

THE JEWS AND VICHY: REFLECTIONS ON FRENCH HISTORIOGRAPHY

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ABSTRACT. *This review examines the state of current research on the fate of the Jews under the Vichy regime. Remarkable studies, from native and foreign scholars, dealing with the persecution of the Jews have examined aspects of that process hitherto ignored. They constitute a major contribution to our knowledge of the wartime involvement of the upper echelons of the French administration, the legal profession, and the banking system in the persecution of the Jews. And yet, despite recurring revelations of the involvement of the administration in the wartime treatment of Jews, despite the outstanding contribution of studies of the Vichy regime, and the space occupied by the Jewish question in the media, they have failed to bring to a close that chapter in French history.*

In 1987, forty years after the Second World War ended, Henry Rousso, Directeur de l'Institut d'histoire du temps présent (IHTP-CNRS), wrote an analysis of French attitudes to the Vichy regime and argued that France had still not come to terms with that period.¹ There was, he concluded, a persistent 'Vichy syndrome'. Some years later, in collaboration with Eric Conan, he noted the curious fact that *judeo-centrisme* had come to occupy a unique place in French public discourse.² The *judeo-centrisme* of the 1980s bore no relationship to past forms of anti-Semitism. It was rather the resurfacing of events and issues which had occurred during the Vichy period; it was, in effect, another version of 'Vichy syndrome'.

Press reports like that on the 'gendarmérie nationale' which allegedly made use of a wartime Jewish card index to organize the round ups became the subject of a parliamentary commission of inquiry. While the commission finally dismissed the case, it had nevertheless raised the issue of French complicity in Nazi policy.³ The quick reaction both in parliament and the press suggested that the political establishment had become sensitive to the question of the French role in the persecution of the Jewish population. Other instances of *judeo-centrisme* followed, not all linked to Vichy's treatment of the Jews. Some were public events staged by the Jewish community, such as annual commemorations at Drancy, the major French transit camp, in which thousands of Jews were held until their deportation. On such occasions ministers, and

¹ The expression was first used by Henry Rousso in *Le syndrome de Vichy* (Paris, 1987); it was further developed in Eric Conan and Henry Rousso, *Vichy, un passé qui ne passe pas* (Paris, 1994).

² See Rousso, *Le syndrome de Vichy*; Conan and Rousso, *Vichy, un passé qui ne passe pas*, pp. 268–74.

³ For a review of the history of the *Fichier juif* (the card index) and the problems it raised, see 'Le fichier juif': rapport de la commission présidée par René Rémond au Premier ministre (Paris, 1996); Philippe Grand, 'Le fichier juif: un malaise, réponse au rapport Rémond remis au Premier ministre le 3 juillet 1996', *Revue d'histoire de la shoah*, n.s., 167 (1999), pp. 53–101.

sometimes the president of the republic, attended and delivered speeches condemning this shameful past. All such declarations were dutifully reported by the media.⁴

Cases involving resistance fighters and collaborators were also brought to public attention during the 1980s. The Klaus Barbie trial was just one such case. Barbie had been condemned to death in absentia for crimes against humanity because he arranged the arrest and deportation of forty Jewish children.⁵ And then there was the relentless public campaign waged by Serge Klarsfeld, demanding a retrial of René Bousquet, the head of Vichy's national police, and Jean Leguay, his representative in Occupied France, for their role in the organization of the deportations of Jews.⁶ These demands were followed by the indictment and trial of Maurice Papon.⁷ During the war Papon, as general-secretary of the prefecture of the Bordeaux region, had been responsible for the arrest and deportations of Jews. Equally momentous was the French Catholic Church's public declaration of 1997 asking forgiveness for having failed to come to the defence of the Jews.⁸ In March 2000 the French parliament passed a law instituting a national day commemorating the persecution of the Jews. In so doing the state finally acknowledged its past guilt and no doubt hoped to put an end to the 'Vichy syndrome' and the accompanying *judeo-centrisme* of the 1980s.⁹

I

In this review I want to look at the historical studies which dealt with French society under Vichy and examine the possible sources of France's complex attitude to the Jews. In general historians agree on the ideological and structural changes that Vichy introduced in the years 1940 to 1944. However, the support those changes received from some sectors of French society has only been partially studied.¹⁰ Beyond professional associations and the middle-class circles that supported Vichy, the role of the Catholic

⁴ In fact, of all the successive presidents, Jacques Chirac was the first on one of these occasions to recognize French responsibility when he declared: 'Yes, the murderous madness of the occupant [the Germans] was seconded by French people, by the French State', quoted in a parliamentary report, in <http://www.senat.fr/rap/199-353.html>, p. 7.

⁵ For a comprehensive presentation of Barbie's background, see Tom Bower, *Klaus Barbie, the butcher of Lyon* (London, 1984); for his trial, see Alain Finkielkraut, *Remembering in vain: the Klaus Barbie trial and crimes against humanity*, intro. A. Kaplan, transl. R. Lapidus with S. Godfrey (New York, 1992).

⁶ For the documentary evidence supporting the case against Bousquet and Leguay assembled by him, see Serge Klarsfeld, *Vichy-Auschwitz* (2 vols., Paris, 1983–5).

⁷ For the case against Maurice Papon, see Michel Slitinsky, *Procès Papon: le devoir de justice* (Paris, 1997); Bertrand Poirot-Delpech, *Papon: un crime de bureau* (Paris, 1998); for the proceedings of his trial, see *Le procès de Maurice Papon* (2 vols., Paris, 1998).

⁸ 'Déclaration de repentance lue par mgr Olivier de Berranger le 30 septembre 1997', *Sens*, n.s., 222 (1997), pp. 419–24.

⁹ The parliamentary report can be found on <http://www.senat.fr/rap/199-353.html>.

¹⁰ It is impossible to list here the countless studies which address Vichy personnel, their various policies, the 'collaborationists' movements, the press, and intellectuals. From among them it is perhaps useful to begin with Robert Aron, *Histoire de Vichy* (Paris, 1954), followed by Robert O. Paxton, *Vichy France: old guard and new order, 1940–1944* (New York, 1972), and conclude with a general study of the period: Jean-Pierre Azéma, *De Munich à la libération* (Paris, 1979), and on Vichy in particular: Jean-Pierre Azéma and François Bédarida, eds., *Le régime de Vichy et les Français* (2 vols., Paris, 1992); for an examination of some of the professional organizations which supported Vichy's xenophobic policy, see Vicki Caron, *Uneasy asylum: France and the Jewish refugee crisis, 1933–1942* (Stanford, 1999).

higher clergy in particular still awaits a full examination.¹¹ The church episcopate had certainly welcomed the new state because it appeared to promise that France would be re-Christianized. Did that mean complicity in the elimination of French Jewry?

