Adolf Hitler before the Second World War is a well-known fact. But did they meet more than once? And when did they first meet? What did they discuss? Did the meeting(s) have any importance for the life of Louis Renault thereafter? Having posed these questions, I found the answers on May 12, 1997, at the German National Archives (Bundesarchiv) in Berlin, in the files of the Chancellery of the Third Reich. There, I discovered a four-page report of the meeting prepared by an associate of Hitler's. The document contained a surprise: the date of the meeting itself. It set forth a dialogue concerning the essential questions, and shone a bright light on the prewar relationship between France and Germany.

When and Where

According to the first biography of Louis Renault, the first meeting between Renault and Hitler took place in February 1938.¹ This was "*Renault de Billancourt*" (1955), written by "Saint Loup," a pseudonym of Marc Augier, a French collaborator who served in the SS on the Russian front. The biography was commissioned by Renault's widow, Christiane, to glorify her late husband. According to Saint Loup, "In 1938 Louis Renault exhibited, as he did every year, at the Motor Show in Berlin. Snow had fallen during that February night but stopped by early morning [when] Hitler received Louis Renault at the Chancellery." In 1969, the English journalist Anthony Rhodes also described an encounter between Renault and Hitler at the Renault stand at the 1938 show without indicating whether it had been followed by an official personal meeting at the Chancellery.²

Because Saint Loup explicitly cites the testimony of Jean-Albert Grégoire, the noted French automotive



Louis Renault (1877-1944), c. 1931

engineer, who was present at the 1938 Berlin Show, I consulted Grégoire's first autobiography which contains a detailed and lively account of the meeting on the Renault stand.³ Grégoire also mentioned that Renault had visited an earlier Berlin show, in 1936. Wanting to know more, I asked my associate, Mathieu Flourneau to do some research in the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Paris, but he found nothing relating to Louis Renault in Berlin.

Then I discovered the doctoral thesis by Gilbert Hatry, a biography of Louis Renault, which stated that Renault had attended the 1935, 1938, and 1939 Shows, where he had encountered Hitler three times (Fig. 1). Hatry averred that Renault and Hitler had met "for more than two hours" at a meeting in "March 1935."⁴ That Hatry was essentially correct, where the rest of us had been wrong, I confirmed by the document I found in Germany. The first meeting between Renault and Hitler took place on Thursday, February 21, 1935, at the Reichskanzlerai, the Chancellery.

The date is important in light of what had transpired three months earlier. On November 26, 1934, Louis Renault came out



Fig. 1—Hermann Goering, Adolf Hitler, and Louis Renault examining the Renault Juvaquatre at the Berlin Auto Show, February 1939.

in favor of an agreement with Germany rather than running the risk of war. Renault was open to the possibility of Germany seeking agreements, economic protectorates over all the countries located to the east of Germany, Russia excepted, and the same advantages and economic privileges and protectorates for France, toward all the countries bordering directly to the east and south of France. This would have been something for the two men to talk about.

The 1935 meeting also does justice to the opinions of Saint Loup and Rhodes that the personal trauma caused Renault by the later labor unrest and worker occupations of his factories in 1936-38 and the policies of the Popular Front government caused the industrialist to admire Hitler, who had no such problems in his country. By then, the German economy was in full recovery, aided by rearmament, and its auto industry experiencing a true renaissance as contrasted with France which in general, and its automotive industry in particular, remained stuck in a morass.

What did Renault and Hitler Discuss?

Saint Loup asserted that the 1938 meeting had been “without interest.”⁵ As neither man spoke the other’s language, conversation consisted of “some words of welcome only.” We do not know what transpired in 1938, but certainly the 1935 meeting, according to the document I found, shows, the intensity of the discussion.

Louis Renault opened the meeting.⁶ He went right to the heart: Franco-German relations. Renault recalled that his first visit was to Berlin was in 1901, in connection with the Paris-Berlin automobile race. Tactfully, he did not mention that he had won first place in the light-vehicle category (and seventh in the general class).⁷ He suggested that his role as a race driver was an indication of his general dynamism. He presented himself as “the founder of his own business” and stressed its growth from “a payroll of two” at the beginning to “90,000 today.” His manufacturing principles had remained constant: “to produce the best product at the lowest price, to borrow nothing from banks, and to provide for the financial requirements of the business out of profits.” Renault therefore presented himself as a self-made man who could meet Hitler on an equal basis.

He then went on to that which was of most concern to him. As quoted in the Bundesarchiv: “He is a huge admirer of the progress realized by Germany in the realm of the car and follows with lively interest the measures taken by Germany to reduce unemployment. Since 1920, he has imported German products. He is not interested in politics. He is only passionate about his work. However, he believes that collaboration between Germany and France should be instigated. France is not an aggressive country. His daily contacts with his workers prove this to him.”

Hitler quickly pulled out all the stops. He expressed “a joy and a particular pleasure” to be in the presence of Louis Renault. First of all, he has a profound admiration for men who have created their own businesses from their own efforts.” Then he stressed that “since his earliest days” he had always been interested in the technical problems of the car and “motorized transportation.” He was most satisfied to find “that his present position” gave him “the chance” to be able “to realize his interest in cars with concrete acts.” Finally he was very pleased

that Louis Renault shared a “vision of the economy because he, too, can confront contemporary problems without blinders.” Hitler wanted to give Renault the feeling that his message was understood. And to declare as well: “From all evidence, it is necessary to institute a comprehension and reconciliation between France and Germany. He himself had made an important contribution to this recently.” This had reference to “redrawing the frontier” and the return of the Saar to Germany (decided by plebiscite in 1935).

After the glorification of his own action, Hitler continued: “One need not provoke any conflict contrary to that which was still occurring in a number of locations, but rather try to avoid them. The essential lesson to draw from [the First World War] is that it wasted the accumulated experiences of several decades and destroyed economic potentialities for years.” He continued: “If there were a Franco-German entente [there would be] an economic surge in which the technical [part] would enjoy an important role. One must consider the Berlin Auto Show . . . as symptomatic of economic development in the face of which purely political instincts must take second place.”

The wolf is thus set loose among the sheep. Louis Renault was enchanted. He replied: “Up to the present, all conflicts among people have had economic bases. To avoid such conflicts in the future, the people must have certainty that their properties are guaranteed. From now on, a way must be found to prevent certain nations from seeking the collapse of other people. In addition, mutual competition must be exercised within reasonable limits. Excess production must be shipped to countries which lack national production. A country prevented by excess competition from disposing of its surplus must defend its position.” The idea of directing exports to nations not producing the same goods isn’t new. It was, for example, advanced by André Citroën in New York at the Congress of Large Companies.⁸ The world economic crises did not prove its viability. But it did permit Louis Renault to suggest that there was “no contradiction between the economic interests of France and Germany” and to find justifications for the policy of autarchy conducted by Hitler.

Hitler seized the ball on the bounce and presented his best social persona to Renault, asserting that he had “followed M. Renault’s explanations with the greatest interest,” and he explained his social policy. “It seems that abroad no one yet understands that there are some social duties which National Socialism has decided to address. These are so substantial that Germany needs at least 40 to 50 years of assured peace, protected from trouble, to acquit itself of these duties. In the course of this social reform it will, based on all evidence, be necessary to enact the 6-hour workday. National Socialist power will increase its efforts to decentralize labor from factories, transferring it to the countryside. For commuting from the place of residence to the place of work it will be necessary to create better means of transportation than those of today.” Hitler marveled at his own long-term vision. “All these projects, which have been conceived to fight against unemployment, are enormous. I don’t know whether I will be able myself to carry them out or whether my successors will have to do so.”

Here he came down to earth and attempted to respond to the appeals of Louis Renault without really doing so. “If people

everywhere threw themselves into this task, having recourse to armaments wouldn't be necessary. I'm of the opinion that it's necessary to learn from the past. Reason must be applied to all areas of disruption. Natural interests must, all the same, be conducted to a good end. The most important thing is that one must develop methods allowing workers to be assured of lasting work. France and Germany must arrive at an agreement and develop between themselves a flow of business which will be hugely advantageous. It is necessary that personal relations pick up again. In effect . . . the shortest road is always the best."

Louis Renault, always obsessive, wished to take advantage of these favorable remarks to reap some benefits in his own domain, that of the automobile. "Between Germany and France, it would be necessary to arrive at an agreement concerning the export of automobiles. The two countries have a negative balance of foreign trade. With respect to automobiles, if they compete in each other's markets, that would make no sense." And Renault returned to the attack. "It would be much better, based upon an agreement, to export the excess production of the two countries to other countries which don't have a national industry." Renault thereby expressed his hostility to the Anglo-Saxons, formed in the course of the world economic crisis, and he was sure that Hitler thought the same way. "An economic war between France and Germany would be advantageous only for England and America."

Hitler hid his refusal for a direct engagement behind a vast geopolitical tour of the horizon. "The nations must lay out in the open [their views] on the world commercial organization. It is necessary, first of all, to suspend the export of the means of production. Now, that mistake is being made frequently. One finds the truth of this in the fact that Japan, China, India, and Russia have national industries. For example, some business that is good for a branch of the mechanical industry may lead to the loss of a good market for the textile industry. Since France and Germany are both victims of the devaluation of the English currency, the two peoples would have already, on this basis, an interest in an economic agreement." It is with these words that the meeting came to an end. It remains for us to evaluate the significance of it.

What Conclusions to Draw?

