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# The Civilian Experience in German Occupied France, 1940-1944

Meredith Smith

Connecticut College, [msmith22@conncoll.edu](mailto:msmith22@conncoll.edu)

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The views expressed in this paper are solely those of the author.

**The Civilian Experience in German Occupied France, 1940-1944**

An Honors Thesis  
Presented by  
**Meredith Smith**

To  
The Department of History  
In partial fulfillment of the requirement for  
Honors in the Major Field

Connecticut College  
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## Introduction

Any visitor to Paris today will probably pass through the Bir Hakeim metro stop, the station closest to the Eiffel Tower. It takes its name from the victory of the Free French Forces in Libya over German General Erwin Rommel's joint Italian-German forces. With so few triumphs to celebrate, this commemoration of a World War Two victory is nearly unique in France. The Second World War is not a topic that most French people want to discuss. Far better to talk about the Great War and French heroism at Verdun. The Second World War is too complicated and too ambiguous to be a source of national pride. But nevertheless it is an unavoidable part of France's history, with a legacy contemporaries and modern day scholars alike have been forced to contend with. This legacy has given rise to myths and much debate.<sup>1</sup> Some have tried to paint the occupation as igniting a heroic outpouring of patriotism, while others have seen cowardice and culpability. The truth lies somewhere in the middle. The defeat France suffered in May and June 1940, though cataclysmic and shocking to contemporaries, is far less interesting than its aftermath. In four years of foreign occupation, France suffered deprivation and fear on a nationwide scale, a fate which molded her present and changed her future.

## Historical Context

When Germany launched Case Yellow against Western Europe on May 10, 1940, it was not without warning signs. Throughout the 1930's Adolf Hitler's Germany had been rearming and acting in open defiance of the 1919 Treaty of Versailles, which had been designed to curb its power and potential aggression. For a myriad of reasons (that

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Gildea, *Marianne in Chains* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2003) 4.

have been the study of many books), France was ill-prepared to meet this threat, in spite of the mounting warning signs. And so, in under two months, France fell to the German army.

Eight months prior, the opening guns of World War Two had been sounded. On September 1, 1939, Nazi Germany invaded Poland, decimating Europe's uneasy peace. Within days both Great Britain and France had rushed to Poland's defense, declaring war on Germany. Despite their apparent eagerness to enter the fray, however, both nations waited on Germany's next move in what became known as the phony war, or *le drôle de guerre*.

Case Yellow abruptly ended this period of expectant inactivity. Bypassing the Maginot Line that stretched along France's borders from Switzerland to Luxembourg, the Germans instead invaded through the north, entering neutral Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands, as well as France's Ardennes Forest. Within ten days German forces reached the Atlantic Coast, splitting the Allied forces. The British Expeditionary Force and members of the French army were evacuated at Dunkirk onto waiting British war ships in an attempt to salvage what remained of the beaten armies, to fight another day. On June 11, Paris was declared an open city and three days later the German army entered the French capital. The world watched with horror as the storied French military crumbled in the span of six weeks under the Nazi onslaught.

Thousands of civilians from northern and eastern France fled in the face of invasion, inundating the southern provinces with refugees and beginning the war years with a significant stress on resources, including food, petrol, and even impacting the

conditions of the roads.<sup>2</sup> The French called this mass migration *l'exode*, and it included civilians from all social classes.<sup>3</sup> Those who remained in Paris described the city as empty: shops closed, streets deserted, trains crowded beyond capacity and running constantly to evacuate as many civilians as possible.<sup>4</sup> For most people, no real destination existed – anywhere but here, anywhere to be safe from the army chomping at their heels. The *exode* was a dramatic, but temporary, demographic shift. Still, it foreshadowed the troubled times to come, revealing the inadequacy of French trade routes and supply lines when placed under pressure, and the inability of the government to calm the nation in a time of chaos.

Overpowered by the superiority of German forces, the French sued for an armistice, which was reached on June 22. Three days later, France officially surrendered. Under the armistice terms, all France was to be disarmed. In addition, the country was divided into zones. Alsace and Moselle, long a source of Germano-French tensions, were annexed into the Third Reich and cultural vestiges such as speaking French or wearing berets were outlawed.<sup>5</sup> Alsaciens and inhabitants of the Moselle who had fled with the *exode* were only permitted to return home if they could prove they were not of Jewish descent, and that their families had been in residence prior to 1918.<sup>6</sup> The Nord Pas de Calais was closed off from the rest of France and governed from Belgium as part of a

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<sup>2</sup> Ian Ousby, *Occupation – The Ordeal of France 1940-1944*. (New York: St Martin's, 1998) 45.

<sup>3</sup> L'exode translates to exodus.

<sup>4</sup> Simone de Beauvoir, "War Journal." In *Defeat and Beyond: An Anthology of French Wartime Writing, 1940-45*, ed Germaine & Bernauer. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970) 149.

<sup>5</sup> Richard Vinen, *The Unfree French*. (New Haven :Yale University, 2006) 104.

<sup>6</sup> Ousby, *Occupation*, 104.

German-administered military zone.<sup>7</sup> This stopped any movement in or out, isolating it from neighboring regions. The north and east, including Paris and extending down along the Atlantic Coast, were occupied, placed directly under German control and answering ultimately to Berlin.

The Occupied Zone ended at the demarcation line, which divided it from the Free Zone to the south. The demarcation line seems somewhat arbitrary – it did not follow any natural landmarks, and ran haphazardly across departmental lines, even splitting some towns in two.<sup>8</sup> What at first glance appears illogical, though, in fact reflects the enormous power imbalance between France and Germany in 1940. Germany held the French capital, the richest agricultural lands and the majority of French industry. They controlled access to the English Channel and the Atlantic coast. Perhaps most importantly though, stopping short of a full territorial occupation allowed the Germans to preserve their own resources. Maintaining French bureaucracy spared German personnel for more valuable tasks in Berlin and on the Eastern Front. Additionally, by keeping the French administration in place and working with them through official channels, the Germans gave the French government a vested interest in collaboration. And, should the need arise, German forces felt comfortable in the knowledge that occupying the remainder of the country would pose little challenge.

France's government had been on the run since the beginning of May 1940. From Paris, it bounced from Tours to Bordeaux, staying a step ahead of both *l'exode* and the German offensive. But geographic displacement was nothing compared to the turmoil

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<sup>7</sup> Lynne Taylor, *Between Resistance and Collaboration: Popular Protest in Northern France, 1940-1945* (New York: St Martin's, 2000) 13.

<sup>8</sup> Vinen *The Unfree French* 102.

within the French government. Prime minister Paul Reynaud was facing mounting dissension and resigned on June 16. His replacement was Marshall Philippe Pétain, the great hero of World War I, revered by the whole nation. Pétain's government favored an "honorable" peace with Germany and immediately sought a cease-fire.<sup>9</sup> After signing an armistice with Germany, the new government headquartered itself in Vichy, a spa town in the Auvergne, located some distance south of the demarcation line.

The choice of Vichy is another decision that feels arbitrary, however it too can be explained. Essentially, Vichy was secure. It was removed from the politics, often socialist, of larger southern towns like Marseille or Toulouse.<sup>10</sup> It was a safe distance from the coast, the demarcation line, and the Swiss border so the Germans felt secure. Its newness provided a means for the French government to start over. Under Pétain, the Third Republic, which had existed since the Franco-Prussian War of 1871, was dissolved and replaced by the French State, or *l'Etat Français*. Unofficially, it became known as Vichy, adopting the name of its chosen location, the name it has been known by ever since.

Vichy's exact status has been the subject of serious debate. Some have called it a puppet state, while others insist on its autonomy.<sup>11</sup> Even more so in retrospect, Vichy has taken on a divisive role, as the responsibility of the French in Occupied France has been subject to reassessment by historians. Ultimate authority derived from Berlin and policies were only enacted when they did not contradict existing German policies. Vichy was internationally recognized by contemporaries, and even had a United States embassy

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<sup>9</sup> Werner Rings, *Life With the Enemy: Collaboration and Resistance in Hitler's Europe 1939-1945* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co, 1982) 113.

<sup>10</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 48.

<sup>11</sup> Ousby, *Occupation*, 67.



in the first years of the war.<sup>12</sup> It had its own bureaucracy, and particularly in the Free Zone was active in promulgating policies and seeking autonomy. However, this pursuit of autonomy could be a doubled-edged sword. Often in attempting to prove their effectiveness and gain more power, French administration and police found themselves performing the German's dirty work under the guise of independent action.<sup>13</sup> The best example of this is the role of the French police in rounding up the country's Jewish population – of the seven internment camps in France, six were run by the French, who also played an active role in marginalizing and eventually arresting and deporting Jews, especially between 1940-1943.<sup>14</sup>

Perhaps the greatest condemnation of Vichy comes from its active espousal and pursuit of collaboration.<sup>15</sup> Working with German authorities has been termed the “shield theory” by many apologists and by Vichy authorities themselves when they stood trial for treason following Liberation.<sup>16</sup> Ostensibly, Vichy created a safeguard between the Germans and the French population at large, and Vichy's attempts at collaboration mitigated national suffering and prevented “Polandization.”<sup>17</sup> It seems clear though, that collaboration implied slightly more than this defense mechanism – at its worst, it caused Vichy to actively aid and even promote rounding up France's Jewish population. In fact the decision to deport Jewish children along with adults came from a top Vichy minister,

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<sup>12</sup> Vinen *The Unfree French*, 50.

<sup>13</sup> Gildea, *Marianne in Chains*, 255.

<sup>14</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 135.

<sup>15</sup> Robert O. Paxton, *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order, 1940-1944* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972) 51.

<sup>16</sup> Paxton, *Vichy France*, 358.

<sup>17</sup> Paxton, *Vichy France*, 359. Polandization refers to the extreme sufferings of the Poles under Nazi occupation, including mass exterminations and forced ghettos, taking enormous tolls on the civilian population. It was often used as a reference to contrast the experiences of occupied nations.

purportedly to “keep families together.”<sup>18</sup> Clearly Vichy shared more than a little of the responsibility.

### Thesis

The chaos of World War Two provided the background and impetus for the events in France between 1940 and 1944. Though the war may have been as distant as Russia or the Pacific Ocean, its impact reverberated into the heart of France and dictated the course of the occupation, determining the way that French civilians experienced the war. It is easy to lose sight of these civilians amidst the drama of earth-changing political and military events. The scale of life, however, does not lessen the importance of the French civilian’s experience.

Journals and other contemporary sources are the best means of piecing together the civilian experience in Occupied France. They come from rural and urban locations throughout the country, presenting a kaleidoscope of personalities and experiences. In search of the average civilian experience, though, this diversity is problematic. Not surprisingly, there is no discernible single experience that ran throughout all of France and all of its citizens. Hunger, deprivation, and fear may have been present everywhere, but in varying degrees that depended on a number of factors.

One of these factors was population size. A larger native population denoted a larger importance to any town or city, and it was in France’s densely populated areas where the majority of Germans lived and worked. As cultural and administrative centers, cities naturally attracted the occupying power, which was looking to work with and manipulate these institutions. A highly populated area also provided the critical mass of

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<sup>18</sup> Ousby, *Occupation*, 191.

people needed for enterprises such as the black market or collaboration or resistance to succeed.

There were some areas that drew the attention of the German occupiers, not because of their significance as cultural or administrative centers, but because of their strategic locations. The best examples of this, where geography became a crucial determinant of occupation policy, are France's coastal areas. Considered vulnerable to seaborne attack, the Germans stretched the demarcation line to include the entire Channel and Atlantic Coasts.<sup>19</sup> Though important towns dotted the coastline, most notably Nantes and Bordeaux, the main motivation for extending the occupation into these areas was not to control these cities, but to control the coast. In so doing, Germany also controlled what (and who) passed into and out of France by water. Eventually, decrees were even passed demanding that civilians move away from the vulnerable coastline, transforming it into a military zone.<sup>20</sup> Normandy, along France's Channel coast, was the most important region to have its occupation experience dictated by geography. Judged to be a likely point for Allied landings, the Germans were careful to man the Norman coast from the outset of the war, long before such a threat was likely.<sup>21</sup>

Though never a hard and fast rule, belonging to the right social class could usually ease many of the hardships of occupation, even in cities or along the tactically important coast. Wealth or connections were the most effective means of lessening the

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<sup>19</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 101.

<sup>20</sup> Louis Guilloux, *Carnets 1921-1944* (Paris: Gallimard, 1982) 299. It should be noted that though these decrees were passed, they were not universally applied or obeyed. Often the main concern was removing the most vulnerable portions of the population, such as children or the elderly. Moreover, the coast only became forbidden to all French citizens in April 1944 and, even then, enforcement was uneven.

<sup>21</sup> Marie-Louise Osmont, *The Normandy Diary of Marie-Louise Osmont* (New York: Random House, 1994).

day-to-day difficulties of the occupation, and according to one contemporary observer, for many Frenchmen living through the occupation, their lifestyle was as imbued as the Rights of Man – those accustomed to luxury resorted to any means to maintain it.<sup>22</sup>

Though social factors were clearly important, material factors were the greatest determinants of the French civilian's experience of the occupation. Of material factors, by far the most important was economic – it virtually defined the experience of most French citizens. Most memories of the war revolve around various aspects of the economic situation: waiting in endless queues to buy food, ration coupons in hand; bicycling into the countryside in search of provisions when they failed to materialize at markets in town; developing substitutes to replace missing necessities; hiding signs of wealth to avoid requisitioning or denunciation. Scarcity and availability provided the undertones for the occupation, nationwide.<sup>23</sup> With only two months of active war and four years of passive occupation, it is no surprise that economic realities reigned supreme as the greatest burden of the occupation period.

Analyzing the occupation from both a rural and urban perspective illuminates the similarities and differences between the two, based on each of the factors described above – geography, population density, social class, material scarcity and availability – as well as many others. The main difference between rural and urban occupation was one of degrees. Urban areas were most often the epicenter of the German presence, causing these populations to endure the most friction between the power of the occupier, and the forced lot of the occupied. By contrast, most towns and villages only saw German troops at the beginning and end of the war, when they were on the move. Cities were also at an

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<sup>22</sup> Alfred Fabre-Luce, *Journal de la France 1939-1944* (Paris: Fayard, 1969) 409.

<sup>23</sup> Gildea, *Marianne in Chains*, 2.

economic disadvantage. Often long distances from points of agricultural production, they were dependent on trade to supply their markets. When trade routes shrank or occasionally collapsed, urban populations were the first to be beset by hunger and scarcity. Rural populations, on the other hand, gained increasing economic power during the war. Their proximity to agricultural production, even if they themselves were not involved in production, gave them specialized access to supplies.

The greatest similarity that urban and rural France shared was the plain fact that both were occupied. While certain factors could mitigate the effects of occupation, the occupation itself remained in place. That meant the countrywide imposition of a controlled economy, German administrators and soldiers, and subjugation to a hostile foreign power. Through an examination of the social and material factors that defined the occupation, we can come closer to understanding the intricacies of daily life in Occupied France, as well as the legacy it left behind.

Examining urban and rural experiences in conjunction using the common factors that determined the course of the occupation in each allows us to come closer to ultimately defining the average experience of the individual civilians who lived in Occupied France. Or rather, it allows us to find several average experiences, accounting for differences throughout France. Understanding the daily lives of civilians in one area helps illuminate circumstances in another, ultimately illuminating the nationwide consequences of the occupation, as experienced by ordinary French citizens.

## Ch 1. The Urban Experience of Occupation

### Introduction

On June 14, 1940, the day the German army entered Paris, sixteen Parisians killed themselves.<sup>24</sup> It is impossible to determine how many of these were the result of invasion. It can be said, though, that suicide historically had a decidedly republican flavor in France, in the style of ancient Rome, that would have been directly in opposition to Nazi totalitarianism.<sup>25</sup> So began the German occupation of France's northern cities. The German presence hit the urban areas of the Occupied Zone hard – Paris, Tours, Bordeaux, Dijon, to name a few. The cities were subject to a new controlled economy and rationing system. Their resultant effects metamorphosized the local economy. A heavy German administrative and military presence forced constant contact between the two populations. This contact forced the difficult question of how to navigate occupation – pressure to collaborate or resist met pressure to simply see the occupation safely through. Urban society in Occupied France between 1940-1944 was markedly different than what came both before and after.

As of 1940, Paris alone played host to some 40,000 Germans.<sup>26</sup> They held both administrative and military positions, but, regardless of their official capacity, they radically changed the demography and the environment of the city. Though Paris, which served as headquarters of the Occupation, had the highest concentration of Germans anywhere in France, other cities were subject to similar occupations resulting in similar changes.

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<sup>24</sup> Richard Vinen, *The Unfree French* (New Haven: Yale University, 2006) 14.

<sup>25</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 15.

<sup>26</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 109.

The changes wrought by the occupation seem obvious, but in fact they were very complex and had extended consequences, like a societal ripple effect. The first, and probably the most important, step the Germans took was to transform French industrial and agricultural production into a controlled economy, safeguarded by a system of rationing. “The German economy required French material resources, agricultural products and industrial goods. German industry needed French manpower for its factories and the military needed it for its construction projects on the Atlantic Coast.”<sup>27</sup> This spurred inflation and led to the development of several concentric black markets, supplying the goods unavailable through the official market with varying degrees of price extortion. Wage controls compounded these problems, in what was effectively a crisis economy: a supplier’s market built on scarcity and disproportionately high demand.

The heavy German presence in urban centers opened the thorny question of how to proceed: to resist, to collaborate, or to look for a middle path. Varying degrees of economic collaboration existed in cities, as did multiple forms and interpretations of resistance. Defining collaboration and resistance became extremely difficult, most notably in the instances of romantic or sexual relationships between French women and German soldiers, better known as horizontal collaboration. Most French citizens fell firmly in neither of the two camps, collaborator or resistor, and instead sought simply to navigate through a changing society, and outlast the Occupation in peace.

German occupation in urban areas is best seen through the eyes of the people that experienced it firsthand. Alfred Fabre-Luce lived in Paris during the Occupation and recorded his observations in a journal. The journal begins in 1939 as the French

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<sup>27</sup> Frederic Spotts, *A Shameful Peace: How French Artists and Intellectuals Survived the Nazi Occupation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008) 35.

anticipate German attack and continues through Liberation, in 1944. Prior to the war Fabre-Luce was employed as a writer, working in fiction, biographies, histories and essays. During the war, though, he felt compelled to document instead his own changing world. His journal is highly critical of contemporary society and devotes particular attention to the prices and availability of food, which he sees as reflective of the occupation as a whole.<sup>28</sup>

Fabre-Luce's contemporary, Henri Drouot, lived in Dijon, the provincial capital of Burgundy. He began a journal to document the Occupation after returning from the defeated Western Front in late August 1940, where he had served as a reservist.<sup>29</sup> He continued writing until September 1944, when the Allied armies liberated Dijon. Trained as a historian, specializing in the 16<sup>th</sup> century of his native Burgundy, Drouot turned his analytical eye to the events around him. While personal and familial details have been deleted from his journal by the publishers, it still retains the bulk of his observations.<sup>30</sup> He cautions his readers in an introduction that his writing reflects perception much more than reality. Nevertheless, his diary provides frequent reports on prices and availability in the marketplace, war news, and local events and rumors surrounding the German occupiers.

Together, the two men present similar pictures – of urban populations dominated by insecurity and preoccupied with their own day-to-day survival. Neither of the men makes mention of participating in any form of resistance or collaboration, but seem to walk a middle road, almost as conscientious objectors to the entire affair. Their shared

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<sup>28</sup> Alfred Fabre-Luce, *Journal de la France 1939-1944* (Paris: Fayard, 1969).

<sup>29</sup> Henri Drouot, *Notes d'un Dijonnais Pendant l'Occupation Allemande 1940-44* (Dijon: Editions Universitaires de Dijon: 1998).

<sup>30</sup> Drouot, *Notes d'un Dijonnais*, xxi.



preoccupation with food availability and prices is extremely telling as to the prevailing atmosphere within France. According to historian Richard Vinen, “The French talked about food obsessively.”<sup>31</sup> Indeed, while occupation obviously had large social and political impacts, its biggest effects, and certainly the primary concern of contemporaries, seem to have been economic. Historians, though acknowledging this, have tended to focus on other aspects of urban occupation – the arts, intellectuals, and especially collaboration and resistance. Recently, there has been a move towards examining what are perhaps the more mundane aspects of urban occupation – price controls, the black market, everyday Franco-German interactions, etc. This chapter follows in that vein, and attempts to define the average French citizen’s experience of urban life under Nazi Occupation.

#### Economic Conditions

The actual Occupation disrupted the economic order of France significantly more than invasion had in May and June 1940. The invasion drew farmers and workers out of the economic sector and into the armed forces, but most of these – with the exception of prisoners of war of whom there were some 1.5 million, no small loss to the nation’s economy – returned to their civilian lives within days of the armistice.<sup>32</sup> Occupation, by contrast, was built around the idea that France should help Germany. This help took many forms but by far the most tangible, and arguably the most important, was the requisitioning of goods. Known as the *ravitaillement*, this requisition necessitated German control over production and supply, to ensure that the desired goods were produced and sent back to the Reich. In order to ensure this management, the Nazi

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<sup>31</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 215.

<sup>32</sup> Robert Gildea, *Marianne in Chains* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2003) 67.

occupiers introduced a controlled economy in Occupied France. One of its key features was rationing.