Another problem was the uncomfortable issue of continuity between the pre-1940 period and the Vichy years. Vicki Caron's study of French immigration policies adopted during the 1930s reopened an old question: were Vichy's anti-Jewish policies simply a qualitative extension of measures introduced in the last years of the Third Republic? Her findings suggest that the answer is yes.¹² The professional and middle classes had previously pressured governments to introduce restrictive measures aimed at foreign Jews in particular, and only gained limited satisfaction. Caron makes the important point that they found Vichy not only fully in accord with their demands but also willing to carry them out. Before the war these demands were partly anti-Semitic and partly economic; under Vichy the latter issue was resolved. Jewish business competitors were dispossessed by state-appointed administrators. Although 2 per cent of the Jewish professional classes were ultimately permitted to practise their professions, the consequences for the rest were catastrophic.¹³ A far more important question, however, is the general dispossession of the Jews carried out by Vichy, which in spite of its scale has not been fully examined. We have yet to learn which French commercial interests benefited from the programme of 'aryanization' – that is the transfer, or rather the theft, of Jewish property to the benefit of non-Jews.¹⁴

While Caron's study points to the support Vichy received from certain social classes, the argument for continuity remains unresolved. The Third Republic had a mixed record on Jewish issues. Despite strong pressure from the Right and the harsh, economic conditions, measures introduced between 1933 and 1939 aimed at the wave of immigration to France in general and were not directed particularly at Jews. Moreover, under the Republic no legislation was ever considered that would have affected native Jews. Hence when war broke out in September 1939, police regulations directed at foreigners were already in place. When the Third Republic collapsed in June 1940, the newly created Vichy state carried out previous policies directed at foreigners but now proceeded to transform them into a policy primarily directed against Jews, foreign-born and native French alike.

In the course of the four years of Vichy's existence some four hundred laws, amendments to laws, decrees, and police measures directed at Jews were introduced. The list of such measures in strict chronological order is the place to start in understanding the evolution of policy. It began with a definition, went on to counting,

¹¹ Of the numerous articles and conferences which have addressed themselves to the Catholic Church, two recent studies need to be mentioned, W. D. Halls, *Politics, society and Christianity in Vichy France* (Oxford and Providence, 1995); Michèle Cointet, *L'église sous Vichy, 1940–1945: la repentance en question* (Paris, 1998); the post-war issue of the French Catholic Church and its assistance to war criminals has been the object of a commission of inquiry, see René Rémond et al., *Touvier et L'église, Rapport de la Commission instituée par le cardinal Decourtray* (Paris, 1992).

¹² See the evidence and comments on the pre-war and wartime activities of the medical, the legal, and other professional groups, Caron, *Uneasy asylum*.

¹³ For the numbers affected, see Joseph Billig, *Le commissariat général aux questions juives (1941–1944)* (3 vols., Paris, 1955–60), III, ch. 1.

¹⁴ Preliminary work had already begun in the 1950s but was never pursued on account of the inaccessibility of records; however, a beginning was made, see *ibid.*; Philippe Verheyde, *Les mauvais comptes de Vichy: l'aryanisation des entreprises juives* (Paris, 1999); see also *Revue d'histoire de la shoah*, 168 (2000), on the theme of 'l'aryanization: le vol légalisé'.

dispossession, ration books and identity papers stamped 'Juif', the obligation to wear a distinctive sign in the occupied zone, and isolation from the rest of the population, and ended with transfer to camps for deportation.¹⁵ While most measures were new, some were inherited from the Third Republic. In 1927 criteria for naturalization had been liberalized. One of Vichy's earliest measures created a commission to review those concessions and Jews were the main target.¹⁶ Furthermore, in order to win the population's support for its anti-Jewish drive, the government used the press and radio. It cancelled the 'Loi Marchandeu', passed in April 1939, that had banned religious and racial defamation in the press.¹⁷ Equally significant were changes introduced to restrict foreigners' rights to practise certain professions. Jews were thus eliminated from all professions.¹⁸ The concentration camps created on the eve of the war are another significant case. They were initially created in order to house Spanish refugees from the civil war and were called 'camps d'hébergement'. They were temporary camps but were surrounded by barbed wire. At the outbreak of the war they found a new purpose. They were used to intern 'enemy aliens', mostly Jewish and anti-fascist refugees who had fled Nazism. Vichy did not close those camps. On the contrary the number of camps and inmates was increased until at one point they held 40,000 foreign Jews.¹⁹ Many remained in the camps until August 1942 when they were gradually handed over to the German authorities for deportation. The issue of continuity or discontinuity in French politics during the 1933-42 period requires a serious re-examination of such evidence.²⁰

II

Another area that needs further work is the behaviour of the Jewish organizations under the new regime. Most existing studies ignore the context. They describe organized Jewish efforts to protect their population as if the environment were relentlessly hostile from the first day, as if Jews lived in isolation from, and not in the midst of, the French population. The facts raise a question at this point. Of a Jewish population of roughly 330,000 in July 1940, three-quarters survived. Without some contact and support from the French people, that could not have happened. How did the Jews survive and how, if at all, did non-Jews, and the churches in particular help? How did non-Jews regard the gradual introduction and escalation of persecution measures? How did they react as

¹⁵ The chronological listing is presented in Joseph Lubetski, *La condition des juifs en France sous l'occupation allemande* (Paris, 1945).

¹⁶ The establishment of the commission was announced with the law of 22 July 1940 in *ibid.*; for some figures concerning the number of Jews who had benefited from the liberalization of naturalization and the numbers whose French nationality was taken away, see Michael R. Marrus and Robert O. Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews* (New York, 1981), pp. 323-5.

¹⁷ The law was cancelled on 27 August, see Lubetski, *La condition des juifs*.

¹⁸ For the pre-war measures, see Caron, *Uneasy asylum*; for Vichy, see Marrus and Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews*, pp. 98-9 and *passim*; for the list of professions affected, see text of the first 'Statut des juifs' of 3 Oct. 1940, followed by the second 'Statut des juifs' of 2 June 1941, in *Le statut des juifs de Vichy*. Assembled and presented by Serge Klarsfeld (Paris, 1990).

¹⁹ See Joseph Weill, *Contribution à l'histoire des camps d'internement dans l'anti-France* (Paris, 1946); Anne Grynberg, *Les camps de la honte: les internés juifs des camps français, 1939-1944* (Paris, 1991).

²⁰ For the still outstanding study of Vichy and the Jews, see Marrus and Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews*; for an earlier discussion of the issue of continuity and discontinuity, see Stanley Hoffmann, *Decline or renewal: France since the 1930s* (New York, 1974); for the issue of how France, as a nation, has dealt with its past, see Michael R. Marrus, 'Coming to terms with Vichy', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 9, 1 (1995), pp. 23-41; for one of the earliest post-war rejections of Vichy having represented France see De Gaulle's comment quoted in Roussio, *Le syndrome de Vichy*, p. 27.

they witnessed the mass arrests and deportation of women, children, the old, and the sick? Was their help the determining factor which made it possible for so many Jews to survive?²¹ These are fundamental questions that still need an answer.

The political backgrounds and the ideological baggage of the men who assumed the leadership of the state are well known. It is still useful to recall how the shock of the defeat of June 1940 provided them with an historical opportunity to eliminate the republican system, which many of them had always opposed. The president of the republic was replaced by a chief of state. All political organizations were banned, as were the freemasonic lodges. The new rulers did not wait long to name those they had long held to be the enemies of 'traditional' France and present them as responsible for the catastrophic defeat. Foremost among those considered guilty were the communists, the socialists, the trade unions, the freemasons, and, of course, their *bête noire*: the Jews. During the weeks that followed the formation of the government in the summer of 1940, ideology became law and a new France was to be built.²²

From the very first weeks of the Vichy regime, before the nation was called upon to support a reconstruction programme, the 'Révolution nationale' focused on the 'Jewish question'. Far more important issues required attention, so it is legitimate to ask why the first legislative effort to reconstruct France was directed against the Jews. Base, irrational, and ingrained anti-Semitism on the part of some of the men in power has long been known. Another reason might be the need of the new government to ensure popular support. Believing that a majority of French were anti-Semites, and that they would support the restrictive measures, the Vichy authorities blamed the defeat on the Jews.