Hitler presented Renault with an authentic synthesis of his strategy for conquering the masses, centered in 1936 on the "creation of work," for he knew that his regime would be judged before anything else on its labor policy, and he considered worker support to be a pre-condition to the great foreign policy about which he dreamed.⁹ Of course, the objective which he assigned himself of reducing the workday to 6 hours was pure propaganda, and it was not until 1937 that a one-week's paid holiday was established.¹⁰ Perhaps Hitler wished to one-up Stalin, who had instituted the 7-hour workday in the Soviet Union in 1928-29.¹¹ In a more general way, Hitler's insistence on the "social duties" of Nazism and upon "social reform" well expressed one of the fundamental dimensions of the regime: totalitarian productivity which sacrificed the political to the social, as Hannah Arendt has suggested.¹²

On the other hand, Hitler's discourse on a French/German entente is much more circumstantial. It recalls the recognition

by Nazi Germany of the utility of a French-German commercial accord; one will be signed after Munich, in December 1938.¹³ But it is also a smoke screen covering his profound intentions, the kind of thing to which Hitler often resorted. In February 1938, when Hitler visited Renault at his stand at the Berlin Auto Show, Renault asked him "Don't you think, Mr. Chancellor, that a real entente between Germany and France is indispensable to the prosperity of our two countries and to the equilibrium of Europe?" To this suggestion implying a non-aggression pact, Hitler limited himself to this response: "If one speaks of war and too much of it, it's the fault of French journalists who always have that word at the tip of their pen."¹⁴ Renault's insistence reminded Hitler that a part of the business community shared a profound pacifism with the majority of French public opinion. Nevertheless, one can imagine that these repeated appeals for an entente did not have much influence on Hitler.

Conversely, there are many reasons to believe that the 1935 meeting had a great influence on Renault's thinking. He took away from it the idea that his project for a French-German accord was credible. On October 19, 1935, he stressed "The atrocity and impossibility of war," and proposed that he "make all to understand that peace is impossible in Europe without agreement, alliance, even an alliance with Germany, an objective toward which everything should be directed without preconceptions."¹⁵ The remilitarization of the Rhineland in 1936 did not dissuade him from considering that it was necessary "to do the impossible in seeking before everything else, an accord between our two countries"¹⁶ and even, paradoxically, linking up with other employer trends favorable to European unification. He envisioned "as soon as that agreement had been accepted in principle" that it should be extended to other countries "with the goal of arriving at a United States of Europe which, it seems in time something impossible to avoid."¹⁷

At the Berlin Auto Show, on February 17, 1939, he stated to the French daily *L'Auto*: "You know my ideas and that I'm against war – source of destruction and disorder. Two great industrial powers such as Germany and France have an equal interest in knowing each other, and all efforts at mutual comprehension will lead to the advantages of world security."¹⁸ In addition, the emphasis put by Hitler at the 1935 meeting on "the motorization of transport" convinced him that he had reason to take seriously the rebirth of German automobile production. One may think that this had contributed to his decision to develop and launch the 6CV Juvaquatre (in large part a shameless copy of the Opel Kadett) (Fig. 2) followed by the strong interest in the preparation and launch of the KdF Wagen (the first Volkswagen Beetle), unveiled at the 1939 Berlin Show. Without doubt, it was at his initiative that in April 1939 the new publication for Renault personnel, *Prise direct*, dedicated a fulsome and highly complimentary article about the KdF Wagen "which, mostly, will make an excellent car," and which was termed "a huge future competitor."¹⁹ Saint Loup goes even further. He asserts that "during several months," Louis Renault sprinkled his statements with the phrase "Hitler said to me" and claimed to his associates "I turn to the Hitler-said-to-me report." Whatever the case may be, one may at least go along with him when he suggests that starting with his meeting with Hitler, Louis Renault constructed a world entirely centered on the two problems which obsessed

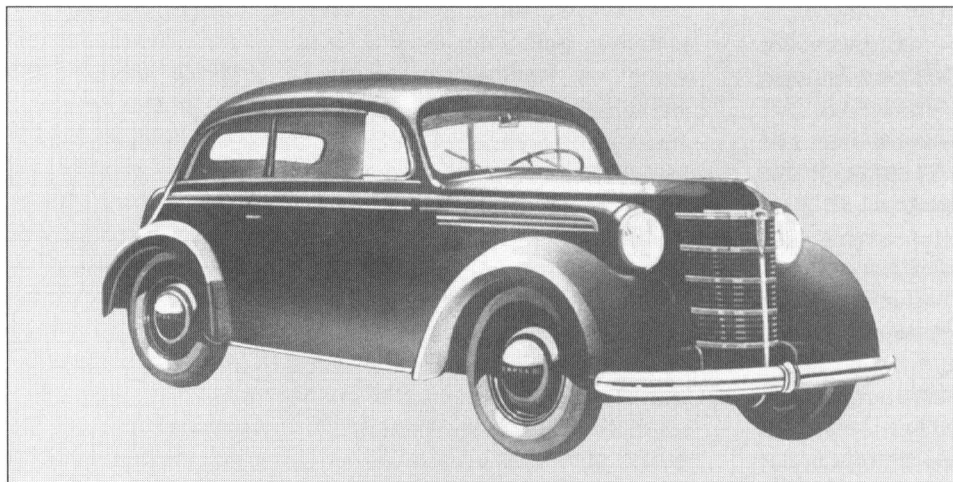
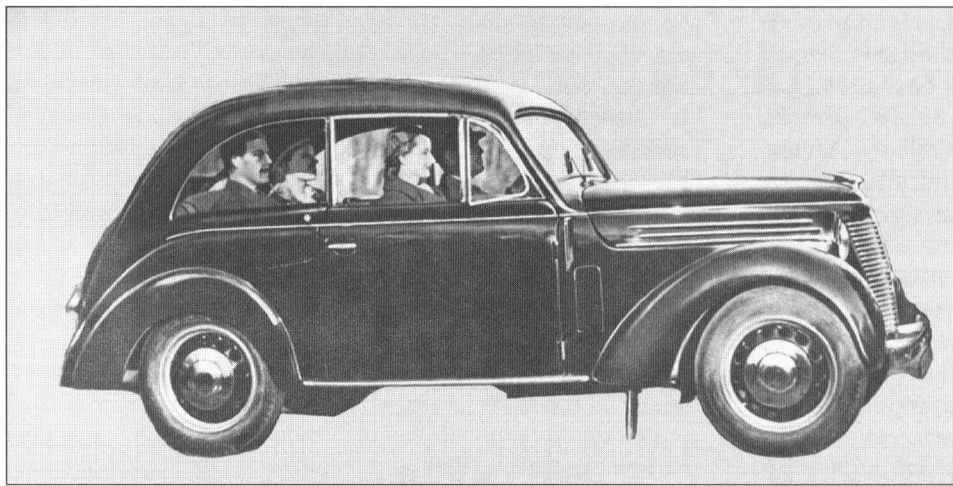


Fig. 2 – 1939 – The Renault Juvaquatre (top): a copy of the Opel Kadett (bottom)

him all his life, the reconciliation of capital and labor, and the United States of Europe.²⁰ But he never separated ideology from the practical side of business. In 1939, he issued directives to his research department working towards the preparation of a small rear-engined car. The KdF of Ferdinand Porsche served as a reference. One sees here the origins of the famous postwar car, the 4CV.

There remains a burning question: the meeting of 1935 (as well as those that followed)—did they affect the attitude of Louis Renault when he collaborated with the German Occupation of 1940-44? There is no existing direct proof of this. One may only speculate with a great risk of error. Nothing permits one truly to affirm that views held during peacetime prefigured acts during the Occupation, since war always gives birth to the unexpected and exceeds the anticipations that people hold beforehand. Nevertheless, that which happened before the war counts for something. The fact that Renault maintained his “peace with Germany” position from 1934 to 1939, even though Hitler consistently raised the bidding on the European scene, belongs with the tragic. His conviction was so profound that nothing could shake it. This view amounts to a break with his analysis of the 1920s. The true international adversary for him

in the years that followed was the United States of America. In other words, Renault went more overboard in his admiration for “the industrial and social efficiency” of Nazi Germany than Saint Loup attributes to him.²¹ He turned to ultra-pacifism and dreamed of a Franco-German union in Europe, but a union with a Nazi Germany. It is difficult to imagine that with the defeat of 1940 Louis Renault had abandoned his ideas and that these had in no way inspired his decisions under the Occupation. The present study of the relations between Renault and Hitler before the war therefore is founded, as distinct from all the publications preceding, on an unpublished document from the German National Archives and upon the analysis of all the formulations of Louis Renault relative to Germany between 1935 and 1939. This study leads to three series of conclusions, the first two of a general nature, the third applicable only to Louis Renault.

First, the case studied confirms the analysis expressed many times by the American historian Louis Galambos who argues that beginning with the 20th century the relationship with politics assumed an essential aspect for large enterprises.²² The importance of international exchanges being acknowledged, this political competence spreads naturally to

foreign policy. In this sense, Louis Renault’s meeting Hitler appears as being neither out of step nor eccentric but rather quite representative of an evolution of a number of contemporary matters. Any historical research which ignores this political dimension will overlook an aspect henceforth essential to a company’s strategies.

Secondly, before 1939, many businessmen worldwide had expressed their reluctance to convert their factories from civilian products to the manufacture of arms. Historians have cited firms in Japan, Great Britain, Italy, and in France aside from Renault.²³ An English historian has stated that, in Germany, this was particularly true for Daimler-Benz, the company that was going to take control of Renault during the Occupation.²⁴ The reasons are always economic. These businessmen aren’t “cannon sellers” by choice, as was said at the time. They had opportunities, principally before 1935, to produce arms, either for their country or others. But it was a matter of producing goods complementary to their principal product which had the benefit of filling gaps in civilian markets during the world economic crisis of the ’30s. On the other hand, these businessmen weren’t very receptive to being required to switch to military orders. Their factories, perhaps different

from what was the case during the First World War, were specialized in the mass production of civilian items. Conversion to military production had, therefore, a high cost in investments, in personnel, in training, and in the loss of faithful customers. Thus, Louis Renault stated “several times” that “war programs don’t correspond with the possibilities of our factories.”²⁵ These same businessmen evaluated with distrust (having learned from the post-1918 experience) the financial, commercial, and organizational costs of reconversion upon the return to peace of their factories and specialized armament tools, as well as the probable return of the detested wartime profits tax. In this sense, Louis Renault was not alone and may be deemed representative of the profound concerns of a good portion of businessmen in the mass production sector when confronted with the perspective of having to prepare for a new world conflict.