Rationing was essential to the effective operation of a combined Franco-German economy. It regulated virtually all consumer goods, including clothing, tobacco, and soap. Most importantly, though, it controlled food. Cheese, eggs, meat, milk, butter, fats, oil, bread, wine, potatoes, fish – all were controlled by rationing.<sup>33</sup> Beginning in August 1940, each citizen registered with their local suppliers – butchers, bakers, etc. This registration was then noted on a citywide level and ration cards were made available periodically, usually on a monthly basis, in the *mairie*, or town hall.<sup>34</sup> A ration card determined how much of a type of food – in pounds of meat, for example – a person was allotted each week. The Germans were not interested in needlessly antagonizing the French, so food allotments were not intended to starve the local population. Nonetheless, hunger has been pointed to as perhaps the predominant feature of the Occupation.<sup>35</sup>

Rationing was not conducted uniformly, but rather by breaking the population into subsections, based on age, gender and other needs. Group E included children under age 3. J1 encompassed children ages 3-6, J2 children 6-13, and J3 ages 13-21. The majority of adults were in group A, ages 21-70 with no special circumstances. T, from the French *travail*, meaning work, covered adults ages 21-70 performing heavy manual labor. Group C – for *cultivateur*, or farmer – referred to agricultural workers, whose allotments were often smaller as they were assumed to have ready access to additional food sources, by virtue of their labor. Adults over 70 were in group V, for *vieux*,

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<sup>33</sup> Ian Ousby, *Occupation – The Ordeal of France 1940-1944* (New York: St. Martin's, 1998) 116.

<sup>34</sup> Ousby, *Occupation*, 116.

<sup>35</sup> Gildea, *Marianne in Chains*, 1.

meaning old.<sup>36</sup> Special categories also existed for pregnant or nursing mothers. These divisions existed to meet special needs within the population, for example by providing extra milk for children, or giving larger portions to those performing valuable manual labor. Despite these attempts at specialization, the rationing system almost always represented a dramatic drop in caloric intake – prior to the war an average adult consumed approximately 2500 calories a day, but this had dropped to between 1200-1500 by the end of the occupation in 1944.<sup>37</sup>

Obviously rationing could not meet demand. So, French citizens turned to alternative, extralegal means to procure the goods they needed. An extensive black market developed and flourished in answer to this pervasive need. The black market forged a link between the countryside and cities during the war, and it is difficult to examine one side in isolation. The countryside played the crucial role of supplier, supplementing the diet of town and city dwellers throughout the nation. This took place in a number of ways, and there were several concentric black markets. The smallest circle involved only immediate family and friends. This often led to urbanites rediscovering country cousins who could provide them with much needed packages of food. These packages were known as *colis familiaux*. In 1942 alone, 13.5 million were mailed throughout France.<sup>38</sup> Often this smaller market, sometimes called the *marche amical*, was based on barter economics, or even in some cases on the promise of future payment.

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<sup>36</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 22.

<sup>37</sup> Ousby, *Occupation*, 118.

<sup>38</sup> Ousby, *Occupation*, 127.

The black market grew wider and wider outward from this family circle. The bigger the market, the higher the price. The government-set price of butter in 1942 was 43 francs a kilo. On the *marche amical* it sold for 69 francs, and on the black market for 107 francs.<sup>39</sup> This drastic difference in cost reflects the persistence of demand, even in the face of steadily rising prices. Fear of denunciation to the German authorities had some effect in maintaining relatively fair costs, but as this example of butter prices illustrates, not by much. The market was at its widest in big cities like Paris or Tours. In these urban centers it often relied not on familial ties but on anonymity. Whatever its size or prices, the black market became an integral part of life under occupation. Nearly everyone in France participated in it somehow, whether as buyers or suppliers, or on a large or small scale.<sup>40</sup> It became fundamental to survival. It has been estimated that in 1942 an average Parisian got 1725 calories from rations, 200 from the black market and an additional 200 from *colis familiaux*.<sup>41</sup>

A parallel black market existed for ration cards. These tickets functioned essentially as a second form of currency and quickly became highly prized commodities – as Fabre-Luce says, the most valuable form of money.<sup>42</sup> Not only were false cards created, but the originals were also stolen at every stage of production and distribution.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Michel Cepede, *Agriculture et Alimentation en France Durant la IIe Guerre Mondiale* (Paris: Genin, 1961) 335.

<sup>40</sup> Lynne Taylor, *The Black Market in Occupied Northern France, 1940-4*, Contemporary European History Vol. 6 (Cambridge: Cambridge University, July 1997) 175.

<sup>41</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 231. 1725 calories per day seems much larger than the 1200-1500 noted earlier. It is important to note that rations were not constant and amounts were subject to almost monthly changes, in particular as the Occupation wore on. Thus from 1942 to 1944, it should come as no surprise that the average caloric intake had dropped by a minimum of 225 per day.

<sup>42</sup> Fabre-Luce, *Journal de la France*, 414.

<sup>43</sup> Taylor, *The Black Market*, 165.

In addition, whether fake or real, a furious trade in ration cards took place. Clothing tickets were the most popular to trade away, as they were arguably the least essential.<sup>44</sup> This trade allowed even those without a surplus of francs to participate in the black market.

Despite the prevalence of the black market, and perhaps aggravated by the failure of the rationing system, shortages persisted throughout the Occupation. There simply were not enough of the necessities to meet the population's demands. In the Occupied Zone, meat, bread and potatoes were constantly undersupplied. This was felt particularly hard in urban areas, where desperate citizens occasionally turned to eating cats, pigeons, and even guinea pigs.<sup>45</sup> In 1940 a typical adult in Paris consumed 350 grams of bread a day. By 1943 this had dropped to 180 grams a day.<sup>46</sup>

Food was not the only scarcity. The German army requisitioned as much leather as they could get their hands on to furnish their soldiers with boots.<sup>47</sup> Leather requisitioning began as early as fall 1940 but seems to have lasted throughout the war. In the absence of available leather, shoes were soled using wood, cork, or occasionally even paper.<sup>48</sup> It is here that we can begin to see the resourcefulness of the French population. Parisian women, known in peacetime for their elegance and style, saw no need to surrender this image to the war. When perms became unavailable, they turned to elaborate hats, decorated with flowers or birds.<sup>49</sup> For these women, there was no sacrificing style. Tobacco, a necessity for much of the population, was also subject to

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<sup>44</sup> Taylor, *The Black Market* 170.

<sup>45</sup> Ousby, *Occupation*, 127.

<sup>46</sup> Ousby, *Occupation*, 120.

<sup>47</sup> Drouot, *Notes d'un Dijonnais*, 7.

<sup>48</sup> Ousby, *Occupation*, 126.

<sup>49</sup> Ousby, *Occupation*, 126.

requisitioning, once again to fill the needs of the German army. Already by April 1941, Henri Drouot reports that there was simply none left in the city of Dijon.<sup>50</sup> A new *tabac national* was developed at the domestic level, using a mixture of dried grass and herbs.<sup>51</sup> This was an example of the *système D*, from the French *se débrouiller* meaning to manage or get by, a celebrated result of occupation. When coffee beans ran short, roasted acorns took their place. Liquorices and even boiled pumpkins were used to replace sugar.<sup>52</sup> The reliance on a vast array of substitutes characterized *le système D*, which itself characterized life in France under the occupation. Historians and contemporaries alike have seen in this an ingenuity admirable in the French.<sup>53</sup>

Much more serious than a shortage of tobacco or a dearth of available perms was the growing scarcity of coal. The Germans requisitioned a majority of what was produced, both for their administration in France and for the needs of the Front.<sup>54</sup> Trains laden with French coal could be seen crossing the country, bound for Germany and Italy.<sup>55</sup> This scarcity became particularly pronounced in the unusually hard winters of 1940-41 and 1941-42.<sup>56</sup> Coal became a highly prized commodity in extralegal trading. SNCF railway workers, who had privileged access to coal during its transport, were often responsible for its availability on the black market.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Drouot, *Notes d'un Dijonnais*, 173.

<sup>51</sup> Ousby, *Occupation*, 126.

<sup>52</sup> Ousby, *Occupation*, 119.

<sup>53</sup> Fabre-Luce, *Journal de la France*, 412.

<sup>54</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 220.

<sup>55</sup> Drouot, *Notes d'un Dijonnais*, 409.

<sup>56</sup> Ousby, *Occupation*, 122.

<sup>57</sup> Taylor, *The Black Market*, 159-60. SNCF refers to the *Société Nationale des Chemins de fer français*, or the French National Railways.

Transportation was also changed by the war. Petrol was badly needed, and in large quantities, for the German war effort against the Soviet Union. Henri Drouot remarks several times in his journal on the silence reigning over Dijon, once no one could drive.<sup>58</sup> In addition to the practical shortage of available petrol, the Germans also established limits on how many cars were allowed on the roads – in Paris, for example, as of 1940 there were only 7000 permits available for private cars.<sup>59</sup> Many other cars had been requisitioned for the German forces.<sup>60</sup> In the absence of automobiles, the French turned increasingly to bicycles for transportation – by 1944 there were 2 million bikes in Paris.<sup>61</sup> Evidence has even been found suggesting a black market specifically for bicycles and bicycle parts.<sup>62</sup>

Shortages were accompanied by physical and psychological repercussions. This psychological hunger doubled the actual hunger.<sup>63</sup> Children growing up during the war were markedly shorter than average, due to malnutrition. Minor infections were rampant as people lacked the strength to fight them off. One author describes malnutrition in Paris as leading to skin drying out, cracking and even developing boils due to vitamin deficiencies.<sup>64</sup> In 1942 the mortality rate in Paris was 42% higher than between 1932-38.<sup>65</sup> These changes could not fail to have a psychological impact and left many citizens numb. It can be argued that it created a preoccupation with day-to-day survival that paralyzed, or at least delayed, the development of an effective resistance movement.

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<sup>58</sup> Drouot, *Notes d'un Dijonnais*, 390.

<sup>59</sup> Ousby, *Occupation*, 120.

<sup>60</sup> Drouot, *Notes d'un Dijonnais*, 173.

<sup>61</sup> Ousby, *Occupation*, 120.

<sup>62</sup> Taylor, *The Black Market*, 162.

<sup>63</sup> Fabre-Luce, *Journal de la France*, 411.

<sup>64</sup> Ousby, *Occupation*, 125.

<sup>65</sup> Ousby, *Occupation*, 124.

According to historian Ian Ousby, “In retrospect this would seem, to many of those who did manage to survive, the real humiliation of being occupied: they had thought of themselves and their stomachs when they should have been thinking of France.”<sup>66</sup> This statement is supported both by Ousby’s fellow historians who point to a preoccupation with finding the next meal as characteristic of the occupation, as well as contemporary journals, which all share a remarkable preoccupation with availability and costs of food.<sup>67</sup>

A discussion of food and the changing market dominates both Alfred Fabre-Luce and Henri Drouot’s journals. Fabre-Luce pinpoints the fall of 1940 as the first alarm, when unfamiliar foods began entering the market. Alfalfa, traditionally used as horse feed, entered the human diet as well.<sup>68</sup> By mid 1941, he likens food to El Dorado: rare and highly sought after.<sup>69</sup> With his journalist’s eye, Fabre-Luce was able to discern the issues of class exposed by shortages. The first reaction the French have to rationing, he notes, was to simply use more capital to obtain what they wanted. Those with money, then, still had access to almost everything, through some means or another.<sup>70</sup> He also emphasizes the reciprocity that grew from shortages and the black market – those looking for tobacco, for example, would bring a chicken with them. To get something, you first had to have something.<sup>71</sup>

The beginning of the occupation in Dijon, writes Drouot, was marked by a supply crisis, when peasants refused to send their goods to market at the new German imposed

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<sup>66</sup> Ousby, *Occupation*, 125.

<sup>67</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 215.

<sup>68</sup> Fabre-Luce, *Journal de la France*, 412.

<sup>69</sup> Fabre-Luce, *Journal de la France*, 414.

<sup>70</sup> Fabre-Luce, *Journal de la France*, 410.

<sup>71</sup> Fabre-Luce, *Journal de la France*, 415.



prices.<sup>72</sup> Drouot is particularly assiduous in monitoring the market, including a discussion of prices, availabilities and rumors. One such rumor alleged that sending potatoes to Paris, presumably in the popular *colis familiaux*, was illegal and could result in a fine of 2000 francs.<sup>73</sup> Another rumor, that requisitioned supplies were feeding the entire Nazi army, particularly plagued the *ravitaillement*, to the point that the Germans felt compelled to issue several newspaper articles assuring the population of the contrary.<sup>74</sup> As of October 1940, no lack of food yet beleaguered life in Dijon, but within a few short months there was a constant lack of milk and almost no meat.<sup>75</sup> On February 27 Drouot notes that clothing stores throughout the city had closed because they simply had nothing left to sell. The next day he reports that the departments prefects had ordered the *pâtisseries* to close – lavish pastries used valuable supplies of necessities such as flour and butter, and were henceforth available only to Germans and select collaborators.<sup>76</sup>

By spring of 1941, Drouot describes a veritable “*crise de ravitaillement*.”<sup>77</sup> A kilo of butter had reached 42 francs in Dijon, and by May no eggs, potatoes or butter were available at the market. Drouot provides a good illustration of changes in ration portions over time – in April 1941 adults were allotted 50 grams of beef per person over a week long period. By June it had risen to 80 grams a week.<sup>78</sup> Rations were in constant flux, subject to an economy under siege, and could rise or fall at any time. Drouot says

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<sup>72</sup> Drouot, *Notes d'un Dijonnais*, 4.

<sup>73</sup> Drouot, *Notes d'un Dijonnais*, 15.

<sup>74</sup> Drouot, *Notes d'un Dijonnais*, 16.

<sup>75</sup> Drouot, *Notes d'un Dijonnais*, 18, 78.

<sup>76</sup> Drouot, *Notes d'un Dijonnais*, 115.

<sup>77</sup> Drouot, *Notes d'un Dijonnais*, 173.

<sup>78</sup> Drouot, *Notes d'un Dijonnais*, 178, 202.

that it would be an exaggeration to say anyone in Dijon was dying of hunger; rather, he notes sardonically, people are hurried to their deaths by it.<sup>79</sup>

City dwellers like Drouot or Fabre-Luce were subjected to endless queuing and waiting under the occupation. Ration card in hand, they could wait for hours on end, for only paltry supplies. Priority cards aggravated this situation, allowing those who possessed them to bypass the odious queues, often leaving nothing remaining in their wake.<sup>80</sup> Professional queuers even developed, allowing those with means the luxury of having someone else do their waiting for them. Besides obtaining goods, queues served other important functions. They provided a social and political forum for those deprived of their political power under the occupation government. Police were well aware of the potential of any queue to devolve into a demonstration or riot, in particular when goods ran out of stock, as they frequently did. They also provided a conduit for information and misinformation. The phrase “*on dit*,” meaning “they say,” acquired a cachet and reflects the importance of this means of spreading knowledge, especially as newspapers came under the control of the German censors.<sup>81</sup> No one was spared rationing, so queues brought all facets of urban society into contact and facilitated their trading information and rumors in long wait times with little else to do, proving socially useful to a disenfranchised population.

If price control and rationing had failed, wage control proved much more successful. While prices continued to climb, wages remained stagnant. Between 1939

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<sup>79</sup> Drouot, *Notes d'un Dijonnais*, 429.

<sup>80</sup> Drouot, *Notes d'un Dijonnais*, 71.

<sup>81</sup> Drouot, *Notes d'un Dijonnais*, 99, 3.

and 1943, real wages fell by 37%.<sup>82</sup> Prices were increasing an average of 17% a year next to wages that hadn't risen since 1940.<sup>83</sup> This compounded the sufferings of a population already under significant economic stress, at the mercy of widespread shortages. Eventually about 2/3 of the population could not afford to buy the minimum ration diet (1400 calories a day) due to a combination of stagnated wages and steadily increasing prices.<sup>84</sup> Aggravating this, the franc had been substantially devalued under German stewardship. 20 million marks were equivalent in value to 400 million francs.<sup>85</sup>

### Collaboration

Under the occupation, French and German industry became intertwined and interdependent. 7000 French firms were taking German orders, both civilian and military, in 1941. By 1944 that number had doubled.<sup>86</sup> Ironically, it was German demand that quite literally resuscitated French industry, giving it a much needed second lease on life. 70-90% of orders taken by French firms during the war years came from Germany.<sup>87</sup> The Renault Company is an excellent example of this new partnership. Owned by Frenchman Louis Renault, prior to the war the company had been among the leading automobile manufacturers in France. Louis Renault seems to have understood

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<sup>82</sup> Philippe Burrin, *France Under the Germans: Collaboration and Compromise* (New York: New, 1996) 186.

<sup>83</sup> Taylor, *The Black Market*, 154.

<sup>84</sup> Taylor, *The Black Market*, 154.

<sup>85</sup> Edmond Dumeril, *Journal d'un Honnête Homme Pendant l'Occupation juin 1940-août 1944* (Haute-Savoie: L'Albaron, 1990) 65.

<sup>86</sup> Burrin, *France Under the Germans*, 245.

<sup>87</sup> Gildea, *Marianne in Chains*, 42.

quickly which way the wind was blowing – in July 1940, within a month of the armistice, he had applied for permission to build for the German air force.<sup>88</sup>

Since France was technically neutral, the idea of making war machines to be used against France's former allies was disconcerting. Provisions were made, therefore, so that while French companies produced the bulk of a tank, submarine, or warplane, they did not outfit them with any destructive weaponry.<sup>89</sup> Obviously this did nothing to alter the deadly nature of these products since any missing weapons were simply added later in production, nor does it lessen France's instrumental role in equipping the German war machine – by 1944 French factories were producing as many as 800 planes a month.<sup>90</sup> Nevertheless, it is revealing as to a general hesitancy among the French to enable the German army, in spite of state endorsed collaboration.

Workers employed in factories like Renault present an interesting dilemma in terms of collaboration. It goes without saying that, lacking the cooperation of these workers, economic collaboration would have failed. Factory employees, and indeed, even captains of industry like Louis Renault himself, viewed their economic partnership with the Germans as circumstantially necessary and politically neutral.<sup>91</sup> Particularly in the beginning of the war, historian Werner Rings identifies a “general tendency and readiness of the inhabitants of occupied territories to compromise with the enemy for as long as humanly possible.”<sup>92</sup> This did not, however, mean that workers greeted their new

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<sup>88</sup> Werner Rings, *Life With the Enemy: Collaboration and Compromise in Hitler's Europe 1939-1945* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1982) 77.

<sup>89</sup> Rings, *Life With the Enemy*, 77.

<sup>90</sup> Rings, *Life With the Enemy*, 76.

<sup>91</sup> Rings, *Life With the Enemy*, 80.

<sup>92</sup> Rings, *Life With the Enemy*, 81.

partnership with enthusiasm: Rings concludes, “mute detestation and mute collaboration were quite compatible” and, indeed, persisted throughout Occupied France.<sup>93</sup>

Economic collaboration is inseparable from the urban experience of occupation. French industry was concentrated in the north, which became the Occupied Zone.<sup>94</sup> The majority of these were concentrated in northern cities – Renault, for example, was in Boulogne-Billancourt, a suburb to the west of Paris.

The Germans held significant power over French industry. According to Henri Drouot, they had forced 1500 factories to close down by June 1942, particularly in the region around Paris (which, as mentioned above, held the greatest concentration of industry in France).<sup>95</sup> These factories – predominantly paper mills, and ceramic, fabric and furniture plants – distracted from the war effort and diverted much needed resources, both in raw materials and in manpower.

Perhaps the most famous, or rather infamous, examples of collaboration, though, were not economic at all. Rather, they were the relationships that developed between German soldiers and French women. This begs the question: Can such interpersonal relationships be interpreted as collaboration? Whether or not we choose to in hindsight, contemporaries certainly answered yes. Women who consorted with Germans met harsh reprisals in the wake of Liberation – their heads were shaved as a public reminder of their shame, with them as long as it took their hair to grow out.<sup>96</sup>

It is impossible to determine how many French women entered into romantic or sexual relationships with German soldiers. Even at the height of German power, the

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<sup>93</sup> Rings, *Life With the Enemy*, 85.

<sup>94</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 102.

<sup>95</sup> Drouot, *Notes d'un Dijonnais*, 479.

<sup>96</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 174.

majority of these relationships were conducted clandestinely. Although relationships sprung up in all geographical areas, they were at their most prevalent in urban areas where the population of German soldiers were highest. In 1940, for example, Paris was host to some 40,000 Germans, forty percent of the entire German presence.<sup>97</sup> Other urban centers, though less concentrated than Paris, also had high populations of Germans. Urban areas also offered degree of secrecy for the women, as even during the war at the height of German power such relations were frowned upon. The natural anonymity of urban life provided an aid.

It is revealing to examine the interpersonal relationships between German soldiers and French women through an economic lens. A large majority of women who found themselves in compromising positions with occupying soldiers belonged to lower economic orders. It was common for them to work in cafés or hotels frequented by Germans, thus putting them in close contact with soldiers and facilitating any interactions. Author Simone de Beauvoir kept a journal documenting her life in Occupied Paris. She recounts seeing a veritable throng of “tarty” girls gathered around Germans in the cafés.<sup>98</sup>

### Resistance

Urban centers were the initial birthplace of the resistance, although as the war progressed it became an increasingly rural movement.<sup>99</sup> Prior to 1942, though, resistance within France was primarily northern and urban – centered in cities like Paris or Tours. Urban resistance pre-1942 had not yet acquired a large degree of organization and instead

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<sup>97</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 109.