Vichy ministers, including Marshal Philippe Pétain, might not have agreed on all issues but it is clear that all shared the view that there was a Jewish problem that needed resolution. All seemed to agree that Jews had exercised a nefarious influence on society, had to be denied access to activities likely to influence public opinion and removed from the economy.²³ From the very first days of the new government's existence, anti-Semitic laws were on the drawing board.²⁴ All such laws were devised on the basis of a definition of a Jew designed to exclude them from society.²⁵ Ministers agreed that Jews should be removed from all areas connected with the administration, education, culture, the press, the army, the professions, and commerce. This consensus found its full expression in October 1940 when the first 'Statut des juifs' was issued.²⁶ One problem remained: what was to be done with the native Jews, particularly those who had lived in France

²¹ Although partially addressed, much more is still required. A promising beginning has been made, see Susan Zuccotti, *The Holocaust, the French, and the Jews* (New York, 1993; reprint London, 1999); Asher Cohen, *Persécutions et sauvetage: juifs et français sous l'occupation et sous Vichy*, pref. R. Rémond (Paris, 1993).

²² For the personalities who joined Vichy, see Paxton, *Vichy France*.

²³ See the government statement issued on 18 Oct. 1940 in *Le temps*, 19 Oct. 1940. The full text is available in Serge Klarsfeld, *Le calendrier de la persécution des juifs en France, 1940-1944* (Paris, 1993), pp. 28-30.

²⁴ As early as 1 July 1940, Raphael Alibert, even before he was nominated minister of justice, referring to the Jews, is quoted as having stated 'je prepare un texte aux petits oignons' (I am preparing a well-spiced text), quoted in Klarsfeld, *Le statut des juifs de Vichy*, p. 30.

²⁵ For the laws passed by Vichy until October 1940 and which included the formation of a commission to re-examine the naturalizations granted since 1927, see R. Sarraute et Tager *Les juifs sous l'occupation: recueil de textes officiels français et allemands, 1940-1944* (Paris, 1945); the French law was issued on 3 Oct. 1940 in which a definition of who was a Jew was announced; it was made public on 18 Oct. 1940, *ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

for generations and had made significant contribution to the defence, culture, and economy of the country? While this issue awaited resolution, minor modifications in their favour were introduced in the first 'Statut des juifs', but foreign Jews were to be expelled from the country.²⁷

Franco-Jewish historiography has not done much to explain Vichy's anti-Semitism. Nor has sufficient attention been given to the question of whether under Vichy old-style anti-Semitism gained popular support. Franco-Jewish historiography has also avoided such issues and generally limited itself to the consequences arising from the measures that were introduced. Most studies examine how the Jewish population and its organizations responded to a deteriorating situation.²⁸ Studies directed at the organized responses have generally tended to reflect two approaches. Some studies have presented the Jews as powerless victims confronted by overwhelming forces. Others emphasize Jewish resistance. Both approaches are problematic. Three issues arise: first what was 'the Jewish community'? Second how did it define itself to the regime? What forms did Jewish resistance take?

III

The answers to those questions depend on the period in post-war history in which they were formulated. Let me review briefly what seem to me to be the three main stages of historiography on the fate of the Jews. During the 1950s historians argued that Jewish and non-Jewish reactions were similar. During this phase Jews in France were not presented as a homogeneous community. The second phase of that historiography emerged in the mid-1960s and lasted until the end of the 1970s. In that period the most significant works dealt with organized Jewish resistance, the communist organizations in particular.²⁹ *Le monde juif*, published by the Centre de documentation juive contemporaine (CDJC), provided a forum for articles dealing with such issues. *Yad Vashem Studies* occasionally published articles dealing with France.³⁰ The most

²⁷ While laws were soon passed expelling Jews from the public service, denying access to professions to some, sometime in August a law was in the process of being drafted providing a definition of who was a Jew. Interestingly, a draft of the law was already discussed on 30 Aug. 1940 at an Assembly of Archbishops and Bishops. A resolution was passed in which the draft law was the object of comments. It expressed concerns at the proposition that the Jews may be 'brutally chased [out of the country]'; see Klarsfeld, *Le calendrier*, p. 2; on 4 Oct. 1940 Vichy authorized the local prefects in occupied France to intern foreign Jews if considered necessary, see Sarraute and Tager, *Les juifs*.

²⁸ For an excellent illustration of individual and collective Jewish reactions to the laws and measures, see Zuccotti, *The Holocaust, the French, and the Jews*; for a more detailed and wider study equally based on personal experiences but which is extended to an analysis of the various organizations and their activities, see Renée Poznanski, *Être juif en France pendant la seconde guerre mondiale* (Paris, 1994).

²⁹ David Knout, *Contribution à l'histoire de la résistance juive en France, 1940-1944*, pref. L. Saillant (Paris, 1947); Alfred Grant, *Paris ville du front* (in Yiddish) (Paris, 1958); Abraham Lisner, *Un franc-tireur juif raconte* (Paris, 1969); David Diamant, *Héros juifs de la résistance française, 1940-1944* (Paris, 1962); Anny Latour, *La résistance juive en France* (Paris, 1970); David Diamant, *Les juifs dans la résistance française, 1940-1944* (Paris, 1971); Jacques Ravine, *La résistance organisée des juifs en France* (Paris, 1973); Adam Rutkowski, *La lutte des juifs en France à l'époque de l'occupation*, pref. G. Wellers (Paris, 1975); see also Ariel Joseph, 'Jewish self-defence and resistance in France during World War II', *Yad Vashem Studies*, 6 (1967), pp. 221-50.

³⁰ Two articles from Zosa Szajkowski appeared in that annual during that period, 'Glimpses on the history of Jews in occupied France', 2 (1958), pp. 133-57; 'The French Central Consistory during the Second World War', 3 (1959), pp. 187-202.

productive period in Jewish historiography began in the 1980s. The opening of national archives as well as the systematic collection of survivors' depositions made for some of the most sophisticated studies yet to appear, in particular those of Susan Zuccotti and Asher Cohen.³¹ Both portrayed the struggle of Jews to avoid deportation but placed appropriate emphasis on the help given to Jews. Yet even the latest studies treat the Jews of France as a single community, not because of advances in research but rather because of the world-wide influence of Zionist ideology.

1940s and 1950s historiography relied on two sorts of sources: accounts from survivors of French or Nazi camps and memoirs of former resistance members. Written in the decade following the end of the war, these accounts were clearly formed under the influence of the enormity of the crimes committed by the Nazi state, and its Vichy accomplices. The need prevailed among survivors to record what Nazism and its helpers had done. They wanted to share their suffering with their communities. Members of clandestine committees gave accounts of their activities in French and in Yiddish.³² Communist organizations published collections of their underground pamphlets.³³ But the significant contribution of Jews to the anti-Nazi armed struggle, organizationally or individually, had to wait until the mid-1980s to be the object of major studies.³⁴ In fact, only two general accounts of organized Jewish resistance appeared during the 1950s. One looked at several organizations, while the other focused exclusively on the Zionist underground.³⁵ Annette Wieviorka's important work, *Memory and forgetfulness* shows how by the end of the 1950s, the first phase of that historiography had spent itself.³⁶ The camp survivors soon fell silent. Primo Levi discovered that nobody wanted to hear about Auschwitz.³⁷ Surviving Jews in France and elsewhere were reconstructing their lives. The time had not yet come to reflect upon how the various communities had acted or not acted in self-defence.