Thirdly, there is an area where Louis Renault is unique: his relation with Hitler. Clearly, a portion of the French economic scene has been “advocates of an economic collaboration with Germany,” without however having a strategy for the united community. One finds among them Henri de Peyerimhoff (Comité des Houillères), Auguste Detoef (Alstom), the Banque Lazard, the Banque Indochine, René Duchemin (Kuhlmann), and Pierre Pucheu (Comptoir sidérurgique). But other businessmen and bankers placed themselves on the opposite side, for example, steel makers such as F. de Wendel and Schneider, Ernest Mercier (oil and electricity), De Dietrich, and the Banque Rothschild.²⁶ In this grouping of French employers, how to account for the choice by Louis Renault? In 1954, Lucien Combeille, a Collaborationist journalist during the Occupation, offered the following justification: “A man of peace, since he is a builder, he spoke of war in terms which would not have been disavowed by his friend, Aristide Briand. And . . . it is really the spirit of Geneva which inspired him . . . and European writers . . . made the rounds of the businessmen to give his utopia patents of nobility.”²⁷ He further justified his position by the constant determination to “give to his country an economic power [which was] menaced by the American giant.”²⁸ In 1998, the latest biography of Louis Renault offers an interpretation but doesn’t present fundamental differences. It stresses that February 1938 is not 1935, reviews the aversion which Louis Renault had towards Britons and Americans, explains his indifference to the possible relationship between “European peace and the development of democracy in Europe” by his well-known criticism of the “French parliamentary regime. It states “The French knew that, in his heart, Renault was an old sentimental Briandist who never, outside the industrial sphere, had taken many pains to locate himself politically.”²⁹ One will permit me not to share this analysis which fails to link, even in an indirect way, ideology and proper economic interests. After all, it was Louis Renault who wrote in his company journal in April 1939 “Don’t forget that, even though quite reduced over the last few years, our automotive exports still absorb an important fraction of our business. For us, Renault, for every eight vehicles leaving our factories, one crosses the border.”³⁰ Thus, in April 1939, one finds again the core motivations of a part of the views expressed by Louis Renault at the Reichskanzlerai in 1935 and of the texts

such as the note of November 1934 mentioned above where he envisioned the division of Europe into two groups of “economic protectorates,” some for Germany, the others for France. His is a matter of cold reasoning which has in it nothing of the sentimental. The great businessman remarkably informed by efficient collaborators was not at all naïve with respect to the Germany of Hitler. Starting with a project for an agreement with him, he went on to admire “his straightening things out.” He did this in full awareness, without his vision being diminished by his notorious hostility to unionism, to the Left, and to the strikes in France. Facing “mounting perils,” it would be to depreciate Louis Renault to make of him a puppet of circumstances. Not able to discern realities beyond the end of his nose, he basically bore no personal responsibility for what happened. Even within the economic restraints of mass production there were choices to be made. In this connection, Robert Frank was right to believe that “in the case of Louis Renault, there is a relationship between his lukewarm attitude towards steps for national defense, and appeasement”³¹ which separated him from part of the entrepreneurs. But this comment isn’t sufficient. In truth, on the international level as well as on the national, Louis Renault became, like Detoef, dismissive of liberalism in favor of the state and cartels³², and favorable to a consumer society to the detriment of the fight for national economic independence. It was truly a choice.

Footnotes

¹Saint Loup (Marc Augier), *Renault de Billancourt* (2d ed., Paris, Presses de la Cité, 1961), 345-382.

²Anthony Rhodes, *Louis Renault, a Biography*, (London, Cassell, 1969), 155-156.

³J-A Grégoire, *L’Aventure automobile*, (Paris, Flammarion, 1953) 142 and 157-162.

⁴G. Hatry, *Louis Renault, absolute boss*, (2d ed., Paris, J.C.M. 1990), 350-51.

⁵Saint Loup, *op. cit.*, 353.

⁶Bundesarchiv Reichskanzlerai, 1935, 372326-329. The author translated into French the typed German text, which had been corrected in writing by Hitler’s secretary. Renault’s comments are consistent with earlier views, for example, the author’s “The Ideology of the Great Industrialists in the Interwar Period,” *Le Mouvement Social* (October-December 1972).

⁷J. Boulogne (pseudonym of E. Pouvereau), *La Vie de Louis Renault*, (Paris, Éditions du Moulin de l’Argent (1931) 101-03; G. Hatry, *Renault et la compétition*, (t.l. Paris, Lafourcade, 1979), 105.

⁸P. Fridenson, “L’idéologie,” art. cit. pp. 55-61. S. Schweitzer *Andre Citroën*, (Paris, Fayard 1992), 110, cites another extract from the same document on another problem.

⁹P. Aycoberry, *La Société allemande sous la III Reich*, (Paris, Le Seuil, 1998), 175-76, 180.

¹⁰Ibid., 186.

¹¹I thank Yves Cohen (Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales) for this observation.

¹²Pursuant to a text of 1954 edited by A. Rabinbach, “The end of the utopias of labour: metaphors of production in the postfordist era,” Thesis Eleven, published in 1999.

¹³S. Schurmann, *Les relations économiques et financières*

franco-allemandes 1932-1939, (Paris, Comité pour l'Histoire économique et financières de France, 1996).

¹⁴Eyewitness account by J-A. Grégoire, *L'Aventure automobile*, op. cit.

¹⁵G. Hatry, *Louis Renault*, op. cit.

¹⁶L. Badel, *Un Milieu libéral et européen: le grand commerce français, 1925-1948*, thèse de doctorat, Université de Paris I, 1996.

¹⁷Note of Louis Renault, March 19, 1936, cited by L. Dauvergne (pseudonym of L. Combelle), *Louis Renault (1877-1944) ou 50 ans d'épopée de l'industrie automobile française*, (Paris, La Table ronde, 1954), 176-77.

¹⁸G. Hatry, *Louis Renault*, op. cit., 352.

¹⁹Ibid., 393

²⁰Saint Lcup, *Renault de Billancourt*, op. cit., 353-54.

²¹Ibid., 354

²²L. Galambos, "Global Perspectives in Modern Business," *Business History Review*, Summer 1997, 287-89, provides a new example.

²³Cf. P. Lessmann, "Erfahrungen mit Konversionen. Die Französischen Automobil Firmen Renault und Berliet zwischen dem Ersten und dem Zweiten Weltkrieg," in M. Grieger and L. Budrass (Hg.), *Kriegswirtschaft und Konversion*, (Essen, Lkartext Verlag, 1998).

²⁴N. Gregor, *Daimler-Benz in the Third Reich*, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1998).

²⁵Letters of Louis Renault of February 11, 1938 to Comptroller General Jacomet, of May 3 and May 21, 1938, to President of the Council Daladier, and of September 21 and November 8, 1939, also to Daladier, cited by Dauvergne.

SIXTH AUTOMOTIVE HISTORY CONFERENCE

April 6 - 8, 2006

South Bend, Indiana

The Society of Automotive Historians and the National Association of Automotive Museums are sponsoring their sixth biennial automotive history conference to be held April 6-8 in South Bend, Indiana

Entitled "Engine of Change — The Automobile and its Influence," the conference will be a symposium exploring the development and impact of the automobile in the world. Of interest to a wide range of people from academic researches to lay historians to museum professionals, it will be hosted by the National Studebaker Museum.

Further information on the conference may be obtained from:

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Telephone: +1 860 464-6466
Fax: +1 860 464-2614
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Kaiser Assembly in Rotterdam

by Frans Vrijaldenhoven

On February 21, 1949, the first Kaiser car was produced in Holland. I had the opportunity to visit the plant then, together with a group of journalists. The “Sluisjesdijk” factory, which was located in Rotterdam, a city largely destroyed during five days of war in May 1940, was built and owned by the city and based on the American system of car assembly.

Henry J. Kaiser, the American industrialist born of German immigrant parents, had contributed to the effort to win World War II by his speedy construction of Liberty cargo ships, but he understood that he would not be able to continue building them after the war ended. He had a group of employees, however, who accepted his philosophy that “nothing is impossible,” and that “everything that has been done can be done better.” These employees would need other jobs, so Henry decided to change his industry: instead of building ships he would build cars.

Many claimed it was impossible for Kaiser to start a new automobile company, even taking a seasoned automobile man like Joseph Frazer as a partner in the newly-organized Kaiser-Frazer Corporation. Frazer had held high positions in Chrysler Corporation and was president of Willys-Overland until 1944 when he took over Graham-Paige Motors Corporation which had stopped manufacturing cars in 1940. But after much publicity, the first Kaiser car emerged from the assembly line at the former bomber plant at Willow Run, Michigan in June of 1946. By the end of that year, almost 12,000 Kaiser and Frazer cars had been completed, but the company had a loss of about \$19,000,000. Observers were sure that this was the end of Kaiser-Frazer. However, by the end of 1947 there was a net profit that almost balanced the previous year's loss.

The company established the Kaiser-Frazer Export Company which, in April 1948, began negotiations with the government of the Netherlands concerning an assembly plant in that country, giving new emphasis to a Dutch auto industry. It is not surprising that the government favored war-torn Rotterdam, a city with a good harbor. Thus was born the Nederlandsche Kaiser-Frazer Fabrieken N.V. The city offered a long-term rental on the new plant, with an option to buy; that was the contract.

The importance of this assembly plant was explained by the guide on our 1949 factory tour. One of the first questions was: “Why did Kaiser-Frazer found an assembly plant in Holland? We thought it would be much easier to use the great capacities of the American automobile industry to supply everybody all over the world with the new cars.”

Indeed, the guide smiled. “They often ask us this question. It seems easier to build the cars in America and transport them to the Continent. But think about the costs of transport. Transport of a complete car is very expensive, because they charge [for] the space of a car and not the weight. When you transport a CKD (Completely Knocked Down) unit in big crates it is much cheaper. So in the States they put all the parts of a car in a big crate and ship it. Six crates contain the parts for building six cars. This unit of six they call a ‘lot;’ a lot weighs 10.5 tons

and measures 35 cubic meters. You will understand that six complete Kaisers would have a much bigger total [volume].

“But we think there will be more advantages than just those costs of transport. For complete cars we have to pay much more [in] import duties, and CKD units cost us less expensive dollars than complete cars. And when we export the Kaisers we shall receive more dollars. We import only parts, remember?”

“Every week after leaving the plant a number of cars are exported to Belgium, and at the moment there are negotiations for export to the Scandinavian countries, France, Spain, the Middle East, and even South America. At this moment cars are on their way to the harbor for transport over the ocean to Brazil.”