<sup>98</sup> Simone de Beauvoir, “War Journal,” *Defeat and Beyond: An Anthology of French Wartime Writing 1940-45* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970) 154.

<sup>99</sup> Ousby, *Occupation*, 254.

was largely limited to isolated incidents. Cutting cables was a particularly common act of sabotage.<sup>100</sup> These cables facilitated the smooth functioning of the German military machine. Graffiti was also prevalent – the words “*A bas le gouvernement de Vichy*” appeared as early as 1940 in Dijon, scrawled across a wall near a public square.<sup>101</sup> As the war progressed “V” for *victoire* began appearing throughout Dijon, as well as in other cities.<sup>102</sup> The victory it called for was Allied, not German. Clearly neither act of vandalism was particularly threatening to the German soldiers – communication cables were quickly replaced and graffitied phrases posed no real danger – but their importance lay in their symbolism. Both declared that the French, though temporarily beaten, were not yet defeated. Germans met these actions with collective fines and occasionally with violent reprisals, yet somehow their symbolic potency was not diminished.<sup>103</sup>

Historian Robert Gildea conducted a study of resistance, reprisals, and their effects on local populations. One of his primary case studies took place in Nantes in October 1941. Lieutenant-Colonial Holtz, the Feldkommandant of Nantes and the Loire-Inferieure, was assassinated.<sup>104</sup> Far from the enthusiasm one might expect, the Nantais greeted the assassination with horror. Holtz had been a popular figure, liked and trusted by the local populace. Furthermore, Holtz had been a known entity. Who would Berlin replace him with? The fear of reprisals was very real and quickly substantiated: 48 hostages were executed immediately as an incentive for those with information regarding

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<sup>100</sup> Gildea, *Marianne in Chains*, 25.

<sup>101</sup> Drouot, *Notes d'un Dijonnais*, 14 – meaning “down with the Vichy government.”

<sup>102</sup> Drouot, *Notes d'un Dijonnais*, 152.

<sup>103</sup> Gildea, *Marianne in Chains*, 25.

<sup>104</sup> Robert Gildea, *Resistance, Reprisals and Community in Occupied France*, Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 6<sup>th</sup> Series, Vol. 13 (London: Royal Historical Society, 2003) 164.

the assassination to come forward. It was only by the intervention of Otto von Stulpnagel, France's military governor, that 50 additional hostages scheduled to be executed were saved.<sup>105</sup> Far from rallying Nantes to the cause of Resistance, this event repelled the city from it. Efforts at collaboration were intensified in an attempt to repair the damages done by the assassination.<sup>106</sup> Following Liberation, General Charles de Gaulle delayed visiting Nantes and endorsing its new government until January of 1945, months after he had visited neighboring Angers and given them his support.<sup>107</sup> He had not forgiven the city its behavior after the hostage crisis. The case of the Nantes assassination is extremely important. It reveals that, in spite of mounting Franco-German tensions and the prevalence of symbolic cable cutting and graffiti, resistance was not universally popular, even in areas under the full weight of to the occupation.

#### Social Conditions

Anarchy and lack of societal structure facilitated crime during the occupation. The lines between police and criminals increasingly blurred in the face of the black market. Frequently, law enforcement turned a blind eye to black market activity, and even participated in it.<sup>108</sup> As one law enforcement officer put it, "*Je fermerai les yeux sur vos petits trafics. En compensation, soyez raisonnables: approvisionne la marche.*"<sup>109</sup> Jurisdiction also became increasingly problematic. Wanting to prove their abilities and gain autonomy, French police forces often stepped in: "In the end the French police and administration, imagining that they were acting independently, in fact simply did the dirty

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<sup>105</sup> Gildea, *Resistance, Reprisals and Community*, 166.

<sup>106</sup> Gildea, *Resistance, Reprisals and Community*, 182.

<sup>107</sup> Gildea, *Marianne in Chains*, 337.

<sup>108</sup> Fabre-Luce, *Journal de la France*, 418.

<sup>109</sup> Fabre-Luce, *Journal de la France*, 418. Meaning, roughly, "I will close my eyes to your trafficking. In return, be reasonable: supply the market."



work of the SS and then found matters taken out of their hands.<sup>110</sup> It was French forces, not German, who were responsible for rounding up Parisian Jews in July 1942 and placing them in the *Vélodrome d'Hiver*, a bicycling center outside Paris, to await their fate in collective misery that a modern observer might compare to the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.<sup>111</sup>

*Faux policiers*, literally meaning fake policemen, capitalized on the prevailing atmosphere of chaos. Impersonating law enforcement, criminals would extort bribes, steal and menace the population. This practice depended on anonymity and could flourish in big cities, Paris in particular. Between 1941 and 1945, over 800 thefts by *faux policiers* were reported in the metropolis.<sup>112</sup>

A list of forbidden behavior dominated the lives of France's urbanites. Exhibiting hostility to Germans was prohibited, as was offering aid to former French soldiers, or to anyone attempting to cross into the Free Zone. Any exposure to foreign propaganda was strictly banned, whether via radio (keeping radio transmitters was criminalized) or via communication with any country unfriendly to the Reich. The possession of hidden weapons was, understandably, forbidden, but so too were less obvious acts of subversion, like taking photographs outdoors, assembling without express permission, or displaying flags.<sup>113</sup> It is no surprise that the German *verboten* was quick to enter the French lexicon.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Gildea, *Marianne in Chains*, 255.

<sup>111</sup> Allan Mitchell, *Nazi Paris* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008) 90.

<sup>112</sup> Vinen *The Unfree French*, 239.

<sup>113</sup> Ousby, *Occupation*, 113.

<sup>114</sup> Irene Nemirovsky, *Suite Française* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006) 198.

One of the most significant, if also the most obvious, results of living in an urban area during the occupation was the physical presence of Germans. The army took over large civilian buildings like schoolhouses and seminaries to create administrative centers.<sup>115</sup> Many organizations ceased functioning, including the University of Dijon, where Drouot himself held a position on the *faculté des lettres*.<sup>116</sup> Their pressure on civilians was most severe and most personal when it came to billeting soldiers with French families. This practice drew the attention of many contemporaries including Irene Nemirovsky and Jean Bruller, both of whom featured it as a key element in their fictionalized versions of occupation.<sup>117</sup> Billeting was not as widespread as either novel would suggest – neither Drouot nor Fabre-Luce make any mention of it – but their shared emphasis on it reflects its intrusiveness. It confronted French citizens with a daily reminder of their dire circumstances.

Billeting represented perhaps the most extreme instance of Franco-German interactions. The majority of these interactions, by contrast, took place outside the domestic sphere. Work brought together the largest numbers of French and Germans, particularly in construction: the ports and aerodromes built throughout the Occupied Zone providing the most notable example of this.<sup>118</sup> The French characterize the initial German presence as “unnatural.”<sup>119</sup> This fits with our modern perspective, which tends to squirm at images of Nazis marching down the Champs Elysees, which seem almost

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<sup>115</sup> Drouot, *Notes d'un Dijonnais*, 6.

<sup>116</sup> Drouot, *Notes d'un Dijonnais*, 33.

<sup>117</sup> Nemirovsky, *Suite Française* & Jean Bruller *Le Silence de la Mer* (New York: The Macmillan Co, 1944).

<sup>118</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 128.

<sup>119</sup> Ousby, *Occupation*, 161.

sacrilegious in their incongruity. As the war progressed, though, the German presence became habitual, virtually unnoticeable and quite unremarkable in its familiarity.<sup>120</sup>

Jean Guehenno, a renowned French writer of the war period, wrote an essay in 1943 entitled *To the German I Pass in the Street* that characterizes the ambivalence with which he and his compatriots saw the German presence. He advises his fellow Frenchmen to feign ignorance and blindness around their occupiers, pointedly ignoring them. The object, he says, is to deny them “the warmth of a glance exchanged.”<sup>121</sup> He does, however, concede the ambiguity of the situation – amongst the Germans, there are all kinds of people, he recognizes, just as there are amongst the French. He notices one German soldier in particular, an old man whom he passes virtually everyday, and sees his loneliness and humanity.<sup>122</sup> Guehenno’s analysis reflects the difficult reality he shared with his contemporaries. On the one hand, the Germans could be dissolute – in one instance in Dijon, Drouot describes them peeing on a wall – but the French also recognized their occupiers as humans.<sup>123</sup> Nonetheless, a silent, tacit agreement existed between the French, to behave as if the occupier, and even the war itself, simply did not exist.<sup>124</sup>

Electricity failure has been cited as “an unsung story of the German Occupation” and was an extremely important aspect of social conditions, particularly in urban areas.<sup>125</sup> The uncertainty of electricity plagued the population and is mentioned by several

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<sup>120</sup> Ousby, *Occupation*, 170.

<sup>121</sup> Jean Guehenno, “To the German I Pass in the Street,” *Defeat and Beyond: An Anthology of French Wartime Writing 1940-45* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970) 190.

<sup>122</sup> Guehenno, “To the German I Pass in the Street,” 192.

<sup>123</sup> Drouot, *Notes d’un Dijonnais*, 77 & Nemirovsky, *Suite Française*, 213.

<sup>124</sup> Bruller, *La Silence de la Mer*, 5.

<sup>125</sup> Gildea, *Marianne in Chains*, 299.

contemporaries, including Fabre-Luce. He claims that it would be better to go without electricity entirely than wait anxiously for it to run out. Electricity was not the only uncertainty he cited – running water and gas were also only sporadically available.<sup>126</sup>

In fact, the Germans went out of their way to behave among the French. Though attempts to pacify the French populace may certainly have had sinister undertones, they nonetheless drastically reduced the harshness of occupation. Germans specifically decided not to treat France like another Poland.<sup>127</sup> According to Ousby, “Germans viewed France with a respect they did not feel for Poland or Czechoslovakia or Yugoslavia.”<sup>128</sup> Anticipating the atrocities that had accompanied the First World War, French citizens were initially shocked by the German’s behavior.<sup>129</sup> The word used most often to describe it is “correct” and it appears in multiple sources. German soldiers in France, in particular before 1942, behaved more like tourists than like a conquering army.<sup>130</sup> They respected French culture and saw their time there as a veritable culinary vacation. It was a common sight in Dijon to see the resident Germans eating steak in restaurants while the majority of the local population went without.<sup>131</sup> In Paris especially, soldiers on leave from other parts of the Occupied Zone would see the sights and spend money freely.

Perhaps one of the most striking features of urban occupation though is the continuity in city life. Simone de Beauvoir’s *War Journal* stands testament to this. She recounts returning to her “usual table” at Le Dôme, where she can see placards

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<sup>126</sup> Fabre-Luce, *Journal de la France*, 414.

<sup>127</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 23.

<sup>128</sup> Ousby, *Occupation*, 56.

<sup>129</sup> Burrin, *France Under the Germans*, 179.

<sup>130</sup> Spotts, *The Shameful Peace*, 18.

<sup>131</sup> Drouot, *Notes d’un Dijonnais*, 71.

advertising that day's *plat du jour*.<sup>132</sup> Loneliness and hunger were everywhere, but so too were signs of life and prosperity. In fact, some historians have cited the "superficial normality of wartime Paris" as one of the greatest shocks of the occupation.<sup>133</sup> Unlike other occupied territories, France preserved a large degree of autonomy, visible in its overall normalness: "Food was short, to be sure, but something could always be rustled up at dinner parties attended by a young aesthete with the right connections."<sup>134</sup> At the end of the day, then, Paris was still Paris.

The enduring, and, indeed, growing, popularity of cinema under the occupation attests to this overlay of normality. Movie going reached new heights of popularity during occupation. Parisian cinemas saw record ticket sales during the war.<sup>135</sup> To a beleaguered population, movies provided a form of escapism, an alternative to the harsh realities of daily life.

### Conclusion

Yet even given certain continuities or any available escapism, urban life during German Occupation was a unique event, almost impossible to capture: "the experience was oddly elusive even at the time and almost impossible to reconstruct faithfully in retrospect."<sup>136</sup> This makes the work of historians even harder, as we are presented with a series of half recollections and pieced together memories. However, it is possible to construct an image of the urban experience of the occupation, given these pieces. The

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<sup>132</sup> De Beauvoir, "War Journal," 152.

<sup>133</sup> Ian Buruma, "Occupied Paris: The Sweet and the Cruel," *The New York Review of Books* (New York: 2009) 28.

<sup>134</sup> Buruma, "Occupied Paris," 26.

<sup>135</sup> Richard Cobb, *French and Germans, Germans and French* (Hanover: Brandeis University, 1983) 81.

<sup>136</sup> Ousby, *Occupation*, 157-8.

sources I have chosen to use – primarily the wartime diaries of Alfred Fabre-Luce and Henri Drouot, with some additions by French authors like Simone de Beauvoir or Jean Guehenno, all supplemented by secondary research and historiography – proved particularly rich. Put together, they present a detailed picture of Occupied France, and identify the key concern of contemporary French: their day-to-day existence. This is born out by the frequency with which food availability and market prices are cited – both pepper the writings of Fabre-Luce and Drouot, as well as appearing throughout de Beauvoir’s journal. Thus we can conclude that, more than anything, urban occupation was characterized by this preoccupation. Historiography confirms this: one French historian writes that “Between 1940 and 1944, the average French citizen spent most of his or her time trying to find something to put in the pot for dinner.”<sup>137</sup> Perhaps this does not present the most honorable or exciting image of cities in wartime France. But it does give us a realistic one. The image of the majority of French was “a *débrouillard*, a survivor, who was neither heroic nor utterly abject, but adapted to difficult circumstances.”<sup>138</sup> Urban life in Occupied France was full of uncertainty – how to deal with the Germans one was forced to encounter throughout the day; what to do should the electricity supply run out, as it almost invariably did; whether or not to take an ideological stance, siding with the collaborators or the resisters; how to stretch a paycheck in a declining and controlled economy; and, most importantly, how to navigate that economy to subsist and live out the war.

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<sup>137</sup> Yves Durand, Dominique Veillon et al., *Collaboration and Resistance: Images of Life in Vichy 1940-1944* (New York: Harry N. Abrams Inc, 2000) 107.

<sup>138</sup> Buruma, “Occupied Paris,” 28.

## Ch 2. Occupation in the Countryside

### Introduction

Historiography has tended to deemphasize the effects of the German occupation on the French countryside. While Paris and other cities may have been ravaged by hunger, the countryside allegedly emerged unscathed. Not merely unscathed, in fact, but wealthier and more powerful for having living through the war.<sup>139</sup> One official in the Eure department in Haute-Normandie said in 1942 that “The rural part of the population, which scarcity affects little as far as farmers are concerned and which earns more money than ever, does not seem unhappy with its fate.”<sup>140</sup> Irene Nemirovsky on the other hand, a French author whose own experience in *l'exode* and under Vichy's anti-Semitic laws dictated much of her writing, wrote “In the countryside nothing changed, everyone just waited. They waited for the war to end, for the blockade to be lifted, for the prisoners to come home, for the end of winter.”<sup>141</sup>

So what then was the experience of the average *paysan* and small town dweller?<sup>142</sup> Was the war and subsequent occupation an unlooked for boon for France's ailing countryside? Did France's small towns and open country live through the occupation with little involvement and less change? The answer is both, and neither. Undeniably, some farmers prospered through the new black market and economic system. Even in polycultural areas, however, hardship was just as common as affluence. Playing the role of supplier was a dangerous game and, if detected, ran the risk of severe

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<sup>139</sup> Richard Vinen, *The Unfree French* (New Haven: Yale University, 2006) 227.

<sup>140</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 227.

<sup>141</sup> Irene Nemirovsky, *Suite Française* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006) 187.

<sup>142</sup> Meaning peasant.

penalties.<sup>143</sup> Small towns and villages faced economic privations and shortages of their own. The new laws of economics came with social changes that ranged from the presence (or absence) of German soldiers to complex questions of loyalty and survival.

The occupation was more than the revenge of the countryside, of *les paysans triomphant*.<sup>144</sup> It was a new world to be navigated – a task some took to more than others – but changes in the countryside were real and palpable, if also occasionally dulled and distant. The best way to understand the new rhythms of rural life is through the lives of those that felt them. Marie-Louise Osmont kept a diary throughout the war, while living in her chateau on the Normandy coast, three miles from Sword Beach, one of the eventual landing sites of the Allied forces during the D Day invasions in June 1944.<sup>145</sup>

Osmont was a wealthy woman, thanks to her marriage to Dr. Osmont, whom she met while volunteering for the Red Cross during the First World War. The doctor died shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War, leaving Marie-Louise isolated in Château Périers, the Osmont family seat in Périers, Normandy, a town of some 250 people.<sup>146</sup> By virtue of wealth and geography, Marie Louise Osmont's wartime experience was truly extraordinary, including witnessing first hand the Allied and German fighting that followed D Day. Her diary is rich with everyday information, including her interactions with and opinions of German soldiers quartered with her, and brief discussions of shortages, market availability, as well as a revealing commentary of

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<sup>143</sup> Lynne Taylor, *The Black Market in Occupied Northern France, 1940-4*, Contemporary European History Vol. 6 (Cambridge: Cambridge University, July 1997) 156.

<sup>144</sup> Alfred Fabre-Luce, *Journal de la France 1939-1944* (Paris: Fayard, 1969) 416. Meaning the triumphant peasants.

<sup>145</sup> Marie-Louise Osmont, *The Normandy Diary of Marie-Louise Osmont* (New York: Random House, 1994).

<sup>146</sup> Osmont, *The Normandy Diary*, v.



social conditions. She provides a glimpse into France's social stratification. Though it predates the war by centuries, it persists during the years of occupation and greatly colors personal experiences and opinions. Unwittingly, Osmont offers a window into this world and its innate prejudices, both through her own aristocratic distance, and in discussion of her domestic servants, who may have lived in the same place as her during the war, but whose experiences differed radically.

Some 225 kilometers south and west of Périers, depending on the route, lies St. Brieuc, Brittany. Though St. Brieuc was a regionally important market town, its population in 1940 was small, roughly 40,000 – it can thus still be counted outside urban life and equated with the countryside that surrounded it.<sup>147</sup> From 1899 to 1980, it was home to Louis Guilloux, a renowned French author. Between 1921 and 1974, Guilloux kept a journal recounting his daily life and experiences called the *Carnets*.<sup>148</sup> Since Guilloux was a cultural figure of some repute, his experience may have differed from that of his fellow Bretons. Bearing this in mind, he is still an extremely valuable source. He was an excellent observer and, perhaps significantly, focused not solely on the war or the marketplace, but mainly his own personal life, reflecting a persistent normalcy not apparent in Osmont's experiences further down the coast, closer to the war's immediate impact.

The two accounts, taken together, present very different pictures of the rural civilian's life under the occupation. Their distinct focuses and experiences are revealing – what begins to emerge are experiences dictated by region. The resistance movement,

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<sup>147</sup> For comparison, St Brieuc was roughly equivalent to the current population of Groton, CT. In 1940 Paris, by contrast, was home to some 3.5 million souls

<sup>148</sup> Louis Guilloux, *Carnets 1921-1944* (Paris: Gallimard, 1982).

temptation to collaborate, requisitioning and black marketeering – these were omnipresent and, indeed, virtually inescapable. But in France’s countryside, it was geography that determined their degree.

### Economic Conditions

The countryside was the most important part of the complex economic web, both legal and not, that developed under German occupation. While cities demanded, the countryside supplied. It was this role that has caused some to see the rise of the countryside during the occupation. Unlike Haussmanian or Third Republic France, Vichy favored and actively promoted rural areas, as France’s cultural and moral backbone.<sup>149</sup> This gave *paysans* moral high ground (at least theoretically), but control over production and distribution gave them real power. The survival of France’s agricultural sector was crucial to France as a whole surviving the war. However, rural France not only produced essential supplies badly needed by their urban counterparts, but also added its own strain on these supplies.

By virtue of the basic nature of economic production, the countryside had a natural and complete monopoly in agricultural production. Over time, this monopoly became increasingly problematic. Mounting difficulties in transportation disrupted preexisting trade patterns. Occasionally this resulted in trade being conducted erratically, but it could also cause a trade route to disappear entirely. The availability of working trucks and automobiles was greatly affected by the occupation.<sup>150</sup> Petrol was highly prized by the German army and requisitioned frequently, as well as occasionally cars

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<sup>149</sup> John F. Sweets, *Choices in Vichy France* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1994) 43.

<sup>150</sup> Henri Drouot, *Notes d’un Dijonnais Pendant l’Occupation Allemande 1940-44* (Dijon: Editions Universitaires de Dijon: 1998) 173.

themselves. With the disturbance of trade patterns and ordinary urban-rural exchanges, products tended to move less, becoming increasingly fixed to their points of production. Regionalism reigned and effected trade patterns just as much as it did mentalities – loyalties shrank from nation to region or even town.<sup>151</sup> This gave much of the economic power, particularly in terms of agriculture, to the countryside. Especially when France faced blockade and trade restrictions, proximity to the source of production became crucially important.

Yet even with proximity, the availability and pricing of different foodstuffs varied regionally. Single crop regions, for example, lacking self-sufficiency, were more susceptible to the rise and fall of government-imposed prices and the frequently mercenary nature of the black market.<sup>152</sup> Multi-crop regions, by nature more easily self-reliant, were at a comparative advantage. It was no coincidence that the Germans occupied precisely those territories, the north and the west, which were the most fertile and the most diverse in their products.<sup>153</sup> The Free Zone, southern France, specialized in non-essential products such as wine and olives. Products not immediately available could easily become prohibitively expensive in such environments.