IV

Three changes occurred in the 1960s: the historical profession recognized that the history of the Jews under the Nazis was a legitimate field of inquiry; a new generation of historians emerged, and finally a new methodology was developed. The Jewish Historical Institute in Poland, the holocaust survivors from Eastern Europe who settled in the USA and worked at the YIVO Institute (New York), and others in Israel, were pioneers in all three aspects.³⁸ In spite of these changes, France posed special problems.

³¹ Zuccotti, *The Holocaust, the French, and the Jews*; Cohen, *Persécutions et sauvetage*.

³² Among them, see Yehuda Jakoubowitz, *Ri Amelot, hilf und vidershtant* (Paris, 1948); idem ed., *L'un des trente-six, David Rapoport* (Paris, 1946); Armand Lunel, *Par d'étranges chemins* (Monaco, 1946); Isaac Pougatch, *Charry* (Paris, 1945); André Weill-Curiel, *Règles de savoir-vivre à l'usage d'un jeune juif de mes amis* (Paris, 1945); Georges Wellers, *De Drancy à Auschwitz* (Paris, 1946).

³³ Adam Rayski, ed., *Dos vort fun vidershtand und zig* (Paris, 1949); idem ed., *La presse anti-raciste sous l'occupation hitlerienne* (Paris, 1950).

³⁴ Although various accounts were published, a full study took much longer, see Stéphane Courtois, Denis Peschanski, and Adam Rayski, *Le sang de l'étranger: les immigrés de la MOI dans la résistance* (Paris, 1989).

³⁵ David Knout, *La résistance juive en France* (Paris, 1947); Jacques Lazarus, *Juifs au combat; témoignage sur l'activité d'un mouvement de résistance* (Paris, 1947).

³⁶ Annette Wieviorka, *Déportation et génocide; entre la mémoire et l'oubli* (Paris, 1992).

³⁷ Primo Levi, 'Afterword', in *If this is a man*; and *The Truce* (London, 1987).

³⁸ The Polish contribution to the study of the Holocaust expressed itself in the pages of *Bleter far Geshikhte* published by the *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego*; the American influence found expression in the work of Jewish survivors who had settled in the United States after the war

The historic characteristics of French Jewish community life were certainly closer to Dutch, German, or Austrian Jewry than to Eastern Europe.³⁹ Yet the huge wave of immigration between 1919 and 1939 gave the French case a unique character. Jews in France were divided along social and cultural lines largely predetermined by their country of origin. Foreign Jews were seen as an autonomous group and were treated differently from the native Jews. No study of the holocaust in France can do justice to the situation unless one proceeds on the basis of such a fundamental distinction, that is, the existence of separate communities, each concerned for its own defence and survival.

How different were those two groups of Jews? What did they have in common and what was the nature of their relationship? As the wartime censuses of the Jewish population reveal, they were made up of two distinctive groups of unequal size. About a third were native Jews who had long resided in France and included the Sephardi Jews from North Africa. Two-thirds were immigrants from Eastern Europe who had arrived during the 1920s, and who from 1933 were joined by refugees from Germany, and Central Europe.⁴⁰ They came from countries where they had been defined as belonging to a national minority and brought with them a Jewish identity which differed from that of the native Jews. This did not pose a problem for those recently naturalized or who had arrived in France after the First World War,⁴¹ but it did for the old-established Jewish families who had lived in France for countless generations. Their Jewish identity only expressed itself, if ever, in religious terms.⁴² In fact on the eve of the

through the pages of *YIVO Bleter*. For the work done for an appropriate methodology, see Philip Friedman, 'Preliminary and methodological problems of the research on the Jewish catastrophe in the Nazi period', *Yad Vashem Studies*, 2 (1958), pp. 95–131; idem, 'Problems of research on the Jewish catastrophe', 3 (1959), pp. 25–39; for the Israeli influence see the publication of *Yad Vashem Studies* which began to appear in 1957 following the creation of the Yad Vashem Remembrance Authority.

³⁹ There are a number of studies dealing with its origins, composition, development, and its unique character. Among them we could cite Robert Anchel, *Les juifs de France* (Paris, 1946); Bernhard Blumenkrantz, ed., *Histoire des juifs en France* (Toulouse, 1972); Béatrice Philippe, *Être juif dans la société française du moyen âge à nos jours* (Paris, 1979); Simon Schwartzfuchs, *Les juifs de France* (Paris, 1975).

⁴⁰ For the numbers and national composition of the Jews of Paris, which included the largest number of immigrants who had arrived in the interwar period, see Michel Roblin, *Les juifs de Paris* (Paris, 1952); with respect to the number of refugees from Germany and Austria who arrived in France according to Rita Thalmann their number never exceeded 30,000: see 'L'émigration du II Reich dans la France de 1933 à 1939', *Le monde juif*, 96 (1979), p. 128. Their numbers fluctuated: some with visas soon left; others sought to remain, but they were never a consistent number. For another survey, see Yehuda Bauer, *My brother's keeper: a history of the American Jewish joint distribution committee, 1929–1939* (Philadelphia, 1974), pp. 138ff; for a sociological study of the relationship between the two groups, see Dominique Schnapper, *Juifs et israélites* (Paris, 1980).

⁴¹ For a penetrating analysis of the internal conflicts which divided the Parisian community as well as the attitude and policy of the leadership of native Jewry, see David Weinberg, *A community on trial: the Jews of Paris in the 1930s* (Chicago, 1977); see also Paula Hyman, *From Dreyfus to Vichy: the remaking of French Jewry, 1906–1939* (New York, 1979); for further expressions of wartime relations between native Jews and emigrants, see Jean-Jacques Bernard, *Le camp de la mort lente, Compiègne, 1941–1942* (Paris, 1944).

⁴² For a discussion of the meaning of assimilation, see Pierre Vidal-Naquet, 'Les juifs de France et l'assimilation', in idem ed., *Les juifs, la mémoire et le présent* (Paris, 1981); for a valuable discussion of the native views on immigrant Jewry, see Adam Rayski, *Le choix des juifs sous Vichy: entre soumission et résistance*, pref. F. Bédarida (Paris, 1992), ch. 15.

war, of a population in Paris of some 90,000 such Jews, only about 6,000 were dues-paying members of the Parisian Consistory (the national Jewish synagogue organization).⁴³ Many had relatives who had either 'married out' or had long since abandoned ties with the religious community. Native Jews never chose to form cultural associations or organizations to the extent that immigrant Jews did. In fact there were few meeting points between each group.⁴⁴ Well integrated in society, most native Jews considered themselves secular and above all viewed themselves as French. They had paid their dues to the country through participation in the wars, and by their contribution in many fields of endeavour.⁴⁵

When the German and French authorities introduced the first race laws in occupied France, the two groups reacted very differently. The French 'Israelites' abided by the law but refused to accept that they were thus denied their national identity. They resented that their patriotism had been questioned but continued to hope that the restrictive measures would in the course of time be liberalized in their favour. Immigrant Jewry simply assumed that these were police measures that would only get worse. Tens of thousands of foreign Jews and refugees were already in concentration camps.

These divisions were not new. Maurice Rajfus has looked at Jewish publications between 1933 and 1940.⁴⁶ Immigrant organizations campaigned against Nazi anti-Semitism and defended German Jewry. Native Jewry's leaders opposed any public protest. They were anxious lest demonstrations incite local anti-Semitism. They were sure that these issues were best handled quietly, preferably by the government. This evidence confirms the view that beyond a shared religion there was little in common between what were, in effect, two different Jewish communities.