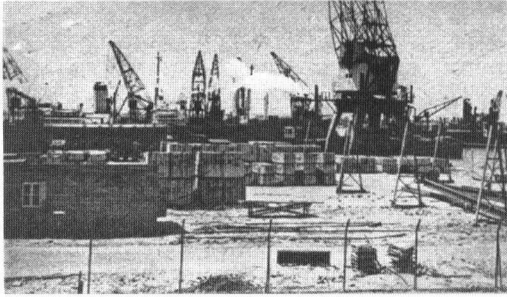
“But listen, my friend,” we said. “It seems to us that you can better export cars to Brazil directly from the States.”

“Of course,” the guide replied, “but Brazil does not have dollars. We Dutchmen export cars to countries without dollars, and they export to us, for instance, coffee, and that saves us dollars, you understand? And because we do not have a lot of dollars we make arrangements so that we do not have to import all the parts the new cars need. So we get the windows from a factory at Sas van Gent, the upholstery from Tilburg, the Vredestein tires from Enschede, the batteries from Rotterdam, and in the future we will try to get the paint, the radiators, and a large number of universal parts from Dutch companies. With a capacity of 20 cars a day we try to export as many as possible, but nevertheless we will distribute about 1,200 units to more than 38 Dutch dealerships.

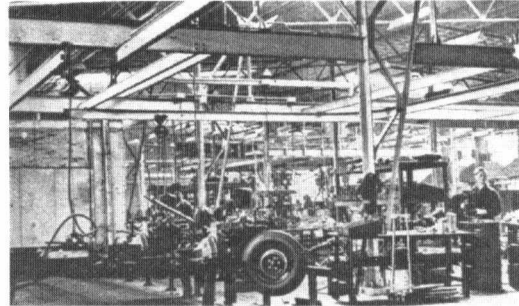
“When you see the production line,” our guide continued, “with a length of 150 meters and a width of 60 meters, you get a total impression of real efficiency. Every day management is looking for new ways to streamline the production process. Rotterdam can be proud of such a piece of the Dutch automobile industry” (Fig. 1).

The decision had been made to assemble only the least expensive models of the Kaiser line at the Rotterdam plant. On the road the more expensive Frazer was sometimes seen, but these were directly imported by merchants such as tulip bulb exporters who did business with the States. They had the dollars to spend on a more expensive car.

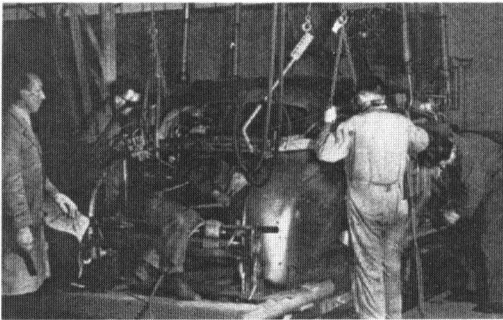
For 1949 the front of the Kaiser was restyled according to the fashion of the times, heavier and with more chrome. At that time the price of a Kaiser was 9,250 Guilders compared with the Buick Super (8,500 Guilders), Nash Ambassador (8,810 Guilders), and Chrysler Windsor (8,200 Guilders). When you imported a Frazer via the usual ways you had to pay 9,560 Guilders. One can see that Kaiser prices were fairly high despite the fact that the cars were assembled in Rotterdam. But there were a number of customers who wanted a car that was different from the cars of their neighbors, and for that reason, plus the modern styling of the Kaiser cars, they gladly paid the extra money.



*Arrival from the USA of the CKD crates
in the "Wallhaven" (harbor).*



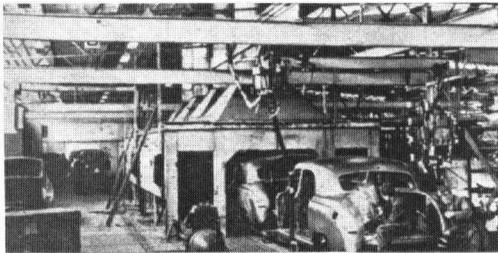
Chassis assembly.



Body assembly.



The "Wedding."



Paint shop.



Final-assembly check.



Henry J cars ready for export.

Fig. 1 – The Kaiser assembly plant in Rotterdam.



Fig. 2 – “The Pride of Rotterdam!”

“The Pride of Rotterdam” was the way Kaiser announced the 1951 “Rotterdam de Luxe” (Fig. 2). The company had created a totally-new body for the coming years, designed by Howard Darrin who had also styled the first models. By this time, Frazer had left the company because of disagreements over policy. Darrin’s unique widow’s peak windshield, the low waistline, and the extremely round roofline distinguished the “Rotterdam de Luxe” from all other cars on Dutch roads. From a great distance you could see that a Kaiser was coming. That year, Kaiser-Frazer had also introduced a small, inexpensive car in the United States, the Henry J, which also began to be assembled at the Rotterdam factory.

Each year a statement of import and/or assembled cars by the Central Office of Statistics was published in the magazine of the Dutch organization of auto trade, BOVAG (Bond Van Autodealers & Garagebedrijven). Production figures available for the years 1951-53 show that the Henry J outnumbered Kaiser each year. In 1951, 1,139 Henry Js were turned out compared with 803 Kaisers.¹ The next year, 1952, saw the assembly of 396 Kaisers compared with 883 Henry J cars.² In 1953, Kaiser production rose slightly to 408, while Henry J had declined to 755.³ To compensate for declining Kaiser assemblies, the factory had taken on other makes, beginning with Simca in 1952, Hillman in 1953, and Willys Jeep in 1954 (Kaiser-Frazer had acquired Jeep’s manufacturer, Willys-Overland Corporation, the previous year). In 1954, the total Kaiser-Henry J production had

dwindled to 222 units, ending at 30 in 1955. This decline and cessation of production paralleled that in the United States where the production of Kaiser, Henry J, and Willys cars had also ceased. All in all, 4,479 Kaiser and Henry J cars had been assembled there. Beginning in 1954, Simca became the volume car of the plant. There were also a modest number of imports from 1947 through 1953: my sources indicate that 31 Franzers came into the Netherlands, and 33 Kaisers.

Some unusual Kaiser vehicles came from this era. One two-door convertible was built. Designed by Cees Akkermans and constructed by carrossier P. J. Pennock in The Hague, this unique car won prizes in several Concours d’Elegance (Figs. 3 and 4). The photos in this article came from the widow of the Kaiser dealer who sold it to a Belgian. The car was subsequently in an accident, a total loss. Several ambulances were built by Gebr. Visser on a chassis with scuttle, front wings and grille, bought from the factory in Rotterdam (Fig. 5). B. H. Versteegen in ’s Hertogenbosch made 8-person taxicabs, ambulances and hearses on Kaiser chassis as well (Fig. 6). At some point before 1951, an incomplete Kaiser converted to right-hand drive was seen in the country (Fig. 7).

Alas, the cars did not enjoy a good reputation, and after the novelty of a new marque was over, people were more inclined to buy the cars of the Big Three or the more established independents such as Nash and Studebaker. Workmanship was poor (rattles and leaks), oil consumption was high and trade-in

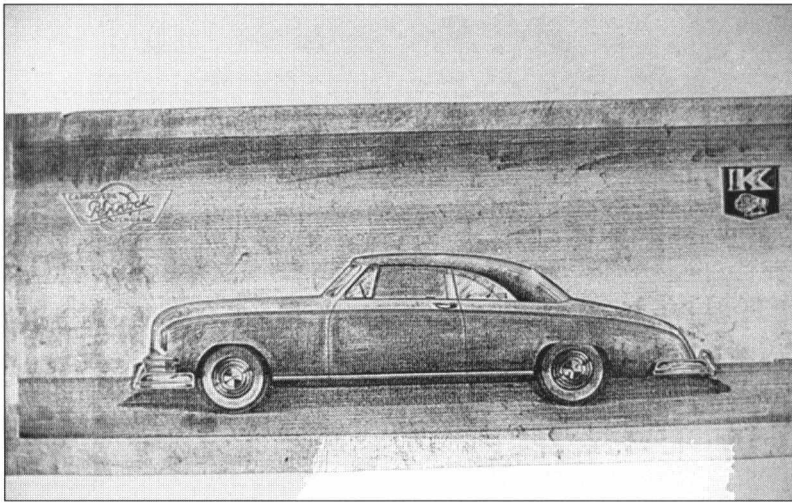


Fig. 3 – Design by Akkermans for two-door convertible on 1949 Kaiser chassis.



Fig. 4 – The 1949 Kaiser convertible as constructed by Pennock.



Fig. 5 – The ambulance constructed by Gebr. Visser on a 1949 Kaiser chassis.

value was low. In addition, the Henry J was also plagued by very high front-end wear. Soon, the factory lost a number of dealerships because of the quality and the high cost of spare parts. The after-sales service was unsatisfactory (dealers refused to accept warranty claims). Competitively, the Kaiser lacked a V-8 engine near the end of its life in Holland.

After Kaiser assembly ceased in 1955, the “Sluisjesdijk” assembly line was used for a number of years for continued assembly of Jeeps (in Holland they called the plant “NEKAF-Jeep”—NEDerlandse KAiser Frazer-works), the French Simca, and the British Hillman, all CKD. In 1958, Chrysler International S.A. bought the complete NEKAF factory to assemble their own American models. It continued the Simca line (until 1962), and in 1960 started to manufacture Plymouth and Dodge 6-cylinder models. Later on, Plymouth Valiants and Dodge Darts were assembled. And, in a little known deal with SAAB, Chrysler International assembled 570 type 96 cars in the years 1962-63. In October 1971 Chrysler International closed the plant and sold it to a wealthy Rotterdam businessman. Some years later, the oldest Dutch automobile factory, Ford at Amsterdam (since 1932), also closed its gates. From that time there has not been a CKD assembly plant in Holland. The country has become a manufacturer of cars such as the DAF, the Volvo 440 and S40, and the Mitsubishi Carisma. As of the end of 2001, the plant had turned out 124,097 Volkswagens and 67,011 Mitsubishis.