One commonality, which seems to have spanned regions and perhaps even bridged some of the gaps in the pervasive localism, was the black market. While other economic sectors faltered or failed entirely, it positively flourished during the occupation. For a producer, not participating in the black market would almost invariably result in a net loss. Purchasing a cow, for example, would cost an estimated 9000 francs. The price

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<sup>151</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 89.

<sup>152</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 228.

<sup>153</sup> Michel Cedepe, *Agriculture et Alimentation en France Durant la I<sup>e</sup> Guerre Mondiale* (Paris: Genin, 1961) 69-70.

fixed for resale by the French authorities was only 7000 francs.<sup>154</sup> The initial loss of 2000 francs is only the beginning, as the cost of keeping and feeding the cow for months could be equally excessive. Piglets, too, lost nearly half their value in the official market.<sup>155</sup> Government regulated prices could not keep pace with the inflated values of goods. Selling through the *marche amical* or the black market presented a much more profitable option.<sup>156</sup>

The best way of doing this was often by selling direct. If customers came directly to a farm, suppliers were able to share the risks of marketeering with their buyers. It was by far the most effective way of circumnavigating the authorities, as *colis familiaux* could easily be confiscated in transit.<sup>157</sup> Urbanites throughout France began taking regional trains into the countryside to find supplies and prices more favorable than those in the cities. These trains took the names of popular vegetables and became known as *trains des haricots*, *trains des pommes de terre*, etc.<sup>158</sup>

From the suppliers perspective, selling directly and avoiding as much of the requisition as possible makes a great deal of sense. Both Vichy and German authorities imposed fixed prices, which were invariably much lower than the market value of any given product. Indeed, the disparity between the black market value of a product and its fixed price could, and often did, differ radically. In 1943, for example, the government

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<sup>154</sup> Taylor, *The Black Market*, 160.

<sup>155</sup> Taylor, *The Black Market*, 160.

<sup>156</sup> *Marche amical* literally means friendly market and is commonly used to refer to illegal exchanges that took place on small scales, for example among extended families. It is discussed at greater length in chapter 1.

<sup>157</sup> *Colis familiaux*, discussed in chapter 1, was the name for packages of food sent to cities, most often to relatives or friends.

<sup>158</sup> Ian Ousby, *Occupation – The Ordeal of France 1940-1944* (New York: St. Martin's, 1998) 127. Meaning bean train, potato train.

set cost of a dozen eggs was 24 francs, while on the *marche amical* the price was 53 francs, and on the black market it was 76, three times the regulated price. In the same year, the price of rabbit ranged from 26 francs officially, to 39 through the *marche amical* and 52 francs on the black market.<sup>159</sup> Through the extralegal channels available through the black market and the *marche amical*, the supplier regained primacy. The majority of risks ran with the supplier, from acquiring a product (in particular if that product passed through several hands before reaching its final destination – hence why selling direct was so popular) to ensuring that transactions passed unnoticed by authorities.<sup>160</sup> When black marketeering was discovered, it was met with heavy fines and occasional internment.<sup>161</sup>

The French perspective on profiteering was complex and at times contradictory. If done in moderation, the French overall approved the process. From an economic standpoint, they recognized its utility and necessity. Without black marketers willing to take large risks to turn a profit, the history of the occupation would be far different, marked by a dramatic increase in scarcity and suffering. Moderation, though, was essential. Anything else was perceived as taking advantage of one's nation and countrymen. "A distinction was... drawn between those who profited excessively from the misery of the compatriots and those who merely tried to make ends meet."<sup>162</sup> "Fair" dealings were of a premium importance. It is an odd twist of fate, and perhaps characteristic of the entire occupation, that "By the terrible logic of the Occupation, the French who went hungry kept most of their anger for the French who ate well."<sup>163</sup> This

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<sup>159</sup> Cepede, *Agriculture et Alimentation*, 334.

<sup>160</sup> Taylor, *The Black Market*, 161.

<sup>161</sup> Taylor, *The Black Market*, 156, 171.

<sup>162</sup> Taylor, *The Black Market*, 172.

<sup>163</sup> Ousby, *Occupation*, 138.

notion of wrongly diverted anger runs throughout literature documenting the occupation. The suggestion, though it remains largely implicit, is that had that anger been directed at the German occupiers as its primary target, France could have presented a stronger defensive front. This theory suggests national strength and possibility frustrated by the weaker sides of human nature, reveling in shared suffering and ignoring the larger shared experience of occupation.

Occasionally, albeit rarely, tension resulting from the economic disparities and the unequal distribution of goods (both real and perceived) erupted into violence.<sup>164</sup> This occurred most frequently when city dwellers took the *train des légumes* into rural areas, to tap into rumored stores of supplies. Sometimes farmers refused to trade with these foragers, most often because they already had economic relationships in place. Urbanites imagined farmers and their fellow *paysans* to be in possession of an enormous wealth of supplies.<sup>165</sup> This perceived prosperity stood in stark contrast to the scarcity that so often plagued France's cities during the occupation and aggravated nerves already strained by shortages.

Violence is a radical, and rare, example of the tension that arose between the city and the countryside under the occupation. More often, it manifested itself in other ways, most persistently a simmering overlay of distrust and suspicion that pervaded the entire occupation.<sup>166</sup> In fact, this mutual suspicion predates World War Two by centuries. It was evident in the Great Fear of 1789, when each side imagined their imminent peril at the hands of the other. It was in place even before this in the eighteenth century, when

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<sup>164</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 231.

<sup>165</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 232.

<sup>166</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 231.

peasants freshly emigrated into Paris were the first ones that civil authorities turned on in times of trouble.<sup>167</sup> During the occupation, city dwellers assumed that farmers and *paysans* were hoarding supplies and purposefully keeping them off the market.<sup>168</sup> There is some truth to this allegation, as farmers held back supplies both for their own use and for the extralegal channels available to them through the black market and the *marche amical*. Not every farmer or producer grew wealthy under the occupation, though. While they may have been able to sell goods at unprecedented prices in the black market, they were subject to these same prices themselves in the costs of production. The price of maintaining farm equipment hiked with inflation. Some farmers certainly made their fortune on the black market during the war years, but just as many were pressed by the same scarcity and uncertainty that plagued French cities.<sup>169</sup>

Neither Guilloux nor Osmont provide extensive discussions of economics under the occupation in general, or of the black market specifically. This omission can be interpreted in several ways. First, it is possible that neither of them ranked it as a very high priority – at least not enough to write about it. This in turn would imply that supplies were, by and large available, even given the effects of the occupation. Second, they may not have participated in the black market, or at least done so very little, although evidence suggests that nearly everyone in France was involved in the black market somehow, so this explanation seems unlikely.<sup>170</sup> Finally, they could have omitted any mention of the black market for the sake of self-preservation. The black market was,

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<sup>167</sup> Arlette Farge & Jacques Revel, *The Vanishing Children of Paris: Rumor and Politics before the French Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1991) 42.

<sup>168</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 227.

<sup>169</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 234.

<sup>170</sup> Taylor, *The Black Market*, 156.

after all, illegal, and writing down one's purchases and interactions, even in a private diary, could prove a dangerous thing.

Reading Guilloux's account of the occupation alone, one would be left with the impression that there was no black market, let alone a vibrant and flourishing one, equally alive in a town like St Brieuc as in a city like Paris. One oblique reference is made in passing, to an acquaintance of Guilloux's selling beef to German soldiers stationed in the town above the market price.<sup>171</sup> Guilloux does not explore the issue any further than this passing aside, implying distance from the market, possibly resulting from his social class and prestige. Though she too addresses the black market very infrequently, Osmont offers a few more mentions. They amount to almost side comments but are tantalizing as to what they reveal. Osmont alludes several times to the fact that her cook at her chateau is a key player in Normandy's black market.<sup>172</sup> His activities cross party lines, as most of what he sold – meat, butter, cognac – went to the resident German soldiers.

Osmont and Guilloux provide illustrations of the effects of rationing and the practicalities of availability. This very omission of the subject strongly suggests that both Brittany and Normandy were well supplied for the bulk of the war. Furthermore, it causes the infrequent suggestions of hunger or shortages to stand out all the more. Osmont's first reference to experiencing hunger occurs late – not until 1943 – but seems to reflect a problem that has been developing for a while. She describes cooking nettles like one would ordinarily cook chopped spinach. It is not so bad, she said, "but without

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<sup>171</sup> Guilloux, *Carnets*, 316.

<sup>172</sup> Osmont, *The Normandy Diary*, 15.



any fat, it's certainly not very nourishing!"<sup>173</sup> Drinking copious amounts of water throughout the day was her preferred method for quieting the grumbling of an underfed stomach.<sup>174</sup> Nettles as a dietary supplement suggest very dire circumstances indeed. Osmont's later diary entries, however, imply that availabilities changed drastically, and her household once more had access to plentiful food. In February of 1944, for example, she describes the kitchen women peeling vegetables for eight hours a day, which seems to suggest that available goods had changed considerably since the days of chopped nettles.<sup>175</sup> Whether the presence of many billeted Germans affected what the Osmont household had access to is a matter of speculation, but it almost certainly did. The Germans quartered in the chateau often brought milk and eggs to the cooks, who would cook it up for them as a supplement to their rations.<sup>176</sup> This implied sharing leads to questions regarding whether supplies were held in common by the Germans and the Osmont household. Did Marie-Louise have equal access to extra milk and eggs, in times of plenty? Whatever the case, the notion of abundance is reemphasized in a entry made in March of the same year, which describes feeding kitchen scraps to the dogs as "there are plenty!"<sup>177</sup> Scraps were so plentiful, in fact, that the dogs were gaining weight – surely this would not have occurred in a kitchen strapped for resources.

Food was not the only good subject to the fortunes of war. Osmont's car, for instance, was requisitioned for use by the German army in April 1944. Osmont tried to prevent them by putting powdered sugar in the gas tank – a rumored quick fix to

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<sup>173</sup> Osmont, *The Normandy Diary*, 6.

<sup>174</sup> Osmont, *The Normandy Diary*, 6.

<sup>175</sup> Osmont, *The Normandy Diary*, 11.

<sup>176</sup> Osmont, *The Normandy Diary*, 32.

<sup>177</sup> Osmont, *The Normandy Diary*, 18.

temporarily disable a car – but the German mechanics managed to thwart her efforts by fixing it and taking it anyways.<sup>178</sup>

For Louis Guilloux miles away from Osmont in St Brieuc, the situation appears to have been quite different. While he makes clear that shortages were felt, they never seem to become as dire as chopped nettles. His analysis reveals instead lesser versions of the same supplies, or perhaps tightening one's belt a notch or two, but nothing extreme. Coffee and tobacco ran short, and Guilloux bemoaned that quality-typing paper was virtually impossible to come by.<sup>179</sup> When the Pentecost procession passed through the streets of St Brieuc in 1941, the habitual candles were absent. The reason for this, Guilloux reported, was twofold – they were forbidden, but impossible to find even if they had been allowed.<sup>180</sup> He complained early on about the quality of bread available – wet bread, he explains, is for dogs, and dry bread is for prisoners.<sup>181</sup> Guilloux was neither and clearly felt himself to be superior to what the market was supplying. Wine and wool were also missed early in the occupation.<sup>182</sup> While neither of these are necessities (at least not in the short term), wine in particular was missed in the French culture. Later on in the occupation, though, the situation seems to have righted itself, or perhaps normalized due simply to having been in place for so long. Wine was once again obtainable, and, indeed, Guilloux seems to find nothing remarkable in its availability.<sup>183</sup> Even coffee returned – in 1944, Guilloux drank some while eating a sandwich at a café,

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<sup>178</sup> Osmont, *The Normandy Diary*, 23.

<sup>179</sup> Guilloux, *Carnets*, 289, 274.

<sup>180</sup> Guilloux, *Carnets*, 269.

<sup>181</sup> Guilloux, *Carnets*, 266.

<sup>182</sup> Guilloux, *Carnets*, 267.

<sup>183</sup> Guilloux, *Carnets*, 363.

“*comme hier*.”<sup>184</sup> His treatment indicates that, though shortages may have been felt in St. Brieuç, they were neither severe nor long lasting.

Guilloux refers to several other shortages. Bicycles, he reports, were requisitioned for the German army, although this seems to have occurred late in the occupation, May of 1944.<sup>185</sup> Coal shortages, unlike other goods, hit the town hard, and eventually reached such a dire point that coal shipments simply stopped arriving.<sup>186</sup> No doubt this material shortage was felt particularly keenly in the wet Breton winters.

Guilloux records the observations of one of his fellow Bretons in his journal, regarding the ravages of the occupation. “The occupation left terrible memories. The country has been ruined. An intendant, employed to collect requisitions from the recalcitrant, has used the infallible means of lodging garrisons with them, who behaved themselves like gangsters.”<sup>187</sup> The economic system of rural France was scarred by the occupation. As this quotation suggests, much of that scarring was self-inflicted.

### Collaboration

Castigation of those with plenty was a very real fear under the occupation. Denunciations were widespread and pervasive. Conducting business with strangers led to a greater risk of being denounced, and thus effectively limited black market circles in their size.<sup>188</sup> But denunciation was more than a fear – it was a weapon.<sup>189</sup> It was a

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<sup>184</sup> Guilloux, *Carnets*, 359. *Comme hier*, meaning like yesterday, implies that by 1944 Guilloux drank coffee regularly and considered it unextraordinary.

<sup>185</sup> Guilloux, *Carnets*, 377.

<sup>186</sup> Guilloux, *Carnets*, 376.

<sup>187</sup> Guilloux, *Carnets*, 278. *L’occupation française laissa des souvenirs terribles. Le pays était ruine. Un intendant...prépose au service des réquisitions, avait employé contre les récalcitrants l’infaillible moyen du logement des garnisaires qui se conduisirent comme des bandits.*

<sup>188</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 225.

weapon, moreover, that was wielded almost exclusively by the French, against the French. “Virtually all the matters that have resulted in French people being condemned by German tribunals were brought to their notice through denunciations made by other French people.”<sup>190</sup>

Hardship bred self-interest, and suspicion and distrust were made manifest through personal attacks, often with the intent of settling old scores or profiting off the anarchic and distrustful times. Together, these factors created a culture mired in misgiving and doubt. “*J’irai le dire a la Kommandantur*” was a common, and feared, threat, which translates to a taunt warning that the speaker will report to the local German authorities.<sup>191</sup> The flood of denunciations received by both French and German authorities is a blight on the French citizens who lived through the occupation. It belies the fervent desire after the war to forget the role the French played in their own occupation. Forgetting, though, is all but impossible, especially given the sheer volume of accusations made. They inundated authorities. In her occupation novel *Suite Française*, one of Irene Nemirovsky’s German officers says, “The first day we arrived...there was a package of anonymous letters waiting for us at Headquarters. People were accusing one another of spreading English and Gaullist propaganda, of hoarding supplies, of being spies. If we’d taken them all seriously, everyone in the region would be in prison.”<sup>192</sup> Very few condemnations, however, made anonymously or not, led to actual convictions – most “upon investigation, were revealed to have

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<sup>189</sup> Robert Gildea, *Marianne in Chains* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2003) 210.

<sup>190</sup> Philippe Burrin, *France Under the Germans: Collaboration and Compromise* (New York: New, 1996) 208.

<sup>191</sup> Ousby, *Occupation*, 146. Translates to, “I’ll go and tell the Germans about it.”

<sup>192</sup> Nemirovsky, *Suite Française*, 313.

originated in personal jealousies or commercial rivalries and seldom led the police to the discovery of serious criminal behavior.”<sup>193</sup>

Denunciations have been attributed primarily to women.<sup>194</sup> Given the large proportion submitted anonymously, this is difficult to verify, but it does follow the logic of life under the occupation. Women were responsible for providing their families with food in ever-shrinking markets. This bred jealousy over possessions, food in particular. Neighborliness could quickly turn to hostility in such a competitive environment. Nobody “want[ed] to seem richer than they were; they feared being denounced. There wasn’t a single household that didn’t hide its provisions...housewives closed their kitchen door at mealtimes so they wouldn’t be betrayed by the smell of lard sizzling in the pot, or the piece of prohibited meat, or the cake made with illegal flour.”<sup>195</sup>

Accusations became a tool; a means of correcting grievances that often encompassed tensions that existed before the war even began. This was a tradition long before World War Two. It can be traced back to at least the French Revolution (and probably before), specifically the Reign of Terror from 1793-1794, when efforts were made to purge royalists and anyone who posed a threat to the floundering Republic.<sup>196</sup> These too had more often been the result of personal vendettas than political realities, and in the ensuing one hundred and fifty years, little had changed. In both instances, *délation* became a form of policing, born of jealousy – stopping one’s neighbors from acquiring

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<sup>193</sup> Sweets, *Choices in Vichy France*, 23.

<sup>194</sup> Richard Cobb, *French and Germans, Germans and French* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993) 105.

<sup>195</sup> Nemirovsky, *Suite Française*, 216.

<sup>196</sup> Simon Schama, *Citizens* (New York: Vintage, 1989) 714.

what one could not.<sup>197</sup> Making a denunciation should not, however, be interpreted as necessarily implying agreement with either the Vichy or the Nazi regime.<sup>198</sup> It was collaboration in a utilitarian sense, rather than an ideological one.

Horizontal collaboration similarly defied ideological identification, and it occurred in the countryside as well as in cities. Marie-Louise Osmont alludes several times to her belief that the women working in the chateau kitchen were untrustworthy and indecent. Though she never makes an explicit accusation, her suspicions are quite clear.<sup>199</sup> It is apparent to even the most casual reader that the women working in the Osmont kitchen were conducting affairs with the German soldiers quartered in the chateau and nearby areas. Osmont's judgment of them is harsh and unequivocal. Furthermore, it is a judgment which seems to have been shared by virtually all of the French, regardless of region or social class. It implies that engaging in such relationships is un-French, a betrayal of the entire nation.

It is interesting, and revealing, to contrast Osmont's reaction to the physical and emotional relationships developing between her kitchen maids and German soldiers, and the economic deals and trades taking place between her cook and, in all likelihood, the very same German soldiers. The former are judged severely and with no attempt at understanding. The latter, meanwhile, is thought of only momentarily, and then pushed aside as Osmont bows to economic necessity. This seems indicative of the predominant opinion throughout France, both during the occupation and reflecting backwards onto it after Liberation. There is a reluctance to recognize the overriding similarities between

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<sup>197</sup> Délation, French for denunciation.

<sup>198</sup> Cobb, *French and Germans*, 105.

<sup>199</sup> Osmont, *The Normandy Diary*, 11.

horizontal collaboration and close economic relations. Both grew out of necessity and were mutually beneficial relationships. Both illustrate the complicated and varying interactions that took place between occupiers and occupied. And yet the one has drawn much less attention, while the other is virtually equivalent to treason.

Perhaps the reason for this disparity is the primary importance of sexuality and gender relations to any culture. The experience of ignominious defeat and occupation precipitated a crisis in French manhood, a nationwide emasculation.<sup>200</sup> This crisis was augmented by the gender disparity that persisted throughout the occupation. Some 1,400,000 Frenchmen had been taken prisoner in 1940 and were held in Germany throughout the war.<sup>201</sup> The dearth of young men was then filled by German soldiers. These soldiers “eagerly anticipated” dalliances with French women during their time there.<sup>202</sup> That the Germans essentially replaced Frenchmen as the sexual partners of French women must have further unmanned and disgraced the French. It also became a way of casting blame – in France’s catastrophic collapse in 1940, loose morals were blamed for the nation’s inability to defend itself and those women who entered into sexual relationships with the Germans made easy scapegoats for Pétainists and Gaullists alike. For the majority of the French, sexual complicity simply crossed a line that economic collaboration did not – it went further in exposing the weaknesses and inadequacies of the national system.

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<sup>200</sup> Luc Capdevila, *The Quest for Masculinity in Defeated France, 1940-1945*, Contemporary European History Vol. 10 (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2001) 424-5.

<sup>201</sup> Fabre-Luce, *Journal de la France*, 408.

<sup>202</sup> Elizabeth Heineman, *Gender, Sexuality and Coming to Terms with the Nazi Past*, Central European History No. 38 (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2005) 49.

## Resistance

By late 1941-1942, resistance became an increasingly rural movement.<sup>203</sup> It moved away from what were initially isolated acts performed by individuals in predominantly urban settings, and into larger, more organized groups working together, and occasionally even with the Resistance forces outside of France, most famously Charles de Gaulle, who was based in London with his Free French forces.

This new means of resisting thrived in rural France, where a tradition of rebellion was already in place. This tradition extended as far back as the Vendee Rebellion during the French Revolution, which pitted peasants and royalists against republicans.<sup>204</sup> Geography also provided a natural advantage. Mountainous and forested regions served as perfect hideaways for small, guerrilla forces.<sup>205</sup> Rebellion could survive much more easily in these areas than in open country. The most famous resistance movement to emerge out of rural France in this environment was the *maquis*. The word *maquis* literally means scrubland, and the French expression *prendre le maquis* means to go underground. The *maquis*, then, was a loosely organized covert organization, functioning throughout rural France. Size and structure, varied regionally, but it did share a few commonalities across France. Everywhere it was composed of locals, people known in the areas they operated in.<sup>206</sup> The faces of resisters were familiar – men from neighboring villages and towns. They were a guerrilla force, composed of volunteers, led

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<sup>203</sup> Christopher Neumaier, *The Escalation of German Reprisal Policy in Occupied France, 1941-42*, *Journal of Contemporary History* No. 41 (USA: Sage Publications, 2006) 120.