The fall of France and the introduction of race laws unexpectedly turned all Jews into a single legal entity but treated differently. Vichy initially exempted native Jews from internment and later from deportation.⁴⁷ While the French police carried out the arrest of Jews in preparation for their deportation to the East on behalf of the German authorities they were instructed not to arrest native Jews.⁴⁸ The issue of the relative physical freedom of native Jews began to matter to the German authorities, only when

⁴³ Weinberg, *A community on trial*, p. 23.

⁴⁴ There is a voluminous literature dealing with the native Jews' perception of their place in French society; see especially Pierre Birnbaum, *Les fous de la république* (Paris, 1992); for a wartime native Jew's crisis of conscience as he feels rejected by France, see Raymond-Raoul Lambert, *Carnet d'un témoin*, present. and annot. by Richard Cohen (Paris, 1985).

⁴⁵ The attachment to France, its culture and tradition, held by members of some of the old Jewish families rather than to past ties with Judaism is articulated by Marc Bloch in his personal testament, see *L'étrange défaite* (Paris, 1946); for the degree of assimilation into French society of a family, see Georgette Elgey, *Par la fenêtre ouverte: récit* (Paris, 1973).

⁴⁶ Maurice Rajfus, *Sois juif et tais-toi, 1930-1940: les français 'israélites' face au nazisme* (Paris, 1981).

⁴⁷ Such a statement needs, of course, to be seen in the chronological development of the Jews' persecution. The protection I am referring to was limited to the authentic native Jews and not to the Jews who had acquired French nationality since 1927 when laws pertaining to naturalization were liberalized. In fact as early as 22 July 1940, some two weeks after the first government was formed, a commission was established to review those granted as a result of which 7,055 lost their nationality, see Zuccotti, *The Holocaust, the French, and the Jews*, p. 53.

⁴⁸ Until then there had only been one instance when native Jews were effectively arrested as a national group and it occurred in December 1941 but then only as hostages in response to resistance activities and this is evidenced by the fact that they were not sent to Drancy, a strictly Jewish camp, but to Compiègne, see Bernard, *Le camp de la mort lente*.

foreign Jews became harder to find in suitable numbers to fill the convoys departing to the death camps.⁴⁹

Vichy's distinction between native Jews and the others had major consequences. In the first place, it explains in part why native Jewry's representatives never protested at the treatment of immigrant Jewry. In fact, the first protest at the conditions in one of the Vichy camps was made by the Catholic Church.⁵⁰ Native Jewry leadership resolutely defended the French Israelites and ignored the others. Such a course of action was first expressed by the Parisian Central Consistory when it attempted in November 1940 to submit to Vichy an amended version of the October race law, in which the preamble stated:

The government's objective is not to ... engage in racial policy but to eliminate from public and political life the foreign elements who had not assimilated themselves to 'l'esprit national'. The reaction against the [pre-war] invasion of foreigners is expressed by an understandable anti-Semitism of which the victims are today families who had long resided in France. The legislation [October 1940] has understood the origins of the problem and the series of laws promulgated since July directed at the foreigners and ... it is in this sense that they have to be understood.⁵¹

And yet, while most of the major studies highlight the dignified protest of native Jews at being treated as outsiders, they overlook the leadership's continued refusal to commit itself politically to the defence of foreign Jews. Discussion of this issue only began during the 1970s. When seen in terms of the development of the historiography of the Jews in France during the Second World War, the second phase marked the emergence of what can be considered an historiography in the process of construction.

Notwithstanding the native leadership's primary concern with the fate of its own members, it would be wrong to assert that contacts between native Jews and immigrant organizations did not exist. Not all notables among native Jews followed the Central Consistory's policy. As early as September 1940, under the auspices of Chief Rabbi René Hirschler, a Commission Centrale des Organisations Juives d'Assistance was created and it included immigrant organizations.⁵² But it only lasted a limited period of time. The existence of this organization has misled scholars who subsequently assumed that Jews were united in purpose.⁵³ In otherwise first-rate studies, an unintentional but real distortion of wartime reality has occurred. Formal unity between

⁴⁹ By the end of 1942 the German authorities began to press Vichy for an accelerated denaturalization, see Klarsfeld, *Vichy-Auschwitz. Le rôle de Vichy*, II, pp. 67ff.

⁵⁰ The first camps in the south of France were created under the Third Republic at first to house the refugees from Republican Spain and then those considered as enemy aliens. There was no need therefore for the Vichy authorities to improvise when, following the mass exodus of June 1940, the need appeared to concentrate foreigners in order to have them repatriated. For the camps in the Vichy zone, see Joseph Weill, *Contribution à l'étude des camps d'internement dans l'Anti-France* (Paris, 1946); a French law was passed applicable in occupied France giving the prefects the power to organize special internment camps to intern foreign Jews, *Journal Officiel*, 18 Oct. 1940; for the Catholic Church's demand that conditions be improved, see Jacques Duquesne, *Les catholiques français sous l'occupation* (Paris, 1966), p. 254.

⁵¹ Quoted in Rayski, *Le choix des juifs sous Vichy*, pp. 34–5.

⁵² Cohen, *Persécutions et sauvetage*, p. 43.

⁵³ See the work of Israeli historians: in particular, Richard Cohen, *The burden of conscience: French Jewry's response to the Holocaust* (Bloomington, 1987); Cohen, *Persécutions et sauvetage*; Poznanski, *Être juif en France*.

the Central Consistory and the immigrant organizations was ultimately achieved, but only on the eve of liberation.⁵⁴

V

At the end of 1941, the government created a kind of central Jewish representation. Native Jewish leadership and immigrant Jewry recognized, but from a different standpoint, the threat represented by such a body. Each opposed its creation for its own reasons. The native Jewish leadership opposition was predicated on a refusal to be placed on the same footing as the foreign Jews. The immigrant organizations opposed centralized Jewish representation on political grounds. They viewed it as a clear stage in further persecution. Native Jews were shocked at being rejected by the nation, although they were still privately reassured that their status would be taken into account.⁵⁵ Thus they entered into the negotiations with the vague hope that they would not be as victimized as the immigrant Jews. Effectively, this had been the message that Jacques Helbronner, the acting president of the Central Consistory, had brought back in the course of his regular meetings with Pétain which he continued to hold until July 1941.⁵⁶

Native Jewry faced a crisis when the Central Consistory was informed that this organization would incorporate all existing institutions and their community would be reduced to the same status as the immigrants. It reacted by assuring the authorities that it would abide by all orders and by asserting its readiness to co-operate. It expressed its willingness to assist the establishment of the central body but only if the activities of the national representation were strictly limited to relief activities. While negotiations went on for some months, in the end the government was not prepared to restrict its function to relief activities. The native leadership refused to commit itself to open-ended and unspecified aims. A major conflict erupted within its ranks, when it emerged that some of its members, fearing an organization led by unknown individuals, had accepted responsibility for its creation.⁵⁷

While native Jewry was divided, immigrant Jewry was united in its opposition to an institution designed to further state controls, particularly when the aims of such a body remained unspecified. In the end the government-imposed 'Union générale des Israélites de France' (UGIF) – a nationwide organization representing all Jews and controlling all institutions – was set up led by two separate directorates: one for each zone. One concession was made by the French authorities: it would be led by native

⁵⁴ It led to the unification of all organizations, native and immigrants into the Conseil représentatif des juifs de France. The public recognition and papering over of the wartime differences was not made clear in a major report on wartime communal activities published in 1947, see *L'activité des organisations juives en France sous l'occupation* (Paris, 1947).