Ed. Note: The Kaiser official involved in negotiating with the Dutch government was Hickman Price, Jr. For his account of the founding of the Rotterdam plant, see Langworth, The Last Onslaught on Detroit, (Princeton Publishing, Inc., 2nd Printing, 1987), pp 226-27. He indicates that he chose Holland over Belgium because the people of Rotterdam “were ambitious and hard-working and just crazy to have a plant.” In due course, Kaiser-Frazer exercised its option to buy the plant. Although ceasing production in the U.S. and assembly in the Netherlands, production of Kaiser cars similar to the U.S. 1954 models began in Argentina in 1958, and the Willys Aero had a second life in the company’s plant in Brazil.

¹Specifically, 527 Henry J 4-cylinder cars and 612 6-cylinder cars. For Kaiser, 10 Travellers, 552 de Luxe sedans, and 241 Rotterdam de Luxe sedans.

²Specifically, 157 Henry J 4-cylinder cars and 241 4-cylinder Corsairs; 131 6-cylinder Henry Js, and 354 Corsair L 6-cylinder cars. For Kaiser, 156 Manhattans, 77 Rotterdam de Luxe cars, and 6 de Luxe sedans.

³Specifically, 263 Henry J Corsair 4-cylinders were produced and 492 Corsair L 6-cylinders. For Kaiser, 294 Manhattans, 110 de Luxe, and 4 Rotterdam de Luxe sedans.



Fig. 6 – A hearse and two limousine conversions, as well as a standard 1949 Kaiser, outside the B.H. Versteegen works.



Fig. 7 – Incomplete 1949-50 Kaiser converted to right-hand drive.

Roman S.A.: Medium and Heavy Duty Trucks in Romania

by Tom Brownell

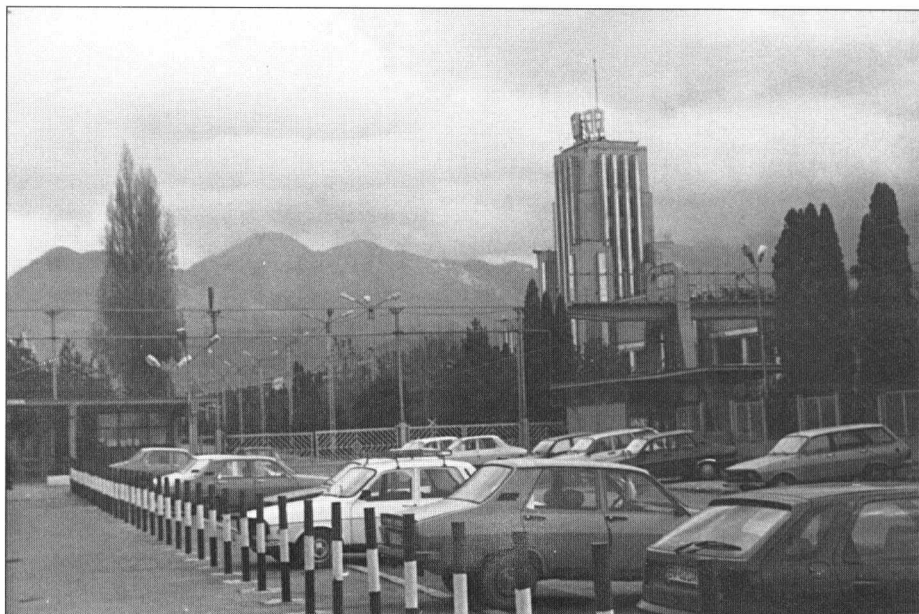


Fig. 1 – Braşov, the city where Roman trucks are manufactured, sits in the heart of the Carpathian mountains.

Tucked underneath the Ukraine, at the very back door of Eastern Europe, lies a country about the size of the State of Texas known since the 3rd century A.D. as Romania. The country's origin is clear from its name, that is to say, a nation of Romans. Indeed, it was the Roman Emperor Trajan who conquered much of the territory that comprises present day Romania. Lying as it does on a migration path for restless peoples and a conqueror's route for armies, Romania's history has been anything but tranquil. Following the Roman conquest, the country found itself overrun by invading tribes from the East, Imperial expansion from the West, and Turkish domination from the South. More recently, in the second half of the 20th century, Romania encountered first the iron fist of Nazi Germany and then the plunder and pillage of the Soviet Union.

For the short period between the First and Second World Wars, Romania enjoyed both its freedom and a measure of prosperity. Everything worth appreciating that exists in the country today emerged during that period, including Romania's medium and heavy truck industry. Thus,

in 1921, in the city of Braşov, a company named ROMLOC (the Romanian Locomotive and Wagon Factory) was established to build, among other products, special-purpose truck bodies. Ford, for example, which built both cars and trucks in Europe, supplied chassis for ROMLOC bodies. In 1936 the company merged with ASTRA, a wagon and engine manufacturer. A few years later, the start of World War II saw Romania's industry building military equipment for its own and the German armies. (Romania entered World War II as an ally of France, was plucked of two of its territories Bessarabia and Moldavia by the Soviet Union after the fall of France, and so forged an alliance with Nazi Germany.) Following the country's invasion and conquest by the Soviet Union's Red Army, Romania once again saw its territories pulled away and its industries broken up, packed on freight cars, and shipped north.

Truck production at what would become ROMAN S.A. pronounced ro-MAHN) began in 1954 in Braşov (Fig. 1). The first model was a Russian designed four-ton model called the



Fig. 2 – A stake-bodied Carpaţi truck, one of a variety of configurations, including dump bodies and trash haulers. The cab and V-8 engine resemble Ford's 1956 F Series, and for good reason since the design and production rights came from Ford.

SR 101 (the initials SR standing for Steagul Rosu (Romanian for "the Red Star"). Among the more notable features of this truck, which looks rather like a 1940s American Diamond T, are completely wooden framed doors (only the door skins are metal and these are tacked to the wooden framing) and an L-head 90 h.p. engine, which must have been underpowered for the truck's load rating. In 1962 the company began production of a more modern line of gasoline trucks in the 3-5 ton range. The engineering for these trucks came from Ford and in fact these "Carpați" and "Bucegi" models look very much like what they are—1956 Fords, even down to the Ford "Y" block OHV V8 engine (Figs. 2 and 3). Manufacturing rights to the chassis and engine had been negotiated with Ford under a licensing agreement and looking at the similarity of the cab stampings, it would seem that the body dies had been included in the deal. Although the Ford V8 engine offered a substantial power increase over the former Russian-designed L-head, the gasoline engine's torque limitations prevented development of true heavy-duty models. In order to expand the heavy-duty line, a 15-year licensing-agreement was reached with the German truck builder M.A.N. and in 1971 a new line of diesel-powered trucks began to be built, also using the M.A.N. forward control cab. These trucks took the name ROMAN (RO for Romania, plus M.A.N.). The high production volume of these trucks is evidenced by the fact that even 10 years after the expiration of the licensing agreement, M.A.N.-based ROMAN trucks provide almost all of the country's highway transport.

When the M.A.N. license expired, the engineering staff at Roman S.A., in conjunction with the National Institute of Automotive Design, set about developing an indigenous line of medium and heavy truck products under the DAC name, which was chosen for its reference to the Dacians, an early Romanian people predating the Romans (Indeed, Dacia-brand passenger cars, generally derived from Renault designs, have been produced in Pitești for some years). Just which changes were made to escape the M.A.N. license are not clear as the DAC cab appears to be identical in overall design and construction to the earlier Roman/M.A.N. cab. DAC trucks remain in production today.

A frequently heard complaint when talking with Romanian auto/truck industry engineers is that prior to the collapse of the Iron Curtain in 1990, they had no access to technical literature from the West, and therefore no inkling of developments occurring in our automotive and trucking industries. This complaint is not entirely true, as professors at the Polytechnic Universities speak of up-to-date literature on nearly any technical topic having been available from a central information source in Moscow. The problem in getting technical information at the engineering level appears to have been more the selective screening by the information supplier (presumably the KGB) and the absence of this technical information after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, due mainly to Romanian industries and universities not having developed their own information contacts with the West. In the absence of information on competitive technologies, Romanian medium and heavy truck products have lagged woefully, particularly in such crucial areas as cab comfort and engine design.

Since engine performance and fuel consumption are factors buyers will look at first in purchasing a new truck, in

1991 Roman S.A. began negotiating agreements with US and European diesel engine and heavy truck transmission builders (companies like Caterpillar, Cummins, and Eaton) in order to be able to supply DAC trucks with engines and transmissions that would pass the European Community's EURO 1 and EURO 2 air pollution, performance, and fuel economy standards. More recently, Roman S.A. has been exploring a joint-venture relationship with Navistar to build and install that company's engines in both its medium and heavy-duty trucks.

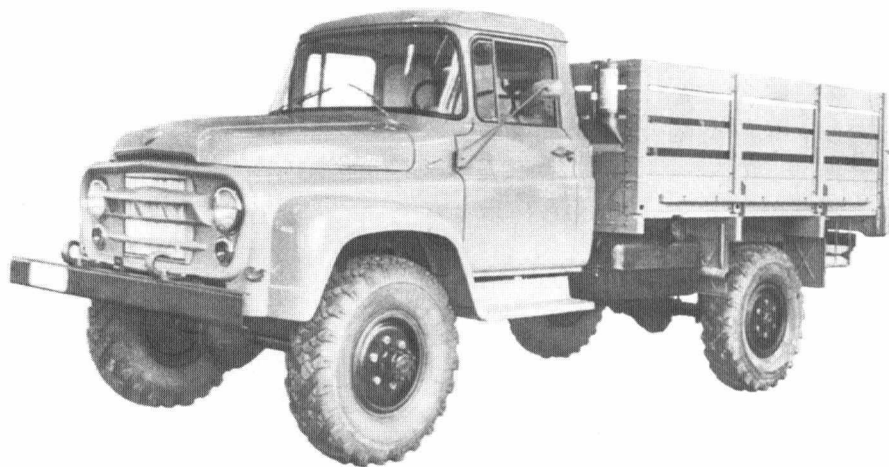
The new DAC trucks look quite up-to-date, but to see the their manufacturing process is to take a time-travel voyage into a bygone industrial era. Unlike modern Western and Asian assembly plants where parts inventory at the assembly stage may be only a few hours stock, at Roman S.A. inventory of cab stampings lies strewn about, stacked in piles, and stashed in bins, with new stampings being pressed out every day. The cab itself is built entirely from metal stampings in sizes varying from single sheet cab panels that require two men to lift to pieces of the instrument display measuring only a few inches. Each needs to be welded to some other piece to build larger assemblies, a process that requires hundreds of welding operations, many of which could be eliminated by the use of composites—particularly for interior components like the instrument display. Nor is the assembly pace especially frantic. Workers in the frame shop I toured weren't doing anything productive. My guide, the company's technical director, was quick to explain that it was near the end of their shift and they had most likely met their production quota for the day. With current production rates but a fraction of the plant's capacity, that statement was probably true.