<sup>204</sup> Francois Furet, "Vendee," *The Critical Dictionary of the French Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1989) 186-7.

<sup>205</sup> Sarah Farmer, *The Communist Resistance in the Haute-Vienne*. *French Historical Studies* Vol. 14 (USA: Duke University, 1985) 92.

<sup>206</sup> Laurence Wylie, *Village in the Vaucluse* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1977) 29.



by volunteers - “the grocer the truck driver, the schoolteacher, the policeman, men from this district and from the next, men from the water’s edge and men from the farms lost in the plains.”<sup>207</sup>

The largest numerical growth in the *maquis* is traditionally attributed to the institution of the STO, or *Service du Travail Obligatoire*, which drafted the French into forced labor in Germany. Instituted in February of 1943, this policy has been identified as a, if not the, chief cause in alienating French citizens from the Vichy government and pushing them towards the Resistance.<sup>208</sup> Initially, only men between ages 20-22 were eligible, with exemptions for farmers, miners, students and several other groups. Within a year, eligibility had been expanded to men and women ages 18-45.<sup>209</sup> Without question, the STO was an extremely unpopular policy, and, more than any other single act, left French citizens feeling disenchanting with and, more importantly, betrayed by their government.<sup>210</sup> Whether it in fact swelled the ranks of the *maquis* as has been believed is a different question. One could easily be opposed to the German presence and Vichy’s policies without joining the active resistance. There were a large number of young men who became STO dodgers, going underground to avoid being sent to forced labor in the Third Reich. Forged certificates of exemption and simply not showing up to answer calls were very popular.<sup>211</sup> Even Louis Guilloux drops a hint that may allude to

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<sup>207</sup> Dominique Aury, “Departure,” *Defeat and Beyond: An Anthology of French Wartime Writing 1940-45* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970) 234.

<sup>208</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 249.

<sup>209</sup> W.D. Halls, *Young People in Vichy France and Forced Labour in Germany*, Oxford Review of Education Vol. 4 (Oxford: University of Oxford, 1978) 297-8.

<sup>210</sup> Gildea, *Marianne in Chains*, 281.

<sup>211</sup> Halls, *Young People in Vichy France*, 299.

his own son dodging the STO.<sup>212</sup> It has been widely assumed that all of these men filled the ranks of the *maquis*, and, indeed, many of them probably did. However, the *maquis* numbers never seem to have reached such levels, and therefore many STO dodgers remain unaccounted for.<sup>213</sup> Especially on farms and in isolated rural areas, many dodgers simply disappeared, going underground and reemerging at the Liberation.

One of the biggest problems facing any concentrated resistance was the inevitable reprisals their actions incurred. Given the secretive nature of the *maquis* and other resistance groups, it was impossible for the German authorities to target only active resisters in their responses, which therefore fell onto entire communities. The most popular form of reprisals was collective fines, levied against entire towns or villages. This happened in St. Briec in 1943, when two German soldiers were wounded while on duty in the town.<sup>214</sup> The entire community was fined 2 million francs, to be paid within five days. On good behavior, they would be reimbursed, but if not the money would be kept. These sanctions were intentionally designed to be debilitating and to turn populations against the resistance, without resorting to mass executions or deportations.

Over time, however, this policy changed. Through 1941 and into early 1942, reprisals fell most heavily on French Jews and communists.<sup>215</sup> Mass deportations of these isolated groups allowed German authorities to respond to resisters without jeopardizing collaboration.<sup>216</sup> Germans stationed in France saw the necessity of avoiding

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<sup>212</sup> Guilloux, *Carnets*, 287.

<sup>213</sup> Gildea, *Marianne in Chains*, 285-6.

<sup>214</sup> Guilloux, *Carnets*, 282.

<sup>215</sup> Neumaier, *Escalation of German Reprisal Policy*, 116.

<sup>216</sup> Neumaier, *Escalation of German Reprisal Policy*, 122.

“Polish methods” in France, but those in Berlin did not always agree.<sup>217</sup> As the war progressed, deportations began to give way to executions. In early 1944 new instructions were issued for a system of calibrated response, placing a premium on rapid, decisive actions and justifying any harm to civilians as “entirely the fault of the terrorists.”<sup>218</sup>

This was the policy followed in the small town of Ascq in the Nord on April 1, 1944. A train carrying Germany’s SS Panzer Division Hitlerjugend towards the Normandy coast was hit by explosives just outside the train station.<sup>219</sup> No troops were hurt but the rail line was broken, leaving the division vulnerable to any Allied aerial attacks. Immediately action was taken – men were shot at the rail line itself and some were taken from their homes and killed – eighty-six total.<sup>220</sup> Collective punitive violence reached its most deadly point on June 10, 1944, in the small town of Oradour-sur-Glane in the Limousin, about forty miles outside the regional capital, Limoges. Acting on reports that resistance forces were operating in the area, a German battalion massacred over 600 civilians living in the town and outlying farmlands. The level of violence in Oradour can be partially explained by events elsewhere. Four days earlier, Allied troops had landed in Normandy and the Germans were facing a bitter fight to maintain their hold on France. As their position became more precarious, a cycle beginning as early as 1942, reprisals became more and more severe.

Even the threat of violent punishment was not enough to deter some dedicated resisters. The village of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon, a small town in the Auvergne, became

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<sup>217</sup> Neumaier, *Escalation of German Reprisal Policy*, 119.

<sup>218</sup> Robert Gildea, *Resistance, Reprisals and Community in Occupied France*, Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 6<sup>th</sup> Series, Vol. 13 (London: Royal Historical Society, 2003) 168,

<sup>219</sup> Gildea, *Resistance, Reprisals, and Community*, 167.

<sup>220</sup> Gildea, *Resistance, Reprisals, and Community*, 169.

a haven for refugees during the occupation. Le Chambon was primarily Huguonot, and thus had a heritage of resisting government edicts stretching back to the sixteenth century French Wars of Religion.<sup>221</sup> André Trocme, the village's pastor, spearheaded what became a community wide effort to help Jews and other refugees cross the French border into nearby neutral Switzerland.<sup>222</sup> Needless to say, this put the village, and Trocme in particular, at great risk as Vichy and German authorities could not fail to notice something suspicious was happening in this tiny enclave of south-central France. The story of Le Chambon provides a glimpse into the many different forms resistance could take. Some people housed refugees permanently, others gave them temporary shelter. Fake identity and ration cards were manufactured, food – already scarce – was found for each refugee. Some people even took on the daunting task of leading the refugees over the mountains into Switzerland.<sup>223</sup> Everyone in the village played a part.

One of the most intriguing questions raised by the heroism of Le Chambon is why there? Why is it only in this small village that resistance on such a massive, organized scale occurred? Throughout France, both the Occupied and Free Zones, individuals and groups aided their fellow French citizens – some people hid Jews in their homes, others provided much needed food supplies to city folk cut off from normal trade routes. Nothing ever reached the same magnitude as Le Chambon, though. The reasons for this are unclear and, probably, unknowable.

#### Social Conditions

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<sup>221</sup> Philip Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood be Shed* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1994) 25.

<sup>222</sup> Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood be Shed*, 170.

<sup>223</sup> Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood be Shed*, 169.

In May and June 1940, refugees flooded the west and south as they fled from the approaching German army. Guilloux watched them come in droves to St. Brieuc, from Rouen, Paris and Ile de France.<sup>224</sup> They came by train, by car, and even by foot. St. Brieuc was by no means alone in receiving droves of refugees during the initial German onslaught of 1940. They poured into the south and west of France from the north and the east, pushing towards an unknown destination, and trying desperately to stay ahead of the German armies. Approximately 1/6 of the population of France took to the road.<sup>225</sup> *L'exode* presented a particular dilemma for farmers, faced with an advancing enemy during the height of the agricultural season.<sup>226</sup> In retrospect, the chaos of *l'exode* seems futile because it was temporary. The Franco-German armistice reached on June 22 installed and entrenched German soldiers in France indefinitely.

This brought German soldiers into direct contact with citizens across France, in both urban and rural settings. Marie-Louise Osmont had a significant amount of interaction with German soldiers. Her chateau in Périers, standing close to the strategically essential English Channel, was chosen to quarter large numbers of German soldiers, the earliest group of which consisted of 2 NCOs and 4 enlisted men and arrived in August 1940.<sup>227</sup> Osmont refused to leave Château Périers, and was thus subjected to what she describes as the continual heartbreak of seeing her beautiful home used to house “Franzes.”<sup>228</sup> Despite conceding that most of the soldiers were clean and discreet (to the point that they became simply part of the background to her), Osmont still found their

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<sup>224</sup> Guilloux, *Carnets*, 264.

<sup>225</sup> Gildea, *Marianne in Chains*, 30.

<sup>226</sup> Gildea, *Marianne in Chains*, 31.

<sup>227</sup> Osmont, *The Normandy Diary*, 3

<sup>228</sup> Osmont, *The Normandy Diary*, 3.

presence unbearable.<sup>229</sup> But as each battalion of German troops moves on, she found herself wishing they would stay. This suggests that familiarity bred comfort, rather than a genuine attachment or trust. Over the weeks, and occasionally months, spent billeted together, Osmont and her household came to know the Germans they were living with, but new groups of soldiers represented a renewed threat – who could tell what each new group might bring.<sup>230</sup> This comfort in familiarity is reiterated throughout literature regarding the relationships between occupiers and occupied.<sup>231</sup> The familiar predictable enemy was far safer than the unknown, untested one.

Due to its tactical location, billeting was very popular in Périers – in May 1944, there were 220 Germans quartered in the small town, a number almost equal to the population of the town itself.<sup>232</sup> St. Brieuc, by contrast, had far fewer German soldiers. In January 1941 Guilloux was visited at home by two German officers who had come there for lodging. They left, indicating that they would return shortly for an extended stay, but seem to have never returned.<sup>233</sup> Thus Guilloux was spared the unenviable task preformed by Osmont of quartering enemy soldiers – he never again mentions it as a possibility. This disparity was due to geography – the Normandy coast was a far more likely landing point than Brittany.

Guilloux describes one tense interaction with a German soldier, which stands out against the staid nature of most of his diary entries.<sup>234</sup> One day, in March of 1943, he was walking down Rue Victor Hugo in St. Brieuc with his friend Elie. The two of them

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<sup>229</sup> Osmont, *The Normandy Diary*, 4.

<sup>230</sup> Osmont, *The Normandy Diary*, 6.

<sup>231</sup> Gildea, *Resistance, Reprisals and Community*, 164.

<sup>232</sup> Osmont, *The Normandy Diary*, 29.

<sup>233</sup> Guilloux, *Carnets*, 267.

<sup>234</sup> Guilloux, *Carnets*, 284-5.

were walking and talking amongst themselves, when a German officer approached, walking the opposite direction down the street. The two friends continued to walk, oblivious to the fact that the German officer had signaled them to get out of his way, until they were nearly on top of each other. Guilloux quickly stepped aside, but Elie was slower and the German officer roughly elbowed his aside. Indignant, the two parties exchanged hostile words and gestures for several minutes before eventually wandering off to nurse their wounded pride, when they failed to make themselves understood.

Especially in the vulnerable coastal regions of France, frequent bombs dropped by Allied forces seem to have been accepted with little complaint as a fact of life. Guilloux mentioned them constantly, but rarely with any sense of fear or hostility.<sup>235</sup> It would seem easy for Guilloux to turn against the Allies after experiencing repeated bombardments, but he merely reports them, never commenting, suggesting Allied sympathies. Evidence suggests that this sentiment was widely shared throughout France – the English and Americans were largely absolved of any civilian casualties their preparatory strikes had. After one 1943 aerial attack in the Loire had damaged a locomotive parts factory, the workers “anger was aimed at the management for not providing enough air raid shelters rather than against the British, whose skill in targeting all twenty-four of their bombs on the factory itself they rather admired.”<sup>236</sup> Indeed, it is only natural that, following their own subjugation, the French should turn to the English, their nearest ally, for salvation. As the war progressed and an Allied victory looked increasingly probable, this feeling only increased.

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<sup>235</sup> Guilloux, *Carnets*, 285-6.

<sup>236</sup> Gildea, *Marianne in Chains*, 293-4.

Radio united the people of France during the war, and city or country, provided them with news of the outside world and the progress of the war. German authorities foisted Philippe Henriot on the Vichy government, as their chief radio personality for Radio Paris. Until his assassination in 1944, Henriot was one of the most vocal proponents of collaboration available to Vichy.<sup>237</sup> Radio Paris, though, took a backseat to BBC, the British Broadcasting Company, which, by 1942, was probably the single greatest unifying institution in France.<sup>238</sup> Through BBC, no matter where one lived, war news was available without the filter of German or Vichy propaganda so prevalent on Radio Paris and other collaborationist airwaves.

There is an overall sense of normalcy that persists in literature regarding the rural occupation. This is primarily the result of distance. Between the armistice in June 1940 and D-Day in June 1944, there were no battles in France's countryside and large administrative bodies were in the cities, primarily Paris. In many ways, the war was far away. Much of Louis Guilloux's time was spent visiting his elderly mother in nearby St. Laurent. He often bicycled there and back, occasionally bringing her butter or other goods.<sup>239</sup> He went to see the doctor for regular check ups, and even traveled to Paris and Burgundy.<sup>240</sup> Osmont, meanwhile, seems to have faced much harder times. All the furniture had been removed from her chateau to maximize space for quartering

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<sup>237</sup> Hirschfeld, Gerhard, and Patrick Marsh, *Collaboration in France: Politics and Culture during the Nazi Occupation, 1940-1944* (Oxford: Berg, 1989) 36.

<sup>238</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 92.

<sup>239</sup> Guilloux, *Carnets*, 315.

<sup>240</sup> Guilloux, *Carnets*, 269, 272.



soldiers.<sup>241</sup> By 1944, the tires on her bike were completely worn away through overuse, and there was nothing on the official market to replace them.<sup>242</sup>

Geography was a telling feature in determining one's experience of the war. Osmont's tire treads were worn away and unusable, while Guilloux's managed to take him back and forth, from St Laurent to St Briec, some 48 km each way. In both Normandy and Brittany, though, their proximity to a possible Allied naval threat was felt. Radios were confiscated and deposited en masse at each *mairie*.<sup>243</sup> Tree trunks were requisitioned to be used as part of the growing coastal defenses.<sup>244</sup> As in France's cities, electricity became sporadic as the war dragged on, particularly in 1943 and 1944. By May of 1944, immediately prior to the D-Day invasions, Osmont reported that electricity had gone from sporadic to nonexistent.<sup>245</sup> Further west, Guilloux and his fellow Bretons were subject to nightly blackouts and the omnipresent threat of complete electricity failure. Typically French, Guilloux felt this hardest at *boulangeries*, which he says were particularly pinched by these new restrictions.<sup>246</sup> Presumably, he was referring to the fact that most of the baking for the day is typically done the night before, a practice that had to be modified without nighttime power sources for the ovens.

Gas and water had also run out in Périers by May 1944.<sup>247</sup> Though Marie Louise Osmont lived through most of the occupation in relative ease, her comfort plummeted in the months prior to D-Day, as the resident German battalions anxiously anticipated an

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<sup>241</sup> Osmont, *The Normandy Diary*, 4.

<sup>242</sup> Osmont, *The Normandy Diary*, 17.

<sup>243</sup> Osmont, *The Normandy Diary*, 19. *Mairie* meaning town hall.

<sup>244</sup> Guilloux, *Carnets*, 366.

<sup>245</sup> Osmont, *The Normandy Diary*, 36

<sup>246</sup> Guilloux, *Carnets*, 375.

<sup>247</sup> Osmont, *The Normandy Diary*, 36.

Allied landing. Once again, geography was the determinant here. While Périers and other Norman towns went completely without water or gas, St Brieuc fared much better. The *mairie* issued a decree reducing water consumption.<sup>248</sup> Reduction, however, is quite different from a total unavailability. Guilloux daily expected the city's gas to run out, but it never did.<sup>249</sup> Though St. Brieuc and other such towns and villages in France's west were unquestionably subjected to hardship and deprivations, their distance from any probable Channel crossings granted them a degree of protection unavailable to those in more strategically important areas. The Norman coast, with its small town of Périers, is a prime example of this.

Geography played an enormous role in the civilian experience of the occupation, but it was not the only determining factor. Social class also seems to have greatly affected understandings. Guilloux and Osmont are both excellent examples of this. Guilloux, by 1940, was already a renowned writer, which afforded him the lifestyle of a man of leisure. Several times throughout the war he reports not working very much, and his concern regarding his artistic productivity.<sup>250</sup> Never, though, does this lack of inspiration cause him to have any kind of economic concerns, even in the inflated markets of occupied France. Osmont, with her family chateau and domestic servants, was essentially mid-twentieth century country gentility. Her position afforded her the respectful treatment of the German soldiers who lodged with her, and may well account for her overall favorable reports of them. It allowed her to maintain a distance from them, and from the lower classes who found themselves more often thrust into German

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<sup>248</sup> Guilloux, *Carnets*, 375.

<sup>249</sup> Guilloux, *Carnets*, 374.

<sup>250</sup> Guilloux, *Carnets*, 266.

company. Here we have an excellent explanation of Guilloux's position in judging her kitchen women sleeping with German soldiers – she simply could not relate their position.

Social class also goes a long way towards explaining why neither Guilloux nor Osmont make any lengthy mention of the black market. Perhaps by virtue of their wealth they did not need to touch it. Or, more likely, they had subordinates to do such dirty work for them – it is no great leap of logic to assume that Osmont's cook, a known black marketeer, used these connections to supply the kitchen of Château Périers.

### Conclusion

The experience of rural occupation was far more varied than that in urban centers. The two greatest determining factors were social class and geography. Geography determined the presence or lack of German soldiers, and in those towns and villages where they were present it determined their numbers. Geography also played a significant role in the ability of the countryside to rise and prosper, or to suffer the same deprivations occurring in the cities. Fertile soil with diverse agricultural traditions already in place usually meant relatively light shortages, whereas cultivating a specific crop, the best example being wine, could often guarantee that the countryside suffered even more than some cities, where trade routes were more firmly established. It also introduced certain farmers and producers into the black market, which could lead to great wealth on some occasions, and restricted others from it.

Social class also played a large role, although a less decisive one than geography. It dictated how Frenchmen interacted with the occupying powers. Respect was often reserved for those of higher class. This is especially true in the case of women, as seen

through the diary of Marie-Louise Osmont, who herself was treated with a distant respect by the German soldiers she encountered, while her lower class kitchen women were more often their sexual play things. Social class also determined how individuals engaged, or did not, with the black market. Osmont illustrates this as well. Rank and prosperity brought greater access and the means to procure goods even in times of rampant scarcity.

Thus the experience of the average *paysan* or town dweller is difficult to determine, as it first demands that we determine what constituted average. Rural occupation changed considerably over time and place and thus is much more difficult to grasp than the occupation in the cities. Variables caused significant differences that make an average experience almost impossible to obtain.

## Ch 3. Synthesis

### Introduction

In the previous two chapters, rural and urban occupation have been treated as largely separate entities. They were not. At every point during occupation, France's cities and countryside formed a web of mutual dependence and occasionally mutual enmity. The purpose of this chapter is to illustrate the links between the two. In doing so, common threads running through the last two chapters that defined both rural and urban occupation have been reexamined. These include collaboration and resistance, social class, city and country tensions, and the controlled economy. A section discussing historiography has also been included to demonstrate where such an analysis fits in the larger context of studies of the French occupation.

Though there would seem to be some redundancy inherent in this approach, the intent is not to repeat those points already made, but to expand on them and place them in a larger context by connecting the experiences of urban and rural occupation. In so doing, the links between the two experiences can be explored and expanded. The controlled economy and resultant black markets, for instance, are shown to be the most vital, and most contentious, link between city and country. They simultaneously kept both groups alive while antagonizing the one against the other. This issue then leads to a discussion of tensions between the cities and the countryside.

Tensions between the city and the country derived not only from contemporary struggles, but also from historical precedent. A close examination shows them to have pre-dated the French Revolution and probably long before. This longterm perspective aids significantly in tracing the development of this friction as the occupation wore on.

Viewing the occupation not only in terms of concurrent political and, more importantly, material circumstances, but also within a larger historical pattern clarifies the quickness and ease with which such tensions were exacerbated under the occupation.

These conflicts can be related to the issue of social class in the occupation. Some historians have argued for its inversion under the new rules of occupation, with respectable, educated people losing out to opportunists.<sup>251</sup> Additionally, those well placed within the lines of production and supply, for instance grocers, butchers or farmers, had premium access to supplies. Nevertheless, the bulk of historiography bears out that social class was one of the constants to have survived the occupation largely untouched. Wealth remained of paramount importance, and even became increasingly so as scarcity spread.

The interconnected factors that defined the occupation served to illustrate the links between the urban and rural experiences. Whether these bonds created dependence between two or aggravated it varied with both time and place, which determined the degree to which each factor was present.