⁵⁵ For the list of native Jewish protests, see Rutkowski, *La lutte des juifs de France sous l'occupation*; as late as mid-1942 Laval would have declared that it had always been Vichy's intention to maintain a distinction between the native and the foreign Jews, see Marrus and Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews*, pp. 217–18.

⁵⁶ For the Helbronner–Pétain meetings, see André Kaspi, *Les juifs pendant l'occupation* (Paris, 1991), p. 330.

⁵⁷ For a discussion of the issue within the ranks of the native Jewish leadership, see Cohen, *The burden of conscience*; for the view of those in favour of leading this body, see Lambert, *Carnet d'un témoin*.

Jews.⁵⁸ While the UGIF was for a long time opposed by the leadership of native Jewry for having betrayed the Central Consistory's line of action, by mid-1943 a reconciliation was in process.

Neither of the two councils created became Jewish councils, the infamous *Judenräte*, of the kind operating in Eastern Europe. At no time were they given the same powers nor the same responsibilities. Having to function under the control of the Commissariat aux questions juives (CGQJ) from its inception, the UGIF's activities and role have been the subject of conflicting interpretations. The two councils were effectively under the control of the authorities at all times and all immigrant organizations consistently opposed them. From the first day they understood the projected role of the UGIF; they knew that the UGIF would not protect immigrant Jewry. Their view that the UGIF was conceived as an instrument designed to control the Jewish population better certainly proved justified. Whether the UGIF was ever in a position to protect immigrant Jews is more problematic. With hindsight we can see that the immigrants were right. The UGIF's presence tended to reassure and pacify the population, but it was wrong to characterize the UGIF as a form of collaboration. For although the central leaderships were accountable to the authorities, they chose to give some autonomy to all the incorporated institutions. In so doing the UGIF provided them with a degree of independence which was to play an important role when mass deportations began.

The wartime condemnation of the UGIF did not last. By 1947, two years after liberation, the UGIF leadership was close to being rehabilitated. From then on the emphasis was placed on their leaders' devotion to their responsibility, and their efforts to assist the Jewish population. Further justification was found in the number of leaders who paid the ultimate price. However, such a view was not supported by immigrant Jewry and some native Jews. To this day, critics, from the ranks of former resistance organizations, left-wing Zionists, and the association of camp survivors still maintain that the UGIF played a negative role.⁵⁹

The general view that the UGIF leadership had failed the population was supported by what had occurred in Paris in July 1942 and in July 1944, on the eve of the liberation. On 1 July 1942 the authorities informed the UGIF that mass arrests of foreign Jews would soon take place. Fearing for its continued existence, it waited until 13 July to inform the immigrant organizations.⁶⁰ However objectionable such a decision, there was some justification for inaction. Official information did not indicate that all would

⁵⁸ For the immigrant opposition to Jewish participation to the Union Générale des Israélites de France (UGIF), see Jacques Adler, *The Jews of Paris and the final solution: communal responses and internal conflicts, 1940–1944* (New York, 1987); for a full discussion of the unfolding of the negotiations, see Cohen, *The burden of conscience*, ch. 3.

⁵⁹ At the end of the war an honorary tribunal was created designed to establish whether the UGIF leadership had collaborated with the authorities. As a commission chaired by a member of the Central Consistory, the outcome was predictable. All its leaders were cleared of all charges. Significantly, representatives from a large number of organizations were displeased with the decision of the tribunal. Among those highly critical of the UGIF leadership were left-wing organizations, associations of former concentration camp inmates, and some Zionist organizations. For an excellent presentation of the case against the UGIF, see Rayski, *Le choix des juifs sous Vichy*, pp. 68–85; Cynthia Haft, *The bargain and the bridle: the General Union of the Israelites of France, 1941–1944* (Chicago, 1983).

⁶⁰ See Maurice Rajfus, *Les juifs dans la collaboration* (Paris, 1980); Adler, *The Jews of Paris and the final solution*.

be arrested in the forthcoming planned mass arrests of foreign Jews. The Paris UGIF leadership took the view that the remaining Jews would still be in need of relief. It remained silent. As it happened, many foreign Jews had been warned by other sources, and on 16 July more than half of the Jews listed for deportation succeeded in evading arrest.⁶¹

The second major event that condemned the Paris UGIF leadership occurred in July 1944. The Allied armies were then approaching and the Jewish resistance had urged the UGIF to disperse the children kept in homes. It had even undertaken to ensure their security. Fearing reprisals, the UGIF first agreed and in the end refused to act. While these discussions were taking place Alois Brunner, the gestapo officer then in charge of the Jewish question, in the course of a visit to the UGIF offices found a list of addresses of children's homes on a desk. As a result over 200 children were taken to Drancy and deported.⁶² These two major crises, among many others minor ones, illustrate and justify the reasons for the opposition the UGIF encountered in the course of its existence particularly among immigrant resistance circles.

The comparison between the role of the UGIF and the activities of the immigrant organizations became central to the debates that arose from the late 1970s over the nature of Jewish resistance and ultimately defined the main thrust of Jewish historiography. It was from then on that studies began to examine the emergence of organized Jewish responses designed to assist a pauperized population and later to resist deportation. André Kaspi, who generally supports the view that French Judaism behaved with dignity, has chosen not to refer to the more profound causes of immigrant Jewry's opposition to the UGIF. In an otherwise fine study of the Jews under Vichy he presents the current interpretation of the role of the UGIF leadership:

Were the leaders of the UGIF resisters? No, they were men and women who applied the law, with a heavy heart, but with devotion when it came to defend the interest of their community, without however understanding the implication of their attitude, and incapable of foreseeing the future. They hoped to save what could be saved. They never lost confidence in the Vichy government nor in their many appeals to it. Many of them lost their lives and some their soul as a result. They fell into the trap without being aware of it.⁶³

VI

Equally contentious is the issue of Jewish resistance. From the 1980s onward this issue has occupied a prominent place in the history of the destruction of European Jewry and in France in particular. Among the most controversial aspects of the French story was the part played by the communists.⁶⁴

The arrest, and subsequent deportation, of close to 80,000 men, women, children, old and sick, surprised the victims and rendered them helpless. Immigrant Jews had to find

⁶¹ For a full account of that episode, see Claude Lévy and André Tillard, *La grande rafle du Vel d'Hiv* (Paris, 1967; repr. 1992).

⁶² See Serge Klarsfeld, 'Les 201 enfants arrêtés dans les Centres de l'UGIF du 21 au 25 Juillet 1944 et assassinés à Auschwitz', *Le monde juif*, 145 (1992); an individual case but illuminating in many respects of the UGIF's failure to act is to be found in Bernard Friede, *Une mauvaise histoire juive*, pref. P. Vidal-Naquet (Paris, 1991).