The slow manufacturing pace results from a lack of orders, caused in part by the absence of anything resembling a sales/marketing organization. To purchase a DAC truck, it's necessary to come to the factory showroom in Brașov, Romania, select the truck model and engine/transmission combination you want, place your order, pay cash in advance for the full delivery price, then wait 2-3 months for your truck to be built. It's the factory outlet approach—with sales only at the factory—a system most US auto and truck builders had abandoned by 1910. In most settings history is seen by taking a backward glance. At Roman S.A., history happens before your eyes.

Update on Roman (2003) provided by the editor

According to an article in the May 23, 2003, Wall Street Journal, by Cristi Cretzan, headlined "Romania Tries to Unload Truck Maker," Roman produced only 405 trucks in 2002, far fewer than needed to support economically a staff of 7,400. The company had debts of \$44 million "and its most valuable asset was a 30-year-old hydraulic press that it couldn't afford to run." Roman was offered for sale in 2002, but its poor condition didn't attract any attention. At the time of the article, a government-appointed administrator had been running the company since the beginning of 2003, and the company had been told to shed 3,000 employees by June. The administrator was looking for ways to sell the company.

**“CARPAȚI” TRUCK
CAMION AUTOMOBILE „CARPAȚI”
LASTKRAFTWAGEN „CARPAȚI”**



132

AUTO-TRACTOR
FOREIGN TRADE STATE COMPANY - BUCHAREST - ROMANIA

Fig. 3 – In export markets, the name Carpați was used, pronounced “car-pots.” This 1968 model had all-wheel drive, a capacity of 3 tons, and an engine of 140 h.p. at 3,600 rpms. The truck was available through Auto-Tractor, the Foreign Trade State Company in Bucharest. (From the editor’s collection)

Update on Roman (2005) provided by Tom Brownell

By Mihail Cocosila, Prof. Dr. Ing., Politehnica, Bucharest

The Roman truck company still lives but is not doing very well. During the last decade the company had a growing deficit because, as in the car industry, anyone who had money bought an imported truck whereas those who did not, did not buy anything. The company was saved periodically by the government by some forced state acquisitions. Also, some tentative plans were made to privatize the company by selling it to a foreign truck company (such as Scania), but these did not materialize.

A newspaper article on the Internet says that in 2004 an "industrial park" was created at the site in Brasov with the

purpose of administrating the ailing company. The owners of this park are a local association of "investors" (usually somewhat dubious businessmen bringing no capital but empty promises) with 80 percent holding and the Indonesian company, Pesaka Astana (about which I know nothing). According to the newspaper, Roman is continuing to do poorly, so the new government, elected in November 2004, is thinking to reexamine the company's ownership and future. In fact, except for Dacia which found a very strong partner in Renault, all of the other automakers here have an uncertain present and, especially, future.

Robert Przybylski has provided some additional information on the company in the form of the following chronology:

1954: Beginning of the assembly of the model SR 101 trucks, which ended in 1961. This was a Russian ZIS 150 truck, which, in turn, was based on an International Harvester medium duty model. During this time the city of Braşov was named after Stalin.

1957: Already 17,000 trucks had been assembled. The plant in Braşov became the biggest automotive plant in Romania making trucks for military and civilian use. Very high cost of production.

1966: The 100,000th Roman truck was produced in July.

1969: Roman entered into licensing agreements with MAN for trucks with GVWR from 8 to 19 tons and in-line 6-cylinder engines of 5.5 and 10 liters. The smaller ones were designed by the French company SAVIEM (now part of Renault), but the Germans had rights to them as well - at the time, SAVIEM and M.A.N. had cooperative agreements, the French company specializing in the lighter-weight end of the market. The designs of both manufacturers were sold as either SAVIEM or M.A.N., depending on who was making the deal.

1971: Beginning of production of a new generation of trucks. Small engines fitted to reinforced Bucegi and Carpaţi trucks.

Mid-70s: Engines used for a variety of vehicles, including buses.

1977: Presentation and start of production of the military 6x6 DAC truck with a special cab. Later, 4x4 and 8x8 versions were made.

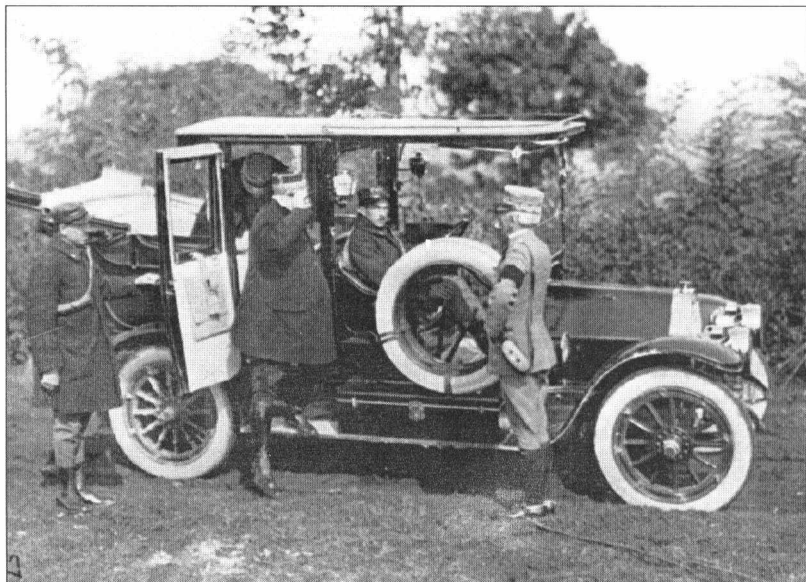
1978: The all-time high production year, with 34,000 trucks manufactured, with a GVWR from 7 to 40 tons. The factory by now was highly vertically integrated, with its own stamping, casting, machining, and assembly operations. Engines, gearboxes, axles, cabs, and frames were made on the spot.

Early-80s: The DAC factory produced dump trucks for open pit mines, the largest having a GVWR of 120 tons.

Mid-80s: Production of 20,000 trucks a year. When their license expired, the Romanians made a series of vee-configuration engines, with a V-8 for long-distance trucks. The engine never lived up to expectations, and in 1985 DAC bought from MAN a new license for engines with turbocharging and intercooling.

The Early Years of Fiat in the Italian Royal Army

by Alessandro Sannia



General Luigi Cadorna, chief of the Regio Esercito at the beginning of the First World War, while exiting from an old Fiat 20/30 h.p. Tipo 3 to meet General Joffre, commander of the French army. Note the disassembling rims, specific to the military cars.

Italy has two important records in the military field: it was the first nation to use both airplanes and motor vehicles in war, specifically during its conflict in Libya 1911-13. In fact, this was only a first step toward the wide use of military vehicles during the First World War, but of course, for traditionalists like the Italian Royal Army, it happened very slowly, beginning in the early years of the 20th century.

The first experiments with self-propelled vehicles were conducted in 1903, the year that the Italian Royal Army bought two Fiat four-ton trucks, equipped with the same 6-liter twin-block engine of the 24/32 h.p. car. The great maneuvers held in this year showed how trucks could be useful in replacing horse carriages. At the same time, passenger cars were considered for the use of the senior officers.

During the 1905 maneuvers in the Volturno valley, the military chiefs tested 29 cars of the Fiat 8 and 24 h.p. types, a steam De Dion et Bouton carriage and, of course, the two Fiat trucks bought two years before. The reliability and versatility of these vehicles not only amazed the soldiers but also took a large space in the press; as a result, Fiat gained many orders for military vehicles, the first one from the Portuguese army and then from Italy and many other countries. Already in 1908 some Fiat 28/40 h.p. vehicles were used by the Italian Royal Army for senior officers of the different army corps

(Fig. 1) and, in a van version, for fast delivery services. The Fiat 28/40 was the latest edition of a luxury car fitted with a 7-litre twin-block engine, unveiled in 1902 as 24 h.p. So it was the most powerful and refined vehicle offered by Fiat in 1907-08, apart from the 60 h.p. that came from a racing car. The 28/40 h.p. had a complicated starting device, working with air compressed by a single-cylinder compressor placed between the engine and the radiator. The engine had a displacement of 7,363 cc and developed 42 h.p. at 1,400 rpm, so that the car could reach a maximum speed of about 80-90 kph. The same engine was also used to fit the truck derived from the 28/40, made from 1907 until 1910 in two versions: the short one with a chassis derived from the car's 3,200 mm wheelbase, and the long one, with a 3,900 mm wheelbase. The truck chassis were heavily modified with respect to those of the cars to increase their strength and to have wider tracks: 1,400 mm the car, 1,550 the short truck and 1,700 front and 1,800 rear the long truck. The truck's engine, with only two horsepower less than that of the car, was coupled with a different gearbox and final reduction that allowed a speed of just 25 kph (Fig. 2).

The 1911 great maneuvers, set along the Po River between Alessandria and Santhià, were the first to show in action two fully organized motor brigades, provided with cars, trucks and motorbikes. This demonstrates clearly how the military chiefs were moving their strategy toward light, fast independent units.