### Historiography

Most of the historiography concerning life in France between 1940-1944 tends to focus on one of three things: the Vichy government, collaboration, and resistance. Until quite recently, the late 1990's and 2000's, very little attention was paid to the life of the average civilian. A cursory acknowledgement was deemed sufficient, recognizing that most French citizens lived out the occupation under relatively normal, if strained, conditions, before delving into the underhanded dealings at Vichy or the romantic

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<sup>251</sup> Richard Vinen, *The Unfree French* (New Haven: Yale University, 2006) 242.

heroism of the resistance. On the one hand, this makes sense. The day-to-day concerns of civilian life can seem dull next to freedom struggles or illicit Franco-German partnerships. But this focus ignores the lives of virtually all the French living under German occupation and obscures the picture that emerges. Most Frenchmen were neither collaborators nor resisters, and even fewer were directly involved in the Vichy government. Rather, their lives were plagued by economic hardship and the forced adjustment to new social realities.

Marshall Philippe Pétain's government in Vichy France has been extensively and exhaustively studied. Straddling the line between neutral state and German puppet, it has been the subject of endless curiosity as political historians have attempted to define its role, in particular to what degree Vichy was its own master. Its policies and its personalities have been combed through for any signs of complicity or foot-dragging that would indicate submission or sovereignty. The best example of this kind of study is historian Robert O. Paxton's seminal work *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order* published in 1972.<sup>252</sup> Paxton examines Vichy from every angle, including an analysis of its myriad influences. He looks into the French politics of the 1930's for explanations as to Vichy's conservative leanings and its political and ideological background. In addition to examining its policies, Paxton also delves extensively into the unlikely mixture of personalities who descended on the Auvergnat spa town. While a variety of other works have attempted the same approach, Paxton remains the benchmark for historians of France under German occupation.

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<sup>252</sup> Robert O. Paxton, *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order, 1940-1944* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972).

By far the most dominant feature of the prevailing historiography, though, is not Vichy and its policies and players, but rather a pendulum swing between two visions of Occupied France: the nation of collaborators and the nation of resisters.<sup>253</sup> Historian Henry Rousso's influential work *The Vichy Syndrome* traces and explains the shifts in attitudes towards the occupation between 1944 and the present.<sup>254</sup> His study traces historiography as it has affected and been affected by these shifts. According to Rousso's classification, postwar memory of Vichy can be divided into three parts. From 1944-1954, there were the immediate after effects, what he refers to as the mourning phase.<sup>255</sup> The war was still roughly contemporary, and its direct impacts still reverberated – the economy had not yet rebounded and France's Fourth Republic was floundering. The second phase began in 1954 and lasted until 1971, during which what Rousso terms "resistancialism" took hold.<sup>256</sup> In this period historians focused on the nation of resisters, giving rise to the Gaullist myth and the romantic image of a nation of resisters. Rousso's classification is too restrictive and ignores the fact that the focus on resistance predates 1954 and, indeed, even predates the end of the war. At the Liberation of Paris on August 25, 1944, a self-congratulatory General Charles de Gaulle shared his feelings with the people of Paris, saying that France had "liberated itself."<sup>257</sup> Clearly the story of French

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<sup>253</sup> John F. Sweets, *Hold That Pendulum! Redefining Fascism, Collaborationism and Resistance in France*, French Historical Studies 15.4 (USA: Duke University, 1988).

<sup>254</sup> Rousso, Henry. *The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France since 1944* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1991).

<sup>255</sup> Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome*, 13.

<sup>256</sup> Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome*, 13.

<sup>257</sup> Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome*, 16.



Resistance was already being propagated. In the immediate aftermath of the war its myth was already being celebrated.<sup>258</sup>

In fact, resistance was never universal and the contention that France was responsible for its own liberation is a dubious one. Only a small percentage of the adult population ever actively participated in the resistance. In light of the national tragedy they had suffered through defeat and occupation, though, the French clung fiercely to the idea of a nationwide, collective resistance. It provided a support system, an emotional buffer against the prospect of contemplating what was, in truth, closer to national tragedy than glory. It became a “quasi-sacred symbol” of eternal France.<sup>259</sup>

By 1971 though, the notion of pure republican resistance had run its course – the pendulum swung the other way.<sup>260</sup> Rousso refers to this as “the return of the repressed.”<sup>261</sup> As if to apologize for overemphasizing resistance and the glories of France, the focus now shifted to her faults. The nation of resisters became the nation of collaborators. Suppressed memories like the complicity of the Vichy government in the deportation of France’s Jews and the eager aid of leading industrialists came flooding back. France was now thought guilty of creating her own misery, the counter myth to the glories of the resistancialism.

Two things in particular can be pointed to as the cause for this change. The first was 1968.<sup>262</sup> 1968 in France was a tumultuous year of student rallies and protests. A

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<sup>258</sup> Fred L. Hadsel, *Some Sources on the Resistance Movement in France during the Nazi Occupation*, *The Journal of Modern History* 18.4 (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1946).

<sup>259</sup> Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome*, 19.

<sup>260</sup> Sweets, *Hold That Pendulum*, 732.

<sup>261</sup> Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome*, 13.

<sup>262</sup> Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome*, 99.

new generation of French citizens rose up against “a certain type of society and therefore, implicitly, [against] a certain vision of its history.”<sup>263</sup> Charles de Gaulle was forced out of public life and the entire face of France changed in the wake of this new, liberal challenge. The second change to be born out of 1968 was a more direct attack on France’s wartime past. In 1972 director Marcel Ophuls released the film *The Sorrow and the Pity*, a documentary look at daily life in the southern city of Clermont-Ferrand, ostensibly a city representative of the occupation throughout France.<sup>264</sup> The film was a departure from the norm – de Gaulle was notably absent, with the emphasis instead on a wide variety of ordinary people, all with different ideologies resulting in different choices during the war. Ophul’s vision of the occupation was much darker and more nuanced than his predecessors, arguing that no one escaped the occupation with their innocence intact. This vision set the tone for the new emphasis on collaboration.

True collaboration, like resistance, was a rare phenomenon. The France of the early 1970s’ was in turmoil, plagued by colonial crises and facing the loss of de Gaulle, who had been the foremost promoter of resistancialism since its inception. The shift towards emphasizing collaboration reflects these issues and is comparable to the idea of self-flagellation – the bad and cowardly French had been the national undoing and therefore the contemporary French should pay.

Several works written between the 1970’s and early 1990’s attempted to bridge the gap, discussing collaboration and resistance in conjunction. This was a major historiographical shift, as it recognized that the two could exist side by side and indeed, even influenced one another a great deal. Werner Rings *Life With the Enemy* provides an

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<sup>263</sup> Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome*, 98.

<sup>264</sup> *The Sorrow and the Pity*, dir. Marchel Ophuls, DVD, Télévision Rencontre, 1972.

analysis of the interplay between collaboration and resistance not only in France but throughout Occupied Europe.<sup>265</sup> H.R. Kedward was the author of several works during this period, some of which treat the two paths as interrelated, and some in isolation.<sup>266</sup>

At its most extreme, the nation of resisters/nation of collaborators dichotomy is believed to have erupted into a *guerre franco-française*, simmering low-level social strife that in 1944 became a veritable civil war.<sup>267</sup> This is a serious contention and worth exploration. It is clear that the tumultuous months before and after Liberation in 1944 saw a not insignificant amount of violence. This was concentrated between French resistance forces and ideological collaborators, in particular the *Milice*, a paramilitary force doggedly faithful to Vichy, and often to the Nazis as well. Indisputably, 1944 was the most dangerous period during the war to be in France.<sup>268</sup> However the infrequency and limited documentation of violence suggests sporadic anarchy and isolated violence between ideological extremists on both sides rather than civil war. Civilian involvement outside these guerrilla bands was very limited. Given the small number of both collaborators and resisters and the general exhaustion with the war by 1944, anything approaching a civil war would have been extremely unlikely. Additionally, it would have warranted greater documentation, whereas the festering tension between the *Milice* and the resisters passed largely under the radar.

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<sup>265</sup> Werner Rings, *Life With the Enemy: Collaboration and Resistance in Hitler's Europe 1939-1945* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co, 1982).

<sup>266</sup> H.R. Kedward, *Occupied France: Collaboration and Resistance 1940-1944* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985). H.R. Kedward, *Resistance in Vichy France: A Study of Ideas and Motivation in the Southern Zone 1940-1942* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1978).

<sup>267</sup> Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome*, 5.

<sup>268</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 326-7.

Neither resistance nor collaboration was ever widespread enough to define the experience of all of France, and yet each in turn has been treated as such. In recent years, interest has grown concerning the experience of ordinary civilians. To that end, regional studies have emerged, detailing life in diverse areas of France. In 2003 English historian Robert Gildea published *Marianne in Chains*, a study of the civilian experience in what he terms France's heartland, the Loire.<sup>269</sup> He focuses on several different aspects of occupation – the role of the Catholic Church, the relationship between *maquis* groups and the local communities – all through the prism of civilians living in the Loire region. He mixes facts with individual stories to illustrate and prove his larger points. He argues for the continuing divisive nature of differing interpretations of the occupation. These interpretations, which might result in mere disagreements, he claims, have such a divisive force because of the vested interests caught up in them, particularly by those looking to protect their own or their families past.<sup>270</sup>

Shannon Fogg published a similar work in 2009, entitled *The Politics of Everyday Life in Vichy France*.<sup>271</sup> Fogg focuses on the Limousin, a region she says she chose for its ordinariness – with a few remarkable exceptions, it provides an excellent case study of Occupied France, particularly in terms of the social tensions between town and country wrought by food shortages.<sup>272</sup> Like Gildea, she mixes facts with stories, allowing characters and their contexts to come to life. Her primary concern in the book is “placing political events within the context of the material situation rather than vice versa [to]

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<sup>269</sup> Robert Gildea, *Marianne in Chains* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2003).

<sup>270</sup> Gildea, *Marianne in Chains*, 397.

<sup>271</sup> Shannon Fogg, *The Politics of Everyday Life in Vichy France* (New York, Cambridge University, 2009).

<sup>272</sup> Fogg, *The Politics of Everyday Life in Vichy France*, 11.

highlight the way in which the public's habituation to illegality in daily life eroded the Vichy government's authority and legitimacy over an extended period of time."<sup>273</sup> According to her analysis, the politics of occupation followed logically from the material circumstances thrust upon France's citizens.

These emerging regional studies have been accompanied by several works providing a more general examination of the civilian's lot in all of Occupied France. The best examples of this are written by Richard Vinen, Ian Ousby, and Philippe Burrin. Richard Vinen is an English historian teaching at the University of London, who in 2006 published *The Unfree French: Life Under the Occupation*.<sup>274</sup> Vinen's discussion of the civilian is extremely informative and seems to offer something about every aspect of the occupation. The particular focus, though, is civilian interaction with the occupying power. Civilians are divided into several subcategories to provide the most comprehensive picture: Jews, women, POWs, youths, and marketers, to name only the most prominent. The picture that comes out is stark, but not totally so – Vinen allows for the complexity and disparity that ultimately characterized the occupation, arguing that the relationship between occupier and occupied was constantly in flux and greatly variable.

In 1998 Ian Ousby published *Occupation: The Ordeal of France 1940-1944*.<sup>275</sup> With a cover image that superimposes a swastika over the Eiffel Tower, Ousby goes for shock and achieves much of his purpose. He seems primarily concerned with showing the darkness inherent in occupation – where other authors remain vague he is explicit, once referring to “respectable folks...braining the pigeons in the public parks” of Paris in

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<sup>273</sup> Fogg, *The Politics of Everyday Life in Vichy France*, 54.

<sup>274</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*.

<sup>275</sup> Ian Ousby, *Occupation: The Ordeal of France 1940-1944* (New York: St Martin's 1998).

their hunger.<sup>276</sup> He presents the occupation as it developed chronologically. By dividing it into three sections, Ousby is then able to analyze its progression. His writing is especially memorable, as it is peppered with obscure and surprising facts that serve to color and bring to life France in the early 1940's, from the braining of pigeons to the “anti-Semitic diatribes” of Coco Chanel.<sup>277</sup> One of the primary distinctions between Ousby and other scholars, though, is his condemnatory tone – though he respects the adaptability of the French evident in *le système D*, a certain disdain for their eagerness to simply live through the occupation with little thought to outside events provides an undercurrent to the book.

Philippe Burrin is one of the few French historians to have emerged in recent years, as interest has turned towards civilians. His 1996 work *France Under the Germans: Collaboration and Compromise* was one of the first to offer a national perspective on civilians.<sup>278</sup> Unlike Ousby and Vinen, though, Burrin is more interested in special groups of the population, often unrepresentative of the civilian experience as a whole. This includes discussions of captains of industry, intellectuals, artists, ad-hoc militias, and the Catholic Church. He also devotes a very large section to the role of the Vichy government in shaping the occupation as experienced by its citizens. His stated goal in writing is to provide context and origins for the most commonly held attitude during the war – that of simply trying to get through.<sup>279</sup>

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<sup>276</sup> Ousby, *Occupation*, 126.

<sup>277</sup> Ousby, *Occupation*, 112.

<sup>278</sup> Philippe Burrin, *France Under the Germans: Collaboration and Compromise* (New York: New, 1996).

<sup>279</sup> Burrin, *France Under the Germans*, viii.

Several studies have focused on the occupation in Paris alone. This is perhaps the most interesting, if least representative, kind of study. Paris, though certainly its cultural center and heart, is anything but typical of France. Many of these works look specifically at the arts and popular culture as they were affected by occupation – for example Ian Buruma’s *Occupied Paris: The Sweet and The Cruel* and Frederic Spotts *The Shameful Peace: How French Artists and Intellectuals Survived the Nazi Occupation*.<sup>280</sup> Both of these works focus specifically on the artists and intelligentsia of Paris as they adapted and occasionally collaborated their way through the war. Buruma’s work also looks at Parisian culture as a whole, documenting the strange element of normalcy that came from the mixture of scarcity and luxury that characterized Occupied Paris.

Jean Dutourd’s *Au Bon Beurre* provides a very different picture of Paris.<sup>281</sup> A novel published shortly after the war, *Au Bon Beurre* details the meteoric rise of a family owning a Parisian creamery, as they successfully negotiate the black market. Dutourd’s work is an indictment of profiteering hidden in a work of fiction that accurately reflects the social stratification of wartime Paris. The potential pitfalls of any of these works, however, is to view Paris or Parisian life as typical of that elsewhere in France, when in fact its unique position afforded it an entirely unique experience.

All historiography of the French occupation and any discussions thereof are inevitably colored by the subject’s sensitivity. Gildea attributes this to a national inability to confront the recent past, saying “the French have never faced up to their wartime past in any sustained and systematic way. Much is at stake ideologically and politically in the

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<sup>280</sup> Ian Buruma, “Occupied Paris: The Sweet and the Cruel,” *The New York Review of Books* (New York: 2009). Frederic Spotts, *The Shameful Peace: How French Artists and Intellectuals Survived the Occupation* (New Haven: Yale University, 2008).

<sup>281</sup> Jean Dutourd, *Au Bon Beurre* (Paris: Gallimard, 1952).

interpretation of the Occupation period, and the rival views are propagated and defended.”<sup>282</sup> Coming to terms with four years of foreign occupation has proven difficult for the nation responsible for articulating and subsequently defending the Rights of Man. The role of the French in the years of occupation could have ramifications for France’s history and contemporary society.

### Controlled Economy

An important aspect of the German occupation of France was the controlled economy. Evidence affirming its importance emerges from sources in the city and countryside alike and it appears to have been the defining feature most responsible for linking the two. It was first introduced almost immediately after the armistice in June 1940 as a means of harnessing France’s economy to aid the German war machine. Superfluous businesses and factories were closed down, the better to direct energies towards those industries which could further the war aims. Rubber production at the Michelin Company outside of Clermont-Ferrand, for example, was maximized, facilitating the constant supplies needed for tires and tank treads.<sup>283</sup> By late June 1942 some 1500 factories had been closed in the Occupied Zone, deemed nonessential and therefore distracting to the war effort.<sup>284</sup> A large number of these manufactured household goods – ceramics, furniture and the like, none of it particularly helpful to the

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<sup>282</sup> Gildea, *Marianne in Chains*, 4.

<sup>283</sup> John F. Sweets, *Choices in Vichy France - The French Under Nazi Occupation* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1994) 3.

<sup>284</sup> Henri Drouot, *Notes d’un Dijonnais Pendant l’Occupation Allemande 1940-44* (Dijon: Editions Universitaires de Dijon: 1998) 478.



Third Reich. Instead airplane construction became one of the foremost leaders of French industry, as production multiplied by almost thirty between 1938 and 1944.<sup>285</sup>

In an ironic twist, this constrained and controlled market resuscitated France's failing economy and poured much needed funds back into production. The worldwide Depression of the 1930's had hit France later and slower than other countries, but its effects were no less palpable – one historian describes it as a “slow paralysis” striking the nation.<sup>286</sup> This virtual stagnation lasted throughout the tumultuous 1930's. During the invasion of May and June 1940, though, what reparations had been made were devastated by the accompanying anarchy and chaos that plagued the nation, down to its economic functions, in the absence of a decisive governing body. German orders and demands allowed France's agricultural and industrial markets to revivify.<sup>287</sup> One particularly good indication of this change are the labor patterns within France. At the outset of the war and in its early years, unemployment was common and even termed “vast” by one historian.<sup>288</sup> Those most susceptible were those working in superfluous industries shut down or limited by the authorities, as well as people already marginal to society, particularly women, foreigners, and Jews. By 1942, unemployment eased, and by 1944 there was a veritable labor shortage.<sup>289</sup>

Requisitions, known to the French as *les ravitaillements*, were the most important, and most felt, feature of the controlled economy. As previously discussed, they could extend to everything from food products – which were most common – to lumber, coal,

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<sup>285</sup> Rings, *Life With the Enemy*, 77.

<sup>286</sup> Julian Jackson, *The Popular Front in France: Defending Democracy 1934-38* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1988) 20.

<sup>287</sup> Rings, *Life With the Enemy*, 76-7.

<sup>288</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 121.

<sup>289</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 117.

horses, or leather.<sup>290</sup> Simultaneously providing for the needs of France and the occupying German forces, as well as those goods requisitioned and sent on to Germany or Italy, proved a strain on French resources and often resulted in shortages, as competition for goods skyrocketed. As also previously discussed, the solution devised for this problem was a system of rationing.

Rationing was the natural extension of a controlled economy and meant that control extended to consumption. By determining who could consume how much of any given product, rationing was intended to maximize on limited availabilities so that, even with the heightened wartime competition for goods, everyone was guaranteed some portion of France's production. Unfortunately this proved largely unsuccessful and shortages, rather than equal distribution, were more often the result of requisitioning.

These shortages varied in intensity and duration, depending on time and place. Substitutes and additional supplies were more widely and readily available in the countryside, closer to the original production point. No travel was necessary to obtain goods already close at hand, and the relationships necessary for trade (legal and extralegal) were already likely to be in place. Monocultural versus polycultural traditions, already alluded to, also had a significant effect on how a region weathered times of scarcity.<sup>291</sup> Some regions of France were simply better equipped to sustain themselves than others. The Limousin, for example, which historian Shannon Fogg chose to study for its alleged ordinariness, did not specialize in any particular product, but

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<sup>290</sup> Drouot, *Notes d'un Dijonnais*, 401.

<sup>291</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 227.

produced mixed agriculture and thus fared much better, longer than many nearby southern provinces.<sup>292</sup>

Primary sources are revealing as to the disparities that emerged, in particular between urban centers and the countryside. Alfred Fabre-Luce and Henri Drouot, in Paris and Dijon respectively, each discuss the prices and availabilities of foodstuffs virtually to the exclusion of all else. They tracked their local markets with an almost obsessive concern. Their journals are filled with the changing price of vegetables and the beleaguered search for potatoes. Marie-Louise Osmont of Périers, Normandy, and Louis Guilloux of St. Brieuc, Brittany, by contrast, practically never mention the markets. Their testimonies are instead a record of their changing feelings and those experienced by the larger society around them.

Paris and Dijon are both located in fertile, strongly polycultural regions, Ile-de-France and Burgundy. Thus Fabre-Luce and Drouot were not suffering because production was focused in the wrong direction as would have been the case in a monocultural region (for example the area around Nîmes, which specializes in wine, ran into shortages as early as summer 1940), but rather due to their urban environment.<sup>293</sup> Cities lacked the direct access naturally available to those in the countryside and suffered as a result.

Disparities between cities and country were very real. In 1946, with France still reeling from the effects of occupation but beginning to make slow steps towards recovery, the average daily caloric intake in rural regions was close to 3000 calories. In

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<sup>292</sup> Fogg, *The Politics of Everyday Life in Vichy France*, 11.

<sup>293</sup> Fogg, *The Politics of Everyday Life in Vichy France*, 9.

Paris it was 2335, and in Marseilles 2242.<sup>294</sup> Specific examples illustrate this disparity even better – whereas the average daily intake of butter in rural areas was some 27 grams, in Paris it was only 13 grams and in Marseilles 2.3.<sup>295</sup> This shows not only the differences based on population, but also based on polycultural versus monocultural traditions. Marseilles, located in the monocultural south, recovered much slower than Paris, in the fertile and prolific north.