⁶³ Kaspi, *Les juifs pendant l'occupation*, pp. 333-4.
⁶⁴ Arnold Mandel, a well-known author, was to write in *L'Arche*, in 1973: '[the Jewish communist resistance] was not born from the awakening of a conscience in its ranks of the drama and abandonment of the Jews', quoted in Rayski, *Le choix des juifs sous Vichy*, p. 317 n. 11.

ways to avoid deportation. Even if they happened to have been warned by sympathetic policemen that arrests were imminent, many had nowhere to go, no one to turn to. Some 250,000 survived, among them a large majority of native Jews. At liberation it is believed that in Paris, for instance, some 30,000 native Jews had remained throughout the war undisturbed, in their own homes. From among those deported only 16 per cent were French Jews.⁶⁵ It has been argued that the survival of 250,000 Jews was in a large measure due to their dispersal and the inability of repressive forces thoroughly to police the territory. Their survival was also partly luck, personal resources, help of one kind or another by non-Jews or by an organization.⁶⁶ The survival of such a substantial number of individuals raises important questions. The initial decision to act in order to evade internment and deportation was possibly influenced by the continued appeals from the underground Jewish press for all Jews to abandon their registered addresses. Whatever the reasons, fear or underground propaganda, in the final instance the decision to hide must have been of a personal nature. Once Jews became conscious of the fact that they risked arrest, each family was confronted by the question of whether to take the critical step of plunging into a clandestine existence. In all instances survival in hiding depended on a number of factors, in many instances on the direct help provided by Jewish organizations. The type of organizations to which Jews turned varied. Some were legal, some semi-legal, others illegal. Since the 1980s several studies have examined the issues of resistance and the various groups attempting to practise it.

In an important review of the question Michael Marrus presented the current state of research on these issues without, however, addressing himself specifically to the French experience.⁶⁷ For Marrus looks at the objectives of the various forms of resistance, including passive resistance. Marrus has accepted Yehuda Bauer's argument about the need to 'keep body and soul together'.⁶⁸ As Bauer argues, life-saving passive resistance, as exemplified by the various forms of passive resistance which took place in the ghettos of Poland, made sense as long as Jews retained the hope that they might survive.⁶⁹ Valid when viewed in the context of the Polish experience, in France the situation was vastly different. Since no ghetto was established in France, life-saving resistance took on different forms. It extended from social activism designed to ensure survival to a personal engagement in the political or patriotic struggle. Whichever path was chosen, whether to contribute to the defeat of Nazi Germany, and Vichy, or to devote oneself to social activities, either commitment remained valid when viewed in the context of the determination to ensure the survival of all Jews. By the time the population was confronted with the need to evade internment and deportation, two independent organizational strategies were already in place. They found expression during the early period, that is, before such threats became manifest. The poor resorted to legal organizations for relief. The issue of aid acquired totally new dimensions for the foreign Jews following the arrests of men in occupied France in May and August 1941. It acquired its most dramatic character from July 1942 when mass deportations began. It was from then on that the UGIF, until then the largest provider of aid, was deemed

⁶⁵ Serge Klarsfeld, *Le mémorial de la déportation des juifs de France* (Paris, 1978), see statistical table.

⁶⁶ For the help provided by a Protestant community to protect Jews, see Philippe Hallie, *Let innocent blood be shed* (New York, 1980).

⁶⁷ Michael R. Marrus, 'Jewish resistance to the Holocaust', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 30 (1995), pp. 83–110.

⁶⁸ Yehuda Bauer, *They chose life: Jewish resistance in the Holocaust* (New York, 1973), p. 33.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

to be powerless. Material relief became secondary to the problems of the day: how to evade arrest and deportation.

Since the 1980s most studies have generally accepted the view that from the moment mass deportations began the UGIF's role as a provider of aid lost its importance. Lucien Lazare offers a radical re-evaluation of the UGIF's role. Because some illegal activities were carried out within some of its departments, he claims that the UGIF was a resistance organization.⁷⁰ Such a view is supported by the argument that until liberation it remained the largest distributor of aid and that without it, and in despair, the starving poor and elderly would have had no option but to accept internment, regardless of the fear of deportation.⁷¹

However well substantiated such an assertion is, it also has to be recognized that in the final analysis the UGIF leadership never saw its task as other than relief. Bound by its legal position and the fear that its continued existence would be jeopardized, its staff never informed those it assisted that its institutions were likely to become the object of police arrests. Passive by definition, UGIF institutions and offices were another potential trap for those compelled to resort to them.

The UGIF institutions were not the only centre of aid. There were also groups which, while operating within the UGIF structure, disregarded official policy when they provided aid to those already in hiding. Among them were such organizations as the Œuvre de secours aux enfants (OSE) which cared for children and also placed children of Jewish parents with Christian families.⁷² The Amelot centre in Paris, created in July 1940, though nominally under UGIF control, continued until the liberation to work both legally and illegally by distributing forged identity papers, among other forms of activities.⁷³ Then there was the scouting movement. While it did not provide material aid, it fulfilled another most important function. It smuggled threatened children to Switzerland and Spain.⁷⁴ Finally there were the immigrant, illegal organizations which assisted Jews in hiding with financial aid or forged identity papers.⁷⁵

At the extreme end of the spectrum of defence activities was the communist underground that saw its highest priority as armed struggle but simultaneously conducted relief and rescue activities. The communist demand for armed struggle caused controversies during the war and has inflamed historiographic debate ever since. Many reasons accounted for the opposition to communist policy. Even though the Soviet Union was fighting Nazi Germany, an anti-communist climate of opinion prevailed in the ranks of most organizations. That opposition was due in part to a long-standing opposition to communism. It was further fuelled by the August 1939 Soviet–German Non-Aggression Pact. Opposition was compounded by the

⁷⁰ Lucien Lazare, *La résistance juive en France*, pref. S. Friedlander (Paris, 1987), p. 76.

⁷¹ The presentation of the UGIF as a resistance activity was first argued in 1947, see *L'activité des organisations juives en France sous l'occupation*.

⁷² Sabine Zeitoun, *L'Œuvre de secours aux enfants (OSE) sous l'occupation en France* (Paris, 1990).

⁷³ For an account of Amelot's activities, see Y. Jakoubowicz, *Ri Amelot, hif und vidershant* (Paris, 1948); Adler, *The Jews of Paris and the final solution*.

⁷⁴ Alain Michel, *Les éclaireurs israélites de France pendant la seconde guerre mondiale* (Paris, 1984).

⁷⁵ For an important review of the various types of aid, which also argues that humanitarian resistance took precedence over guerrilla warfare, the kind called for by the communists, see Lazare, *La résistance juive en France*; for Switzerland, see Emmanuel Hayman, *Le camp du bout du monde 1942, des enfants juifs de France à la frontière suisse* (Paris, 1984); for Spain, see Haim Avni, *Spain, the Jews, and Franco*, transl. Emmanuel Shimoni (Philadelphia, 1982).

organizational links between the Jewish section and the French communist party. As a result, the Jewish section was not considered a genuine Jewish organization. It was seen as an agent of communist policy rather than being committed to the defence of the Jewish population. Despite some popular support, such a view continued to work against its acceptance.