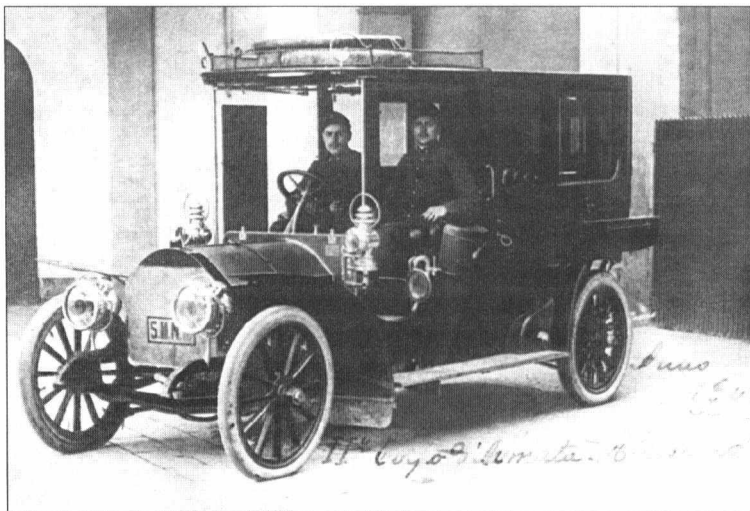


Fig. 1 – A Fiat 28/40 h.p. used by the II Army Corp at the Regio Esercito (1909).

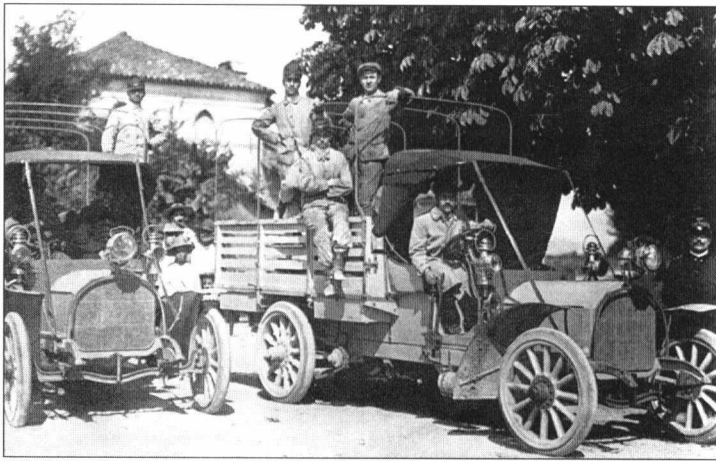


Fig. 2 – The Fiat 28/40 h.p. truck, that used the same engine of the 28/40 car, mounted on a strengthened chassis. It was made from 1907 until 1910 in two different lengths.



Fig. 3 – The parade of the Italian army entering Tripoli in November 1912. The cars are Fiat Tipo 2B 15/20 h.p.

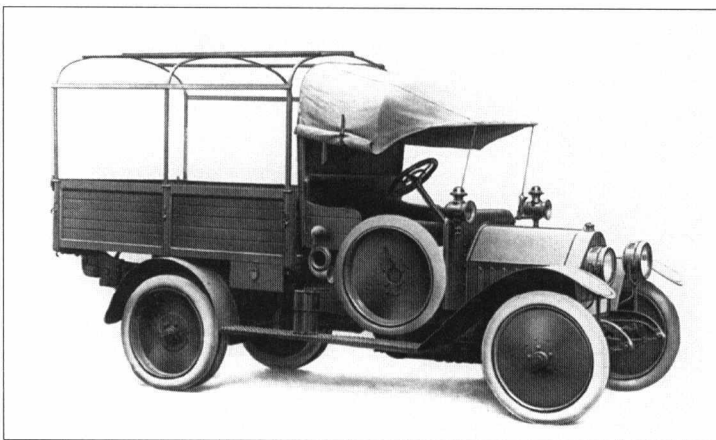


Fig. 4 – The Fiat Tipo 2F light truck, made from 1911 until 1921, used the same engine of the Tipo 2 115/20 h.p., mounted on a stronger and 100 mm longer chassis, with twin wheels on the rear axle.

During the 1911-13 Italian-Turkish War there was indeed the first real use of motor vehicles in military actions and the Italian Royal Army had already bought many cars like the Fiat Tipo 2 and Tipo 2B 15/20 h.p. (Fig. 3). It also had acquired a small quantity, probably only a few units, of the smallest Zero 8/12 h.p., that however, came from the standard civil production. Then, Fiat had also provided the army with some Tipo 1F and Tipo 2F light trucks (Fig. 4), derived respectively from the Tipo 1 bis 12/15 h.p. and Tipo 2 15/20 h.p. cars, mounting the mechanical components on a strengthened chassis and using a bigger rear axle. Finally, Fiat sold the army also many of the heaviest Tipo 15 and 18BL trucks.

The following is a brief description of these cars. The Tipo 2 15/20 h.p. was made in 1910-11 and used the same chassis of the Tipo 1, with a 2,740 mm wheelbase, but equipped with the type 52 engine, a single-block four cylinders with a displacement of 2,614 cc (Fig. 5). The power was 22 h.p. at 1,700 rpm while the maximum speed was about 70 kph. In 1911 the Tipo 2 was fitted with the new type 52A engine, almost unchanged but more reliable and efficient. During 1912, halfway through the army's supply for the Libyan War, Fiat decided to revise the Tipo 2, very important as the middle-class model in its range, introducing the Tipo 2B 15/20 h.p. There was no change to the chassis but the Tipo 2B was fitted with the new type 52B engine, with a displacement of 2,815 cc, derived from a longer stroke. The maximum speed increase was negligible while the power rose to 28 h.p. at 1,800 rpm; it's important to note the adoption of a fan for the radiator cooling. On the aesthetic side, the Tipo 2B was very different from the previous Tipo 2 for the stream coupevent, joining the hood with the sides.

As mentioned earlier, the Tipo 1F and Tipo 2F light truck were closely derived from the production cars. The first one, with maximum load of half a ton, was in fact a Tipo 1 bis 12/15 h.p. with just some modifications to strengthen the chassis. Both the 2,740 mm wheelbase and the 1,400 mm tracks were left unchanged. Also the engine was the same: the type 51, a single-block four cylinder with a displacement of 1,847 cc and a power of 16 h.p. at 1,700 rpm. The second one, with a load rating of one ton, had not only the usual strengthening of the chassis but also an increase in the wheelbase of 100 mm, to 2,840 mm. The engine was always the same as used in the passenger car, first the type 52, then the 52A and finally the 52B. The rear axle was different and on it were mounted twin wheels; the wheels had pressed steel discoidal rims, harder than the Sankey rims used on the car. Both the trucks were equipped with the same engines as the cars but had a much lower maximum speed, because of the need to move, when fully laden, heavier loads; they only reached about 45-55 kph.

In August 1914 the First World War began, and the initial declaration of neutrality by Italy helped Fiat to obtain many profitable contracts with foreign armies. In 1915 the Italian government asked for 1,600 vehicles of different models as it foresaw entering the conflict. Among these, there were also many cars to be used for tactical support. At beginning, the models were three, almost all in a specific open version called "Torpedo Militare": Tipo 2B 15/20 h.p., Tipo 3 ter 20/30 h.p.

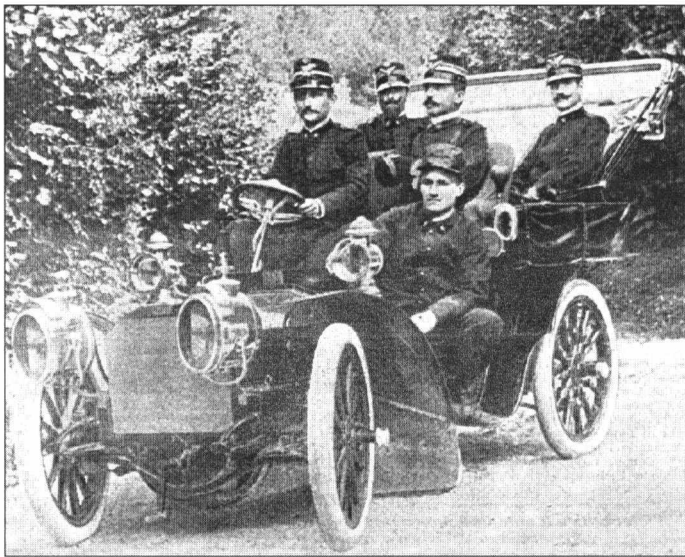


Fig. 5—A Fiat 15/20 h.p. during a test by the military administration. The driver is Tenant Umberto Emanuele, Director of the Automotive Service of the Italian Royal Army.

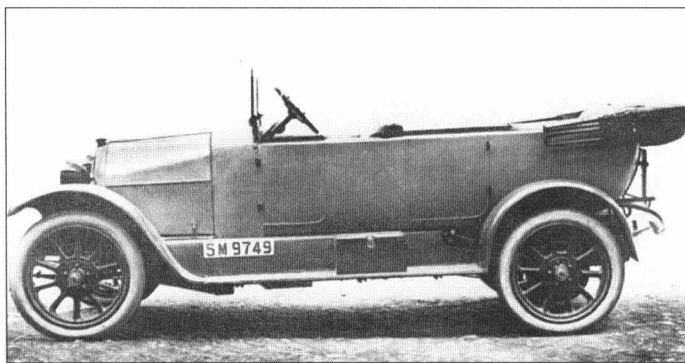


Fig. 6—The Fiat Tipo 3 ter in the Torpedo Militare version (1912).

(Fig. 6), and a few Tipo 4 35/45 h.p.. Two models were mainly used by the senior officers and the third one was reserved for the highest ranks: also King Vittorio Emanuele III moved, when in the war zones, in a Fiat Tipo 4 that was called by the people “the king’s thunderbolt.” The Tipo 2B has already been described above while the Tipo 3 ter was a car made in about 700 units from 1912 until 1915, of which 400 had a tuned engine for sport use and 300 with the standard engine, mainly for military use. It was derived from the luxury Tipo 3A, had a shorter chassis—with a 2,915 mm wheelbase—and the same type 53A engine. Its light body and high speed—about 90-95 kph—were very useful for quick movement in war operations. The Tipo 4 35/45 h.p. was an impressive and expensive car, with a chassis similar to the Tipo 3A, and with a wheelbase of 3,140 mm and the type 54A engine, a single-block four cylinders with a displacement of 5,072 cc developing 53 h.p. at 1,600 rpm, and reaching a maximum speed of 95 kph. The cars supplied to the army were derived from the civilian ones, equipped according to the military requirements. So the modifications were very few and not so difficult to be performed in a factory where the singularity of the work was still the standard, at least in the details. In fact, the

“Torpedo Militari” were different for the flat gray painting and for a spartan fitting, even if they were provided with a lot of boxes and cases for a large tool kit and some spare parts.