The black market was the system developed to combat scarcity and meet demands. In doing so, it forged the strongest connection between the countryside and the cities. Interdependence intertwined the two entities at unprecedented levels as foreign imports became nonexistent and a reliance on domestic production and distribution became essential. City-dwellers rediscovered country cousins, with whom they began barter relationships, agricultural provisions for manufactured goods, or sometimes based on the promise of future payment.<sup>296</sup> Many of these relationships were not strictly familial, and some were even invented entirely. These *colis familiaux* combined with the *trains des haricots* to supplement the meager diet that often confronted Frenchmen living in towns and cities, which would otherwise have had only the legal markets to rely on.

Ironically, pursuing goods through extralegal means often meant that legally obtained supplies were much harder to find and, as a result, more expensive. It became cyclical – because available supplies were limited at legal markets in cities, France’s urban populations began scouring the countryside directly, bicycling to nearby locations and taking the train to more distant ones. They also developed or strengthened existing

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<sup>294</sup> Michel Cepede, *Agriculture et Alimentation en France Durant la Iie Guerre Mondiale* (Paris: Genin, 1961) 396.

<sup>295</sup> Cepede, *Agriculture et Alimentation*, 395.

<sup>296</sup> Fogg, *The Politics of Everyday Life in Vichy France*, 35.

ties to those in the countryside in a position to supply them with goods, most notably in the form of *colis familiaux*, packages sent ostensibly between families to supplement the caloric intake of those living in the cities. They were also willing to pay very high prices. City dwellers thus enabled the black market to flourish, and even to overtake the regular, legal market. Since urbanites were willing to come to them and pay high prices, farmers and other suppliers were able to benefit from the black market far more than they did at government-regulated prices. Thus more and more goods were diverted into extralegal channels, causing even those who had initially relied on legal means of obtaining goods to resort to the black market, thereby perpetuating the cycle.

#### City/Country Tensions

The development of the black market displayed vividly the natural imbalance between France's cities and countryside. While defeat followed by foreign occupation did not in itself cause these tensions, it exacerbated what already simmered beneath the surface of French society. Long before even the French Revolution, urban and rural France had been at odds. Though perhaps close geographically, the two were more often worlds apart – each viewed the other with a mix of hostility, curiosity and distrust.

This persistent tension occasionally bordered on a paranoid – even xenophobic – fear. *The Vanishing Children of Paris* written by Arlette Farge and Jacques Revel, relates how this could occur.<sup>297</sup> The book recounts an episode in Paris in 1750, when reports of children being arrested by civil authorities circulated throughout the city. Paranoia quickly devolved into virtually citywide rioting, as the rumors proved to be at least partially substantiated. The episode is revealing of a prevailing, and pervasive, bias held

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<sup>297</sup> Arlette Farge & Jacques Revel, *The Vanishing Children of Paris: Rumor and Politics before the French Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1991).

by city dwellers against their provincial neighbors. As suspicions were cast everywhere and misgivings rose, “the most entrenched prejudices re-emerged...[The] fear of seeing an influx of vagrants and delinquents into the city was exacerbated.”<sup>298</sup> Widely feared roving gangs of anarchic peasants were suspected to be the orchestrators behind the perceived threat. Indeed, the main reason that the incident provoked such a response from the Parisians was that it was not the roving, migrant population – *paysans* who routinely wandered in and out of the city looking for work in times of scarcity – but rather the children of established urban citizens who were targeted.<sup>299</sup> Outsiders, in particularly the barbarous, uncouth peasantry, were the ultimate threat. The lines between city and country had already been firmly drawn, and to the city dwellers, it was clear whose children were more important.

This inbred suspicion of outsiders came to play a large role in the Revolution of 1789. Eminent Revolutionary historian Georges Lefebvre traces the outbreak of the Great Fear in the rural provinces in his work *The Great Fear of 1789*.<sup>300</sup> Though circumstances obviously differed considerably between 1789 and the 1940’s, there are a surprising number of comparisons that can be drawn based on his findings. The most important, and most striking, of these are the festering tensions between the cities and the countryside. During the occupation, there was a persistent belief held by city folk that farmers and their country neighbors were hoarding supplies, keeping the bulk of the goods for themselves. This belief was nothing new. At the Estates-General in 1789, many of the representatives believed that the peasants were not to be trusted, that theirs

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<sup>298</sup> Farge & Revel, *The Vanishing Children of Paris*, 42.

<sup>299</sup> Farge & Revel, *The Vanishing Children of Paris*, 89.

<sup>300</sup> Georges Lefebvre, *The Great Fear of 1789* (New Jersey: Princeton University, 1973).

was a “pretended poverty...and behind the rags, [they led] a peaceful life, often comfortable, sometimes even affluent.”<sup>301</sup> It was assumed that farmers were jealously hoarding supplies.<sup>302</sup> And the misgivings went both ways. France’s rural residents assumed that brigands were coming from the city’s to menace their lands and crops.<sup>303</sup>

These suspicions always carried with them a kernel of truth, which allowed them to persist through centuries. In the Revolutionary period, peasants did want to protect their crops and keep enough to feed their families and hopefully turn a profit – hence the image of hoarding. Those in the cities saw that, while they might lack bread if it did not make it to the marketplace, the peasants producing the wheat had plenty and they wanted a share of the production. Eventually this even became the job of the Revolutionary Army, formed in 1792 to scour the countryside for hoarded supplies for the deprived citizenry. The distance between roving bandits and the Revolutionary Army is not a large leap either. Little had changed by the 1940’s. Accusations of hoarding were still hurled at farmers. Farmers and others in supply positions still regarded city dwellers scouring for goods with barely veiled hostility.

Urban and rural tensions, then, are ancient and ingrained. Given a successful crop and the ability to trade, it seems that most country and city-folk were willing to cooperate in what was a mutually beneficial relationship, based on supply and demand. The uncertainty of the crop, or perhaps more importantly the uncertain ability to access it, however, inevitably led to divisions and mounting social tensions, whether in the eighteenth century or the twentieth.

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<sup>301</sup> Lefebvre, *The Great Fear*, 7.

<sup>302</sup> Lefebvre, *The Great Fear*, 64.

<sup>303</sup> Lefebvre, *The Great Fear*, 28.

This can be read, as in *The Vanishing Children of Paris*, as hostility towards outsiders. Whether country-to-city or city-to-country, both cases illustrate a population that feels that what is rightfully and necessarily theirs is threatened by unfamiliar people. An excellent example of this comes from the classic children's story, *Stone Soup*.<sup>304</sup> In the story, three soldiers are trudging through the countryside back from war. They are hungry and tired when they approach a village. The villagers, seeing the soldiers draw near and fearing strangers, hide all of their supplies and when the soldiers ask for food, they refuse, saying there was simply nothing left. Suspecting they had been duped, the soldiers turn the tables, declaring instead that they should all make stone soup. The villagers, impressed that soup could come from a stone, are swayed by the soldiers and slowly empty their stores of supplies into the soup, eventually creating a feast. Though a children's tale, *Stone Soup* is revelatory of the ingrained distrust of outsiders prevalent throughout France. It also provides grounds for this inherent suspicion – the soldiers do trick the villagers into giving away their supplies, after all. The most important aspect of *Stone Soup* though, is that it reinforces the tradition of distrust and illustrates its omnipresence.

The city reigned victorious over the countryside for much of the nineteenth century, and seemed to reach its zenith under the metropolitan Third Republic. France's republic was urban, intellectual, and interested in progressing alongside of the rest of the industrial world. Industry required dense populations, which led to the development of urban centers in areas that had not existed before, and the expansion of those that had. Intellectuals flocked to cities as the hubs of learning – newspapers and universities were

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<sup>304</sup> Marcia Brown, *Stone Soup: An Old Tale* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947).



almost invariably based in urban centers. Paris, in particular, became the center not just of French culture, but of world culture, as the arts reached new heights along the banks of the Seine. The city held the attractions of the modern world, of progress, while the countryside came to represent the old, agriculturally dependent world of pre-imperial days.

In the tumultuous 1930's though, this vision of France began to be called into question. Urbanism had not spared France from the effects of the Depression. In 1931 it hit France, sending it spiraling into poverty and chaos, along with the rest of the Western world.<sup>305</sup> Nor was France exempt from the rising tensions in Europe, as fascism and communism came to a head and forced the hardening of party lines on both sides. Added to this was a mounting fear of depopulation in France, whose birth rate was far below that of its neighbors, most notably Germany.<sup>306</sup> Together these factors gave rise to peasantism, a movement that began in the 1930's. Founded in 1928, the *Parti Agraire et Paysan Française* began to gain political power as the Depression threw light on these mounting issues and gave voice to the resentments of France's rural populations.<sup>307</sup>

Thus when Vichy came to power in June 1940 – a political event that has been called by many revenge against the Popular Front – the landed peasant was already on the rise. Vichy's policy was aimed at continuing and expanding this trend. *Travail, famille, patrie* replaced the traditional *liberté, égalité, fraternité*.<sup>308</sup> Vichy capitalized on the image of the peasant to promote the virtues of the country at the expense of the urban rot

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<sup>305</sup> Jackson, *The Popular Front in France*, 20.

<sup>306</sup> Paxton, *Vichy France*, 165.

<sup>307</sup> Paxton, *Vichy France*, 202. Parti Agraire et Paysan Française translates to the French Agrarian and Peasants Party.

<sup>308</sup> Meaning, respectively: work, family, country, and liberty, equality, brotherhood.

and corruption of the Third Republic. Vichy's endorsement of the peasant went beyond lip service, to actually offering subsidies to families willing to restore and revitalize abandoned farmland.<sup>309</sup> Hearty peasant families were allegedly more likely to have children, saving France's aging population while simultaneously providing new agricultural workers.<sup>310</sup> Returning to the soil was meant to simultaneously revitalize France and gain the support of the French people, by returning to the traditions that had originally made France grand.

Like most of Vichy's policies, however, re-aggrandizing the countryside failed. For one thing, it failed to win over the hearts and minds of its target audience, many of whom remained personally loyal to Marshall Pétain, but hostile to the government as a whole, including its policies.<sup>311</sup> The countryside, particularly in the Occupied Zone farther away from the influence of Vichy, did not buy into its rhetoric and as disillusionment with the government grew, so too did disenchantment with its policies. More importantly, Vichy's need to get food from the reluctant countryside to fill requisition quotas put the two seriously at odds.<sup>312</sup> A declaration of production was required by law, so that government officials could accurately predict and fill requisition orders, but in response farmers simply took to concealing how much they had or were likely to produce so that official government quotas for collection were set unnaturally

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<sup>309</sup> Paxton, *Vichy France*, 207.

<sup>310</sup> Sweets, *Choices in Vichy France*, 43.

<sup>311</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 89.

<sup>312</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 236.

low.<sup>313</sup> The vested interest of the farmers lay in thwarting attempts at official seizure, thus holding back more supplies for themselves and for illegal sales.

To a certain degree the countryside did indeed reach its ascendancy during the occupation, and unquestionably at the expense of the cities. As has been discussed extensively, the countryside played a crucial role in France's domestic economy, as the country turned inwards during the war years. Lacking access to most foreign trade, local production took center stage as it had in the pre-industrial world. This exacerbated pre-existent tensions with cities, used to ready access to goods, both foreign and domestic. Competition for scarce resources increased these tensions as the occupation continued. The two groups "were thrown together by the dependence of the townspeople on extra food from the countryside, and this caused resentment to flow" in both directions.<sup>314</sup> Tensions similar to those described by Georges Lefebvre at the outbreak of the French Revolution took hold. Urbanites thought that those in the countryside were selfishly hoarding extra supplies. Those in the countryside, farmers in particular, felt menaced by city dwellers, looking for supplies they were not always willing (or able) to share. Nonetheless, the two became increasingly dependent on each other. The countryside, obviously, fed the cities and kept them at least somewhat nourished through the occupation. Supplies might ebb and flow, but the connection between supplier and demander remained constant. City dwellers, in turn, paid for the rise of the countryside. Their depleting resources financed what some scholars have painted as the revenge of the countryside. While they grew poor in search of increasingly scarce goods, farmers and

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<sup>313</sup> Lynne Taylor, *The Black Market in Occupied Northern France, 1940-4*, Contemporary European History Vol. 6 (Cambridge: Cambridge University, July 1997) 160.

<sup>314</sup> Kedward, *Occupied France*, 7.

suppliers purportedly profited, storing the large sums of cash they accumulated until after the war.

Although the countryside did profit off of the increased needs of the cities, it is important not to over-exaggerate the positive effect this had on rural France. As the cost of food rose, so too did the cost of everything else. Fuel prices soared, as did the price of other essentials – fertilizers or mechanical equipment like tractors, for example.<sup>315</sup> Though the average price that goods could be sold at increased an incredible 216% between 1939 and 1943, the price of goods necessary to facilitate agricultural production rose even higher – some 308%.<sup>316</sup>

“Presence and Absence”<sup>317</sup>

Economics were not the only source of tension between the countryside and cities. A majority of the French prisoners of war were from rural areas.<sup>318</sup> Of the roughly 1.5 million POWs, 450,000 were either farmers or otherwise involved in agriculture.<sup>319</sup> This left France’s rural citizens with a bitter taste in their mouths, imagining themselves to have paid the heaviest costs of the war, that they alone had suffered for all of France. Given that a large portion of France’s population was urban, this sense of disproportionately was not entirely unfounded.

The absence plagued the countryside with a physical void, a dearth of young men. This void had inevitable effects on production, which had difficulty picking up the slack demanded by the localizing nature of the occupation when integral workers were absent –

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<sup>315</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 228.

<sup>316</sup> Sweets, *Choices in Vichy France*, 78.

<sup>317</sup> Ousby, *Occupation*, 154.

<sup>318</sup> Kedward, *Occupied France*, 7.

<sup>319</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 220.

just as foreign imports dropped off, 450,000 valuable members of the labor force also disappeared. This absence should not be over-exaggerated – compared to the emptiness wrought by the First World War, 1.5 million men missing nationwide did not compare to the massive depopulation that erased virtually an entire generation.

POWs were not the only Frenchmen to go missing, although they were perhaps the most notable. When German authorities saw that mass executions (unsurprisingly) deteriorated relations between the occupier and the occupied and made France reluctant to collaborate economically, they switched to a policy of mass deportations instead.<sup>320</sup> This policy was specifically designed to target already marginalized members of society, those that Germany described as the common enemy: Jews and communists, or the “Jewish Bolsheviks” as they were referred to, to instill a sense that they were working in collusion.<sup>321</sup> By targeting these groups, the majority of Frenchmen were left largely unscathed and therefore more likely to remain complacent, even if begrudgingly so. Eventually it was the manner in which these deportations were conducted that could not help but draw widespread public attention – specifically the deportation of children to supposed work camps.<sup>322</sup>

While the countryside suffered from absence and those on society’s margins bore the brunt of contentions, the cities balked under a new presence. Urban centers were the hubs of Germans in France. Paris in particular served as headquarters for the German military command, under Otto von Stulpnagel, and after 1942, his cousin Carl-Heinrich

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<sup>320</sup> Christopher Neumaier, *The Escalation of German Reprisal Policy in Occupied France, 1941-42*, *Journal of Contemporary History* No. 41 (USA: Sage Publications, 2006) 122.

<sup>321</sup> Neumaier, *Escalation of German Reprisal Policy*, 116.

<sup>322</sup> Ousby, *Occupation*, 192.

von Stulpnagel.<sup>323</sup> Situated on Avenue Kléber in Paris' wealthy 16<sup>th</sup> arrondissement gave them a privileged experience of and access to the city.<sup>324</sup> High-ranking officers were not the only Germans in France; rather soldiers and officers alike “clustered around ports, railways and main roads” of France's cities. The administration, akin to a colonial government, was such that at least some German presence was assured in every city in Occupied France, although the actual size of this presence varied greatly depending on the relative importance of any given city.<sup>325</sup> As France's largest city and Germany's local command headquarters, Paris naturally had the highest population of Germans – 40,000 troops as of 1940.<sup>326</sup> Soldiers were not the only addition to the population – imported labor worked both ways, and some 80,000 German civilians were brought into France for construction projects.<sup>327</sup> Their most notable achievement was the Atlantic Wall, designed to impede seaborne Allied invasions.

The magnitude of German presence hinged on two important factors: time and geography. In December 1941 there were 100,000 German troops in France; by spring 1942 that number had dropped to 40,000; by spring 1944 it had risen to a million men.<sup>328</sup> Soldiers were needed initially to ensure that occupation ran smoothly at the beginning. By 1942 these soldiers were gravely needed on the Eastern Front and divisions in France were often older men, less physically capable of contributing actively to the war effort in the east. In the spring of 1944, the Germans were preparing for an anticipated Allied

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<sup>323</sup> Gildea, *Marianne in Chains*, 30.

<sup>324</sup> Gildea, *Marianne in Chains*, 30.

<sup>325</sup> Gildea, *Marianne in Chains*, 31.

<sup>326</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 110.

<sup>327</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 109-110.

<sup>328</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 109.

landing, and therefore began to mass unprecedented levels of troops in France, particularly in the north and along the coast.

At any given time, though, these troops were in different areas. Most towns and villages only saw German troops at the beginning and end of the war, as in the interim they had little cause to move around the country. Some places, however, were subject to continual heavy German presence regardless of their population size, by virtue of their location. The case of Périers, Normandy has already been used to illustrate this. It occupied a strategic potential landing point for Allied invasions, and thus acquired an importance that had nothing to do with the size of its population or whether or not it served as an administrative center. A comparably sized town in the heart of France would never have experienced the same kind of presence.

An interesting aspect of the German presence, though, is that as time wore on the French became almost immune to it, at least in the realm of the public world. Ironically, this growing immunity developed at the same time as the oppression of the occupation intensified, in particular after the end of 1941.<sup>329</sup> Historian Ian Ousby describes the phenomenon saying, “And so the alien presence, increasingly hate and feared in private, could seem so permanent that, in public places where daily life went on, it was taken for granted. It grew invisible.”<sup>330</sup>

#### Collaboration/Resistance

Ostensibly, it would seem simple to define collaboration or resistance. Placed in the context of occupation France, though, only the most overt instances of either are truly easy to define. Particularly in terms of collaboration, motivation heightens the issue and

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<sup>329</sup> Neumaier, *Escalation of German Reprisal Policy*, 130.

<sup>330</sup> Ousby, *Occupation*, 170.

increases the difficulty of making clear divisions. The problems of arriving at formal, fixed definitions for either term reflects the changing landscape they occupied as the war progressed and opinions changed. Collaboration and resistance were fluid and changeable and perhaps the most important aspects of defining them, motive and intent, are virtually impossible to come by, particularly in the light of hindsight.

Thus far resistance and collaboration have been examined in terms of the forms they could take – what a collaborator might do in a factory in the *banlieues* outside Paris, or who might become a resistor in the backwoods of rural France.<sup>331</sup> It is important to understand, however, that choices to resist or collaborate were not made in a vacuum. They were dependent on external, political events. Sometimes it is easy to forget that while Frenchmen and women went about their daily lives for five years, war was raging elsewhere in Europe, and, indeed, most of the world. These events, though far removed geographically, carried great importance and dictated the directions that individuals in France chose.

When the resistance movement began in the summer and fall of 1940, it was little more than a sporadic, unorganized movement. It had little chance of having any real affect on the occupying forces. “Resistance requires some hope, and until late in the war” there was very little to be had.<sup>332</sup> The resistance movement stalled getting off the ground in 1940 for a number of reasons. Much of the strength and organization of later resistance movements came from French communists, but in 1940, the French Communist Party was in tatters. To begin with, it had been officially outlawed in

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<sup>331</sup> Banlieues translates to suburbs.

<sup>332</sup> Paxton, *Vichy France*, 292.



September 1939.<sup>333</sup> Leadership, then, was in question, and officially the party did not even exist to mount any effective resistance. Far more debilitating, though, was the rampant confusion within the party caused by the Nazi-Soviet Pact made weeks earlier, in August 1939.<sup>334</sup> The treaty, which pledged neutrality between the two nations should either be attacked by a third party, bewildered and concerned all of Europe's communists. Since its birth, National Socialism had been the natural enemy of communists. Now that the once hostile groups had become cordial (or at least non-aggressive), communists in France, and throughout Europe, did not know whether to treat Germany as friend or foe. The situation became even more complex for French communists in May and June 1940 when Germany invaded – was it right to fight and protect the nation? Or follow the dictates from Moscow and remain passive in the face of German aggression? This widespread confusion bred inactivity and effectively kept the communists out of the resistance movement until late June 1941. On June 22, Nazi Germany launched Operation Barbarossa and invaded the Soviet Union, thus clarifying the position of Europe's communist community, as the uneasy bedfellows returned to their natural state of mutual enmity.

Not only communists, but the rest of France's political Left, the natural leaders of any resistance movement, had been left devastated and in disarray after the turbulent 1930's.<sup>335</sup> First the Depression hit and the global economy was in shambles.<sup>336</sup> The Popular Front, a coalition government embracing many left-leaning groups including socialists and communists, stepped in to take the lead of the Third Republic in 1934. Led

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<sup>333</sup> Paxton, *Vichy France*, 39.

<sup>334</sup> Kedward, *Resistance in Vichy France*, 2.

<sup>335</sup> Paxton, *Vichy France*, 39.