By mid-1943, as the news of the Warsaw ghetto's rebellion and subsequent destruction reached the immigrant population, the united immigrant non-communist organizations proceeded to re-evaluate the situation. A general agreement was reached to unite all existing forces, including the communists. The Comité général de défense (CGD) was born.⁷⁶ In the wake of the Warsaw ghetto revolt, the communist call for active struggle could no longer be opposed. On the other hand, the Jewish communist organization was not trusted or considered to be really Jewish in the generally accepted national sense. Since it was committed to Jewish survival, the CGD refused to participate in the armed struggle but agreed to subsidize the communist fighting units.⁷⁷

Throughout the four years of the Vichy regime and despite the ultimate agreement to accept communists as equal participants in the struggle for survival, the pre-war anti-communist climate of opinion continued to find expression. Inoperative during the 'phony war' as a result of the government ban on all communist activities, in September 1940 the Jewish section was revived. It began its clandestine activities under the name Solidarité.⁷⁸ From its inception it called for communal solidarity. From the first day of France's occupation until the liberation, it was the only organization that understood the importance of the battle for information. Throughout its existence it distributed illegal publications so as to keep the population abreast of developments and sustain morale. Like all the other immigrant organizations it opposed Jewish participation in the UGIF. It campaigned against Jews working for German industries. It organized the sabotage of production. For those Jews determined to fight back, it organized them into fighting units. Its women's organization assisted families to find hiding places for children and at the end of the war it could claim that it had saved 900 children. Until 1943 Solidarité's activities were highly compartmentalized. Alongside political and military sections there was a trade union section, a youth organization, and a women's section. By June 1943, in line with communist policy of a 'Front national', its leadership took the decision to unify all sections into the Union des juifs pour la résistance et l'entr'aide (UJRE) and set the new political line into motion. It called for united action, among immigrants at first and then with the native Jews of the Central Consistory. In that sense, and regardless of its communist link it cannot be claimed that it never placed the interests of the Jewish population at the centre of its strategy. Significantly, while the immigrant organizations opposed the communist call for armed resistance, the scouting movement, affiliated to the Central Consistory, also entered the armed struggle.⁷⁹ And yet, in their case the move from rescue activities to the armed struggle was not criticized at the time or since. André Kaspi summarizes the consensus on the communists:

⁷⁶ For the background to the creation of the immigrant organization's Defence Committee, see Rayski, *Le choix des juifs sous Vichy*, pp. 262–3.

⁷⁷ Lazare, *La résistance juive en France*, pp. 290–1.

⁷⁸ For an account of the resumption of communist activities, see Diamant, *Les juifs dans la résistance*.

⁷⁹ For their participation in the armed struggle, see Lazarus, *Juifs au combat*; Lazare, *La résistance juive en France*, ch. 13.

No one will deny that the communists were ... determined and often heroic, that their members originated from a genuine Jewish culture and that they remained conscious of being part of the Jewish people. They were however wrong. They did not carry on a Jewish resistance ... The cause for which they fought denied its specific character.⁸⁰

Two types of interpretation have examined the nature of the responses advanced by the Jewish organizations. In my study of the Jews in Paris I concentrated on foreign Jews, the particular problems they encountered, the solutions they advanced, at times in opposition to what native Jews were doing, and how they created defence structures.⁸¹ The other type of interpretation has been developed by L. Lazare and A. Kaspi. They seek to justify the belated choice of the native Jews' leadership to resist. Their activities are presented either as having been an integral part of the struggle for survival on behalf of all, or having also sought to protect the foreign Jews.⁸² Clearly, while each approach reflects existing divisions and tensions, the latter is far from satisfactory. Of course, the native Jews were equally affected by the race laws but the native Jews' leadership, represented by the Central Consistory, primarily sought to protect its own constituency. The defence policies initiated by the immigrant organizations and not those pursued by native Jewry had shown the way to survival. The reality, as expressed in Adam Rayski's striking metaphor, was that the arms of the clock of history moved much faster for the Jews than for all others and for the immigrants faster than for the native Jews.⁸³ The radical difference between the active and armed struggle and passive or unarmed resistance has, of late, been resolved, but in a particular sense. All forms of resistance, armed or not, are now presented as if they constituted a whole. The prevailing view is that resistance expressed itself in a wide range of activities. The act of keeping the synagogue open, just like the rescue of Jews, or the armed struggle, are now defining the contours of resistance.

Finally we must turn to the role of French public opinion in relation to the Jewish question.⁸⁴ It may be judged in part by the extent of the help non-Jews provided, individually and collectively. It began to acquire crucial importance from mid-1942 when the Jewish organizations had to consider how to protect Jews from deportation, that is, to ensure the survival of as many as possible. Solidarité was the first to develop contacts with the non-Jewish population on an organized basis. In June 1942 it created the Mouvement national contre le racisme, (MNCR).⁸⁵ It published illegal publications under such titles as *Fraternité*, or *J'accuse*, calling on the French to protect Jews. The OSE called on Christian clergymen to open their institutions to Jews. The Comité de Nîmes, made up of Protestants and Christian relief organizations actively worked on behalf of the Jews. Even the Central Consistory maintained and developed contacts with the

⁸⁰ Kaspi, *Les juifs pendant l'occupation*, p. 321.

⁸¹ Adler, *The Jews of Paris and the final solution*; among the various studies directed at examining the position of emigrant Jewry, its specific problems in the context of the national situation, see Rayski, *Le choix des juifs sous Vichy*.

⁸² Perhaps the best example of this approach is to be found in Simon Schwartzfuchs, *Aux prises avec Vichy: histoire politique des juifs de France, 1940-1944* (Paris, 1998).

⁸³ A. Rayski, *Nos illusions perdues* (Paris, 1985), p. 91.

⁸⁴ So far there has been no study specifically directed to the question, and yet contacts existed between the Central Consistory and the churches, between Jewish organizations and non-Jewish relief organizations, and between the Jewish and non-Jewish resistance.

⁸⁵ For an account of the activities of the MNCR, see Robert Debré, *L'honneur de vivre* (Paris, 1974).

Catholic Church. And yet, while many studies have referred to these various contacts, only Susan Zuccotti and Asher Cohen have given the issue the recognition it deserves.

VII

The two major approaches to the history of the Jews in France during the Second World War can be summarized as follows. On the one hand there is the 'Zionist' interpretation. The struggle for survival is presented in the context of the gradual but inevitable unification of the disparate communities into a single people. It vindicates the Zionist view that the Jews will be victims as long as they do not have a land of their own, and that they are a people bonded by a shared history and common religion. The other view is more limited in perspective. It sees the history of the Jews under Vichy, and their struggle for survival, in more complex terms. The question was not why Jews failed to acquire a homeland but how they faced a new type of racial anti-Semitism which demanded nothing less than the murder of all Jews. Only a determined struggle, armed or not, could ensure the survival of the Jews. It was, and had to be, an uncompromising struggle and not a vain search for governmental understanding as sought by the notables of the Central Consistory.

Many issues remain unresolved. Was the Jewish communist resistance a genuinely Jewish response? For many contemporaries, neither the motivation of its members nor the fact that most of them had been brought up in Yiddish culture represented sufficient grounds to accept them as a part of the Jewish resistance. Long after the cold war was over, Jewish historians were still fighting its ghosts. When wartime communist activities are fully assessed, such opposition is not justified. Can the wartime relationship between native and immigrant Jewry, regardless of its outcome, be viewed in term of continuity or discontinuity? Does Vicki Caron's study of the prologue to the Vichy period warrant asking whether there was a continuity between what took place in the last years of the Third Republic and what occurred under Vichy?

There are very large gaps in Franco-Jewish historiography that need to be filled. We still need to find out about the support given by some social classes to the Vichy regime, as it implemented its race policy in a variety of fields, from education to the economy. Vichy's xenophobic anti-Semitism still awaits its historian. Last, but not least, is the question of the impact of state-promoted anti-Semitism on the churches' lower clergy and the working classes. But ultimately we need to direct our attention to the Jewish-Christian relationship if we are to explain satisfactorily why two-thirds of the Jews in France survived the war.