The war absorbed the entire Fiat production, as well as that of the other Italian factories producing mechanical goods. Precious materials, like steel, copper, aluminum and hardwood, were always used for military products and the workers were fully employed there. Fiat’s design department had almost ready a new study for a very innovative middle-size car at the beginning of the war. There was a shared opinion that the war would be ending soon, maybe in 1916. This moved Fiat to invest in the new car, the Tipo 70, that would have been produced in a very high volume never seen before at Fiat. Probably it would have happened, if the war hadn’t gone on until November 1918. As a test, Fiat made the Tipo 70 in a pre-production series fulfilling military needs (Fig. 8), thus selling some units to the army, while waiting for the war to end, and to start producing the car for the civilian market. The first prototypes were tested by the soldiers in early 1915. The Tipo 70 had a traditional chassis, with a wheelbase of 2,706 mm, longer than the Zero and shorter than the Tipo 1 and 2. Both the axles were rigid, with 1,250 mm track and semi-elliptic springs; the brakes were mechanical, on the rear wheels; the transmission was by a cardan shaft. The gearbox had four speeds and the clutch had multiple discs in oil. Its Tipo 40 engine was a single-block four cylinders with the head from the same casting; it had a bore and stroke of 70 x 1,300 mm and so a displacement of 2,001 cc; its compression ratio was 4.2:1 and the maximum power 21 h.p. at 2,400 rpm. The engine had side valves, driven by a camshaft in the block; the ignition used a Dixie high-tension magneto, the carburetor was an automatic Fiat and the lubrication was centrifugal. The Sankey rims, made in pressed steel, were one of the main differences between the military cars and the civilian ones: 815x105 on the first, 765x105 on the second. The maximum speed was about 75 kph. On the mechanical side, the Tipo 70 was very innovative because it no longer used the “boat” layout, with engine, clutch and gearbox in a unit and with a common lubrication, but used more modern separate components. The first units made in early 1915 had also a different styling, with an old-fashioned shape radiator similar to the Zero made in the early ’10s; this anachronism was jettisoned with the final version which had the signature radiator with the shape of a pear, like the other contemporary Fiats. On the pre-production series chassis there were made a few Landaulet-Limousines while the remaining ones were all “Torpedo Militare” (Fig. 9). A lot of Tipo 70s were issued to the Italian royal army and sometimes to its allies. Beginning in 1919, when Fiat restarted selling to private customers, the car was offered with the new 501 until the following year. Its production totaled 1,002 units, the majority for the army.

At the end of the war, the Turin firm had made 35,000 vehicles for the army and had become the third largest Italian company, having increased ten times its employees: from 4,000 in 1915 to 40,000 in 1918.

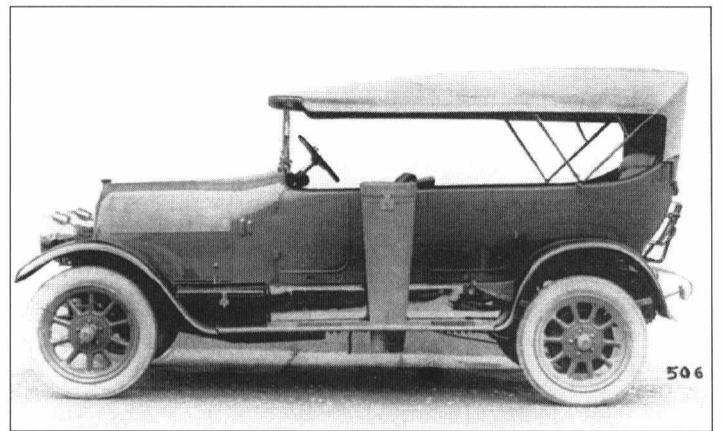
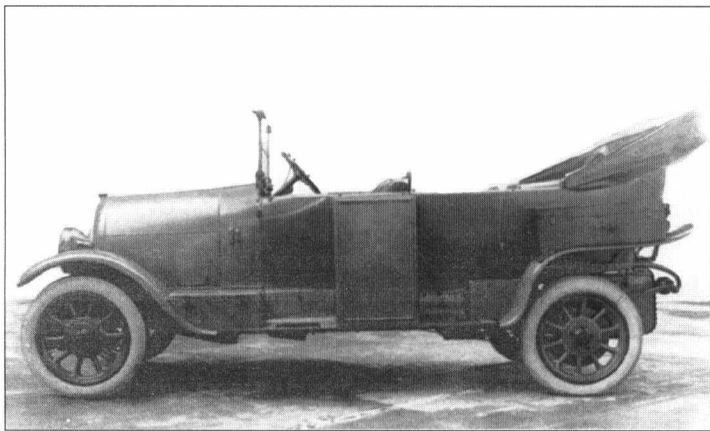


Fig. 7—Two cars Fiat Tipo 4 35/45 h.p., both used by King Vittorio Emanuele III to move along the front during the First World War.



Fig. 8—A pre-series Fiat Tipo 70 during a test by the military administration in early 1915. The civilian (second from the left) is Antonio Fagnano, Fiat's driver and tester, who explains to them the quality of the new car.

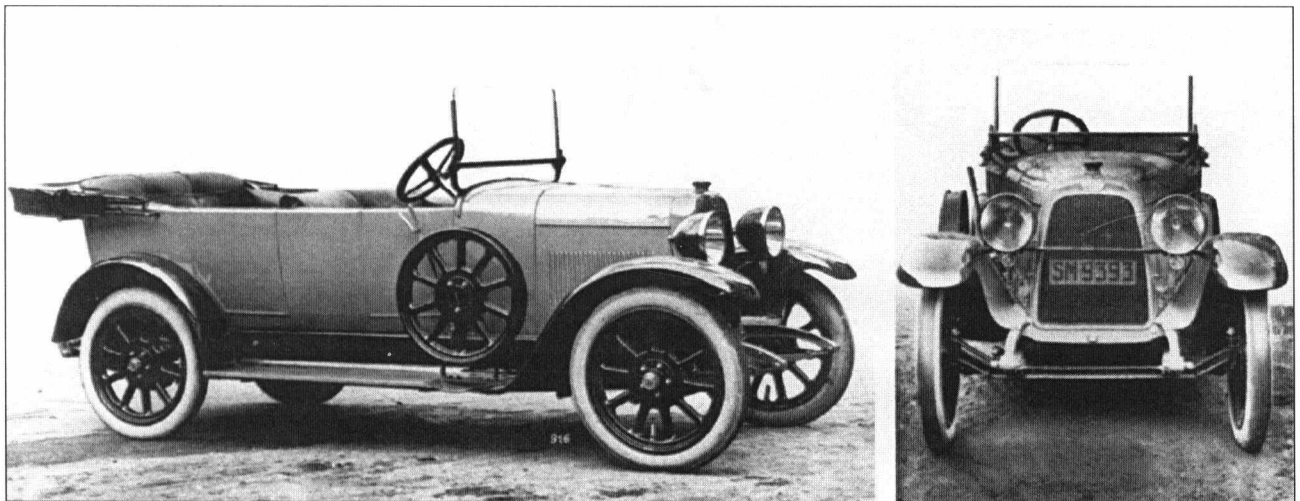
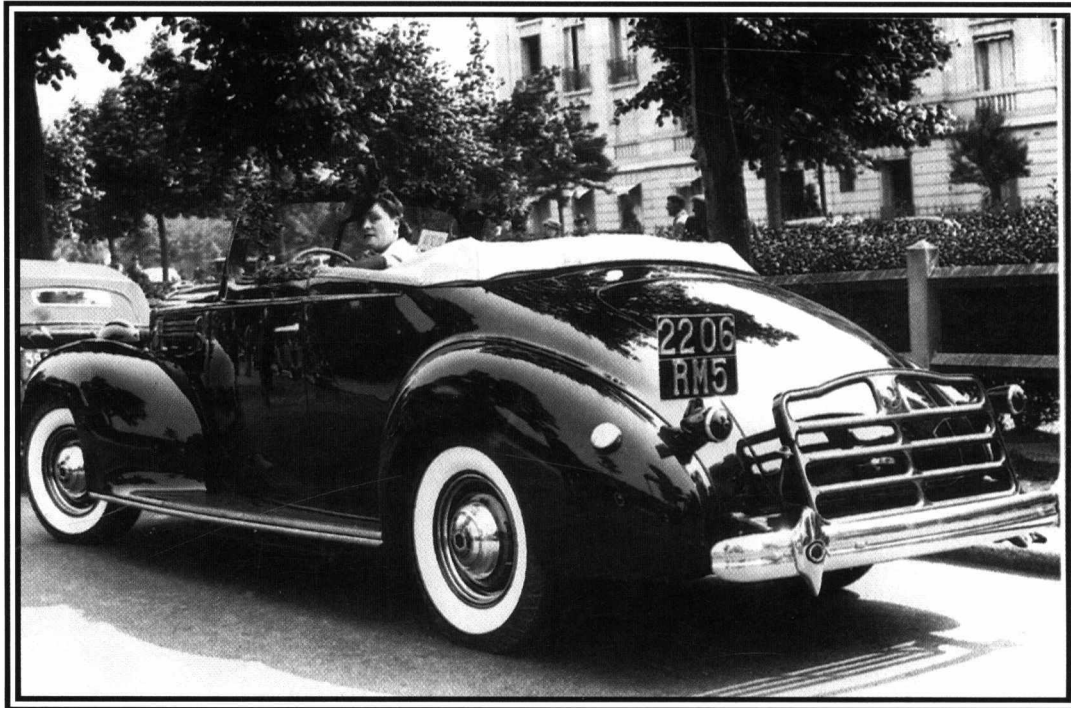


Fig. 9—The final edition of the Fiat Tipo 70 in the Torpedo Militare version (late 1915).



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