<sup>336</sup> Jackson, *The Popular Front in France*, 20.

by the widely respected Leon Blum, the government was beset with problems from its inception. The economic crisis brought unemployment and labor wages, which resulted in a massive general strike in June 1936.<sup>337</sup> When the Spanish Civil War broke out a month later it posed a moral dilemma for the nation, but in particular the Popular Front government. Eventually a course of non-intervention was determined, but this was deemed counterintuitive to the liberal principles of the government, and only further undermined its authority.<sup>338</sup> When their finances began to deteriorate in 1937, there was little the coalition government could do, and they were voted out of power a year later.<sup>339</sup> When the conservative, rightist Vichy government founded *l'Etat Français*, it was the final nails in the coffin of the Popular Front.<sup>340</sup>

Leftist uncertainty was not the only stumbling block to mounting an effective resistance. Vichy presented an additional puzzle, especially in the Free Zone. With the Vichy government advocating collaboration and the jurisdiction not yet ironed out between Vichy and German authorities in the earliest days of Occupation, it could be difficult to know for sure who you were resisting.<sup>341</sup> Did an act taken against the Germans necessarily put you in conflict with Pétain and Vichy? Prior to 1942 this presented a large obstacle to resisters in the Free Zone. In the Occupied Zone, and particularly in the Forbidden Zone, these lines were more clearly drawn. Historian Richard Cobb suggests that, especially in the case of the Nord Pas de Calais in the Forbidden Zone, their experience of the war made the necessary moral position clear

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<sup>337</sup> Jackson, *The Popular Front in France*, 9.

<sup>338</sup> Jackson, *The Popular Front in France*, 10.

<sup>339</sup> Jackson, *The Popular Front in France*, 11.

<sup>340</sup> Sweets, *Choices in Vichy France*, 31. *L'état Français*, or the French State, was the name given to the government, to disassociate it from the Third Republic.

<sup>341</sup> Paxton, *Vichy France*, 38.

early: “Patriotism came easily to a frontier region always the first to experience the fire of war and invasion.”<sup>342</sup> After facing the brunt of German invasion and occupation in both World War One and Two, even being virtually isolated from the rest of France under a military governorship, the Forbidden Zone’s position was clear.

While the case for resisting may have been weak in most parts of France in 1940, the case for collaborating virtually made itself. The German victory in June 1940 had shocked everyone, including the Germans, in its speed and totality. One historian observed that, “In 1919 the Germans attacked Verdun for ten months without taking it...in 1940 the Germans took Verdun in little more than a day.”<sup>343</sup> Everywhere France lost quickly and totally, decimating what little morale the French had possessed going into the war. Defeat was almost a relief when it came. “The most important feature of the French defeat was that it left much of the population with a sense that it still had something to lose.”<sup>344</sup> It instilled the French with a sense of German invincibility and their own ineffectiveness. For many, the only logical thing to do in the face of such defeat was to return to normal life.

Returning to normalcy, however, was not as black and white as it might seem. “The most elementary promptings of normalcy in the summer of 1940, the urge to return to home and job, started many Frenchmen down a path of everyday complicity that led gradually and eventually to active assistance in German measures.”<sup>345</sup> Rebuilding roads, reopening factories were all aids to the German occupation of France. While France may

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<sup>342</sup> Richard Cobb, *French and Germans, Germans and French* (Hanover: Brandeis University, 1983) 54.

<sup>343</sup> Ousby, *Occupation*, 21.

<sup>344</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 42.

<sup>345</sup> Paxton, *Vichy France*, 19.

have wanted to do these things for herself, the knowledge that they were simultaneously aiding the occupying power was inescapable. In 1940, though, collaboration seemed to many like the best, most realistic option. It was undoubtedly only a matter of time before Britain fell and virtually all Europe was under German dominion. Then France would receive preferential treatment in the new European order that would arise for having submitted first and quietly.<sup>346</sup> Collaboration was not only expedient, it was advisable.

As the war changed though, so too did ideas regarding the advisability of collaboration. During the summer and fall of 1940, collaboration was at its most popular. From there, it began slipping. The decline was neither constant nor steady, but by late 1942 the tide had turned decisively from collaboration and towards resistance. Domestic and foreign events both played a part in this shift. Abroad, the German army had begun to experience setbacks – the possibility that it was not invincible began to seem real. German soldiers suffered tremendous losses at the hands of the Soviets at Stalingrad, in what was becoming a bloody war of attrition. Axis forces advancing in North Africa had been stopped at El Alamein in a decisive move by the Allied powers. Weaknesses began to show in the once impregnable Germans hide.

At the same time, the situation within France itself was growing increasingly dire. In November 1942, the German army in France launched Case Anton, which completed the invasion and occupation begun in 1940. The Free Zone joined the Occupied Zone and all of France was under German dominion. 1942 and the total occupation also saw a marked change in German policies in France. In spring 1942, the job of policing France

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<sup>346</sup> Rings, *Life With the Enemy*, 112.

was transferred from the regular army to the SS.<sup>347</sup> 1942 also saw the beginning and the high-water mark of the deportation of France's Jews to camps in the east, including the infamous round-ups that occurred in Paris in July.<sup>348</sup>

Indeed, 1942 can be pinpointed as the turning point in the French occupation. "A crude graph of French public opinion from 1940 to 1944 would show nearly universal acceptance of Marshal Pétain in June 1940 and nearly universal acceptance of General de Gaulle in August 1944" – the turning point was 1942.<sup>349</sup> 1942 was the year when an organized, rural resistance truly began to take hold.<sup>350</sup> In 1940 and 1941, resistance had been an individual and desperate act, built on symbolism rather than efficacy. It had occurred mainly in the cities where occupation rankled earlier and harder.

Throughout 1942 and 1943, though, despite the fact that most French citizens were turning against Vichy, the resistance movement was still a small, relatively limited group – "people were more concerned with the hardships caused by rationing."<sup>351</sup> Approval for and sympathy with the resistance grew at a much faster rate than new recruits joined. Disliking Vichy or disapproving of collaboration did not in itself create resisters.<sup>352</sup> By 1944 this pattern changed. At that point, Allied victory seemed not only likely, but imminent. Just as collaboration had been attractive to opportunists in 1940, resistance now took on a cache to those with an eye towards the future. Collaboration, in turn, reached an all time low in participation and popularity – public opinion had turned

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<sup>347</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 108.

<sup>348</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 143.

<sup>349</sup> Paxton, *Vichy France*, 234.

<sup>350</sup> Ousby, *Occupation*, 254.

<sup>351</sup> Marc Abeles, *Quiet Days in Burgundy: A Study of Local Politics* (Great Britain: Cambridge University, 1989) 227.

<sup>352</sup> Burrin, *France Under the Germans*, 184.

completely against Vichy and its policies. During 1944, the resistance movement was at its most active and its most populous.

A separate cause for this, aside from the changing patterns of war outside France, may have been that at this point the occupation again intensified. It had been in place since June 1940 and by 1944 shortages were felt nationwide; no region or town was immune any longer. It was also by far the most dangerous year to be in France, in particular during the spring and summer.<sup>353</sup> For the first time since 1940, German troops were moving on a colossal scale. This time, however, it was not as the victorious conquerors, but as soldiers actively at war, and they were thus keen to avoid major roads and thoroughfares, which were more likely to attract Allied bombers. This is the period during which the only major atrocities in the occupation occurred, the best example being the massacre at Oradour-sur-Glane in the Limousin on June 10, 1944, when 642 people were killed. The intensifying occupation and the weakening of the Germans on other fronts combined to inspire French resistance to escalate just as the occupation was reaching its closing stages.

Some historians have argued that the black market was an act of resistance. While participating in the black market certainly went against Vichy's policies, there are several problems with this claim. Evidence confirms that though Vichy officially condemned the black market, it also recognized the necessity of its existence. A law promulgated in 1942, for example, intended to regulate the black market specifically omitted any mention of using the market for personal needs.<sup>354</sup> Many, if not all, Vichy officials participated in it themselves. German soldiers were also key participants in the

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<sup>353</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 326-7.

<sup>354</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 224.

black market. The black market was simply the natural response to a forced, controlled economy, without ideological undertones. Proof of this lies in the black markets that sprang up even in those states not under occupation.<sup>355</sup>

### Social Class

According to some sources, the occupation, and in particular the black market, were responsible for an odd social inversion in France.<sup>356</sup> Education, long held at a premium in French culture took a backseat to more practical connections – farmers and grocers, for example, had easier access to resources than the educated elite by virtue of their work. However the educated elite were also those citizens most likely to keep memoirs, thus “historians are particularly aware of their suffering.”<sup>357</sup> Indeed, virtually all of the primary sources available from the occupation period are written by members of the upper or middle classes. Marie-Louise Osmont married a doctor from a wealthy family and inherited the ancestral estate along with the local prestige attached to it. Henri Drouot was a history professor at the University of Dijon. Louis Guilloux and Alfred Fabre-Luce were both well-established writers.

Did the educated elite have a markedly different experience of occupation? Or were they simply more accustomed to recording their thoughts? Did those with truly horrific struggles not have the luxury of putting pen to paper to record their experiences? Not that education guaranteed surviving the war unscathed – Drouot and Fabre-Luce experienced firsthand the deprivation in France’s cities, while Osmont was obligated to quarter soldiers belonging to a foreign power for over four years. It seems likely the

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<sup>355</sup> Taylor, *The Black Market in Occupied Northern France*, 174.

<sup>356</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 242.

<sup>357</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 243.

preponderance of sources from this group reflects tendencies within that group, rather than any great differentiation from France as a whole.

Any social inversion that did occur was limited. Money was the best tool for survival during the occupation. The right amount of money made anything possibly somehow, even when France was plagued by nationwide scarcity late in the war.<sup>358</sup> In this sense, the occupation had not changed anything. Those with money still had access to goods if they were willing to pay a high price and those without it did not. Certainly this aspect of the occupation shows a significant continuity, rather than change. Money eased the pains of occupation, and lacking it augmented them considerably.

Socio-economic conditions had tangible effects on women's experience of the occupation. It dictated the way in which they interacted with German soldiers, and the way in which the government responded to their interactions. "The reports of rape in Paris came from working-class districts...both the French and German authorities seem to have taken rape most seriously when bourgeois women were involved."<sup>359</sup>

Working class women were more likely to have contact with soldiers by virtue of their jobs – the Germans frequented cafés and hotels throughout France and it was often the barmaids, waitresses, or cleaning ladies in these institutions who were reported to have sexual relationships with German soldiers.<sup>360</sup> Access and opportunity were essential ingredients. These women were readily available and, because they were not of a high social class, were considered legitimate targets. It would have been nearly impossible for these working class women to avoid some interaction with German soldiers.

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<sup>358</sup> Alfred Fabre-Luce, *Journal de la France 1939-1944* (Paris: Fayard, 1969) 411.

<sup>359</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 25.

<sup>360</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 158.



Furthermore, they were often likely to be the children of unwed or single mothers themselves.<sup>361</sup> Many of these women could not help but see a relationship with a German soldier as an opportunity – while the Germans were the dominant power in France it offered several advantages. These ranged from specialized access to goods to an elevated importance in society.

Unlike the romanticized image of cross cultural love blossoming in the small, provincial town of Nevers portrayed in the 1959 film *Hiroshima, Mon Amour*, relationships between French women and German men tended to flourish in large urban areas that had high concentrations of German soldiers.<sup>362</sup> This provided not only the necessary opportunity, but also anonymity, which was extremely important for protection, as the French public remained stolidly opposed to such liaisons.

Class differences also colored choices regarding collaboration and resistance. One historian described the “typical” collaborator as an upper to middle-class, urban male.<sup>363</sup> Again, part of this stereotype was subject to opportunity. Urbanites would have had more access to means of collaboration, whether simply through contact with German soldiers or more nuanced paths. The documentary *The Sorrow and the Pity* by Marcel Ophuls implies that the bourgeois were largely neutral, as they had the most to lose, leaving those at the bottom and top of society as the foremost collaborators.<sup>364</sup> This somewhat contradictory picture leaves us with collaborators who had either the most to gain or the most to offer.

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<sup>361</sup> Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 161.

<sup>362</sup> *Hiroshima Mon Amour*, dir. Alain Resnais, perf. Emmanuelle Riva, VHS, Pathe Films, 1959.

<sup>363</sup> Thomas R. Christofferson, *France During World War Two* (New York: Fordham University, 2006).

<sup>364</sup> *The Sorrow and the Pity*, dir. Ophuls.

Historiography tends to generalize class as a determinant for collaboration or resistance far more than was likely the case. In hindsight class-consciousness has been introduced where perhaps it never existed. For example, because labor parties were suppressed in Nazi Germany, it would therefore have supposedly been impossible for any of France's working class to enter into any kind of resistance, out of proletariat solidarity.<sup>365</sup> Collaboration, then, was allegedly restricted to capitalists, in particular business leaders, and resistance was the realm of the working class, who purportedly saw their cause as a cross-European crusade.<sup>366</sup> Obviously this viewpoint is not only anachronistic but seriously misleading. "Not all leading industrialists were collaborators, any more than all workers were members of the Resistance."<sup>367</sup> Suggesting otherwise not only generalizes what were undoubtedly personal and circumstantial decisions, but also grossly overpopulates both the collaboration and resistance movements, neither of which ever had any such overwhelming numbers.

### Conclusion

It is significant, and intentional, that all the journals I have used as primary sources are from four very different places. Paris, Dijon, St. Brieuc and Périers are all important by virtue of their vantage point on the occupation, but none shared exactly the same experience. Together, they provide a nuanced picture of the occupation, specifically as it occurred in Ile-de-France, Brittany, Normandy, and Burgundy, four of the major provinces in the Occupied Zone. Additionally, although each belongs to the

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<sup>365</sup> Rings, *Life With the Enemy*, 79.

<sup>366</sup> Rings, *Life With the Enemy*, 79.

<sup>367</sup> Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome*, 7.

upper class, no source is quite like the other, and thus not only four distinct regions, but four distinct visions of France are presented.

Once compiled, the picture that emerges shows the links between the material, political and social situations that persisted under the occupation. Where material resources were limited, discontent was high, but those who stood to gain by the occupation often did so. Take for example the black market and the role it played in the rise of the countryside. While many *paysans* suffered through the occupation, others were able to navigate the extralegal markets to offset their losses in the rising costs of equipment with unprecedented revenues from desperate town and city dwellers.

The links between the city and the country also emerge as part of the image of Occupied France. Many things bound them together, in particular economic and social ties. While these ties differed from region to region, what was constant throughout were the links and the lack of separation between the urban and rural experiences of occupation.

## Conclusion

In many ways, the German occupation of France between 1940 and 1944 served to reinforce trends that already existed. Social stratification came to the foreground as the prime importance of money and connections was reemphasized in the heightened competition for resources. Tensions between cities and the countryside – in place long before the occupation, if largely dormant – were reignited as the supremacy of the city was tested and strained by scarcity. Hostility towards outsiders and the unknown also reemerged with new potency – the occupying German and the unknown Frenchman were equally subject to this antagonism. Continuity persisted, even in the face of occupation.

In other ways, however, life in France changed drastically with the occupation. Even while social stratification retained its former importance, the black market was opening new avenues for social advancement for the enterprising farmer or merchant. The black market served the additional purpose of establishing new links, both trade and familial. These links built, and in some cases rebuilt, bonds between the city and country at the same moment that these same bonds were coming under threat from scarcity and competition.

Several factors that determined the experience of occupation can be identified: geography, population density, agricultural traditions, social class, pre-war conditions, and ingenuity. These variables shaped the way the occupation appeared in different places and to different people.

Geography played an important strategic role. Those Frenchmen living in the Nord Pas de Calais were subjected to a total military occupation from the outset of the war, due to their tactically important location close to the Belgian border and in the initial

German line of assault. Compounding this was the industrial importance of the region, which was home to a number of factories put to use towards the German war effort. Southern provinces like the Limousin or the Auvergne, by contrast, had a substantially different experience. The south of France was not integrated into the Occupied Zone until November 1942, and even then the German presence was limited.<sup>368</sup> Landlocked regions in the economically dependent south simply held less importance for the occupying Germans.

Population density could often transform what would otherwise be a strategically unimportant area. France's urban centers, whether landlocked or coastal trading hubs, became the focus of the German occupation. Each had its own German regional administration, designed to correspond to the existing French administration.<sup>369</sup> While the center of the occupation was Paris, other cities like Tours, Bordeaux, Nantes and Lille were all important centers, focuses of interaction between the occupier and the occupied and conduits for resistance and collaboration.

Agricultural traditions often followed the lines of geography and were extremely important to a region's experience of the occupation. Monoculture, which in peacetime would often make an area prosperous from the wine or olive oil trade, became a hindrance under the occupation conditions. Virtually nonexistent foreign trade combined with truncated domestic routes often limited regions to what they could produce themselves, giving a decisive advantage to those accustomed to tending to diverse crops and livestock. Living in a monocultural region was of course no death sentence –

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<sup>368</sup> Richard Cobb, *French and Germans, Germans and French* (Hanover: Brandeis University, 1983) 54.

<sup>369</sup> Robert Gildea, *Marianne in Chains* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2003) 31.

domestic trade was not so damaged that inter-regional trade ceased to function. It did, however, put those areas, in particular their urban centers, at a pronounced disadvantage. Marseilles, for example, suffered from greater deprivations than Paris in the north because it lacked a proximate self-sufficient agricultural tradition.<sup>370</sup>

Social class and the advantages (or disadvantages) that came with it could easily change the face of occupation, no matter where in France you were. Those who wanted something first needed something to trade for it – according to Alfred Fabre-Luce, for tobacco it was advisable to bring a chicken; when looking for cement, cheese.<sup>371</sup> Wealth brought availability, even for those goods scarce or nonexistent to others.<sup>372</sup> Thus even as the black market was providing new opportunities to France's farmers or middlemen, preexisting wealth still held its natural advantages and allowed those with it to live above the daily scramblings and endemic dangers of the black market. Marie-Louise Osmont provides an excellent illustration of this point, as her wealth allowed her to live and eat comfortably for the majority of the occupation without once entering in the black market herself.<sup>373</sup> In this way, France's pre-war social structure was reinforced.

What can be said of the character of the French, as judged by the occupation? What emerged from Occupied France was neither widespread national heroism nor cowardice, but rather a dogged insistence on carrying on in spite of events. Even if every other factor was stacked against you– geography, regional agricultural traditions, social class, etc – with the right mix of opportunity and ingenuity, the occupation could become

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<sup>370</sup> Michel Cepede, *Agriculture et Alimentation en France Durant la IIe Guerre Mondiale* (Paris: Genin, 1961) 396.

<sup>371</sup> Alfred Fabre-Luce, *Journal de la France 1939-1944* (Paris: Fayard, 1969) 415.

<sup>372</sup> Irene Nemirovsky, *Suite Française* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006) 243.

<sup>373</sup> Marie-Louise Osmont, *The Normandy Diary of Marie-Louise Osmont* (New York: Random House, 1994).

not only livable but profitable.<sup>374</sup> The majority of the French accepted that events beyond their control had dictated their loser's lot and set about not to change the world, but to see themselves and their families through the occupation unscathed. While it may not seem particularly heroic, this path does illustrate a national spirit of ingenuity and perseverance.<sup>375</sup> Out of this spirit, substitutes for missing staples were developed, including saccharine for sugar and pedal-powered generators to create electricity at hair salons and other businesses.<sup>376</sup>

One central generalization can be made about Occupied France: The urban experience of occupation was harder than its rural counterpart. Rural areas had the advantage of proximity to points of production, which generally enabled them to live through an occupation less marked by scarcity, and even one that put them in a position of economic power for the first time in generations. Actual, demonstrable changes were also simply more present in urban areas – it was here where most of the German soldiers in France were gathered, here where administrators were paired with their German opposite numbers, where tensions ran the highest. France's cities, in particular Paris, were also the initial birthplace of both the collaboration and resistance movements.<sup>377</sup> While these movements diversified geographically as the occupation progressed, their impetus came from the opportunities available in large urban centers, unavailable in the rest of France at the outset of the war.

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<sup>374</sup> Lynne Taylor, *The Black Market in Occupied Northern France, 1940-4*, Contemporary European History Vol. 6 (Cambridge: Cambridge University, July 1997) 157.

<sup>375</sup> Ian Ousby, *Occupation – The Ordeal of France 1940-1944* (New York: St. Martin's, 1998) 119.

<sup>376</sup> Ousby, *Occupation*, 119, 123.

<sup>377</sup> *The Sorrow and the Pity*, dir. Marcel Ophuls, DVD, Télévision Rencontre, 1972.

The overall image of Occupied France, then, is somewhat contradictory. Was it markedly different than France under the Third Republic, or closely parallel? Certainly several of the government officials transferred directly from the ailing Third Republic to Vichy's *l'Etat Français*.<sup>378</sup> Even so, and in spite of certain significant continuities, French society had changed. The spirit and the image of France were permanently altered by defeat, by suffering, and most importantly by the questionable and haunting legacy of occupation. One historian wrote that "the moral and psychic wounds were even more tender than the material ones," suggesting the depth of the damage to France's republican identity.<sup>379</sup>

The experience of civilians in Occupied France between 1940 and 1944 set the course for the French nation to take for the subsequent several decades. It became a source of national pride and later a source of national shame, and in both it shaped the attitudes of contemporary French society towards their past and present. Today it is still debated, as historians and laypeople alike search to find the middle ground that defined occupation. What truly defined occupation, though, was not its ever-evolving legacy. Rather it was the day-to-day experiences of French civilians who lived for four years under German power and, as a nation, sought to find normalcy and stability in the midst of defeat and occupation.

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<sup>378</sup> Robert O. Paxton, *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order, 1940-1944* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972) 16.

<sup>379</sup> Paxton, *Vichy France* 20.



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