

LIST 2 : HISTORIOGRAPHY

WORLD WAR 2 FRANCE AND THE HISTORIANS .

THEME 3 : THE PAXTON REVOLUTION

Document 1 : Sisley Huddleston, Britain, Patriot or Traitor (1951), pp 9-11
('A conversation with Marshal Britain').

Document 2 : Robert Paxton, Vichy France. On Great and New Order (1972),
pp. 357-83 ('Was Vichy a Lesser Evil?')

JOHN HAYNE
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

By the same Author

AVEC LE MARÉCHAL
TERREUR 1944
LE LIVRE DE SAINT-PIERRE
LETTERS À UN AMI FRANÇAIS
LE MYTHÈ DE LA LIBERTÉ
IN MY TIME: A RECORD OF WAR AND PEACE
PARIS SALONS, CAFÉS, STUDIOS
FRANCE (IN MODERN WORLD SERIES)
FRANCE AND THE FRENCH (TRAVELLER'S LIBRARY)
PARIS: A LITTLE GUIDE
IN AND ABOUT PARIS
NORMANDY
MEDITERRANEAN BLUE (WINDOWS ON THE WORLD)
A HISTORY OF FRANCE
LOUIS XIV: IN LOVE AND IN WAR
PEACEMAKING IN PARIS
POINCARÉ: A BIOGRAPHICAL PORTRAIT
WAR UNLESS... (1933)
WHAT'S RIGHT WITH AMERICA
EUROPE IN ZIGZAGS
BETWEEN THE RIVER AND THE HILLS
ARTICLES DE PARIS
ETC., ETC.

PÉTAIN

PATRIOT or TRAITOR ?

Sisley Huddleston



ANDREW DAKERS LIMITED
LONDON
1951

PROLOGUE

A CONVERSATION WITH MARSHAL PÉTAIN

IN the spring of 1943, soon after the occupation of the Southern zone of France, I had, in the most curious circumstances, the good fortune to hear, from the lips of Marshal Pétain himself, an explanation of his policy. Milton has written: "They also serve who only stand and wait," and if the Marshal had done no more than stand firm in France, when nearly all but the soul of the country was lost, as the trustee to whom the National Assembly had, almost unanimously, committed the charge of the nation, he would have deserved the gratitude not only of all Frenchmen but of England and America as well. But, in spite of calumnies, and of a propaganda intent on creating lying legends, he did much more than wait; he inspired the French with the hope of ultimate victory, and by his very presence maintained relative order in an afflicted country threatened with complete dislocation: he faced the occupant with all the force of his personal prestige, and saved France from the fate which had befallen Poland and other conquered countries. When the history of a terrible decade can be written without passion, the Marshal will be rehabilitated, and he will be regarded as one of the most luminous and heroic figures of a cruel war in which men's capacity for seeing things in their true light was seriously diminished.

* * *

The most poignant drama, according to Aristotle, is that which depicts the fall of a man of outstanding virtue and exceptional accomplishment, from the topmost pinnacle of fame to the lowest depths of physical and mental misery. No degree of success and prosperity, no warmth of popularity and of general esteem, are sufficient protection against a sudden

reversal of fortune. A lifetime consecrated to the service of one's country is no guarantee against the caprice of fate. Such a tragedy is intensified when the victim is a man of noble character, with unflinching humanity, purity of intention, the highest patriotism. In revolutionary times, when imaginations are troubled and ambitions inflamed, good may be transformed into evil, and evil into good.

It is strange that such a drama should have been enacted, without drawing the eyes of the whole world upon it. That the man who saved France at Verdun, the most venerable and venerated citizen of France, should respond, when half-way between eighty and ninety years of age, to the call of the bewildered politicians and the despairing nation, and that, a few years later, he should, an old man of ninety-five years, be doomed to life imprisonment in the harshest of prisons, on the falsest of accusations, seems to me to be the greatest personal tragedy of our time.

He was condemned, it is true, by a special Court, but it was a Court which had no legal status, which was quite unknown to the French Constitution, composed of a jury of picked partisans who were bound to convict the Marshal in order to establish the Fourth Republic. He was found guilty of treason. The verdict cannot stand the test of history: it deceives no one who is acquainted with the facts. I am by no means an unreserved apologist for Pétain, but having objectively watched his conduct during those unhappy years, I am bound to offer my impartial testimony, for it throws new light on the whole conduct of the war.

When Pétain, like so many other Frenchmen in high or humble situations, was forcibly deported by the Germans, De Gaulle was anxious that he should not return, but should stay in Switzerland after his release. For political reasons he wished the Pétain régime to be condemned, but condemned in the absence of Pétain, and he afterwards pleaded repeatedly for the Marshal's release. Colonel Rémy, his chief Secret Agent in France, writes: "The régime dishonours France in the eyes of the civilized world by keeping in prison, for the first time in the history of our country, a man who is almost a centurarian

If the régime dared to consult the French people, an overwhelming majority would respond in favour of his release. Incontestable testimony, authentic documents, have appeared. It is evident that the France of 1940 called both for General De Gaulle and for Marshal Pétain. She had need of a sword—and of a buckler."

De Gaulle himself, in spite of the *raison d'état*—that is, of his need of a condemnation in order to establish his own power—privately stated to Rémy: "Remember that France has need of two strings to her bow—the Pétain string and the De Gaulle string." Most Frenchmen believed that there was a secret agreement between the two men, as there was a secret agreement between Pétain and Churchill, and a secret agreement between Pétain and Roosevelt.

* * *

I had gone to Vichy at the beginning of 1943 at the request of my French publisher, to obtain paper for one of my books. Learning that I was in Vichy, Pétain invited me to see him, and I spent the greater part of a day in conversation with him. I must suppose that he wished to confide in an Anglo-American writer, whom he had known at various times of his career ever since the First World War. I did not hesitate to respond to his invitation. Apart from my high opinion of him, I should have replied, had I been challenged, that having seen most of the outstanding men of my time, it was my duty as a veteran journalist to see Pétain. Churchill, when reproached in 1941 for proclaiming Anglo-Russian solidarity, said that if Hell made war on Hitler, he would pronounce a eulogy of the Devil.

When I called upon the Marshal in the middle of the morning, I found him unchanged since those days when I used to see him in a little restaurant near Villeneuve—Loubet, the village in the South to which he had retired, full of years and laden with honours.

He was approaching his nineteenth year—eighty-seven to be exact—and the marvel was that the politicians after their own

By the same author

Parades and Politics at Vichy, Princeton (1966)

VICHY FRANCE

Old Guard and New Order, 1940-1944

Robert O. Paxton



BARRIE & JENKINS
LONDON
1972

economy were minority voices. They were found mostly on the Right, as in such technocratic businessmen as Ernest Mercier of the electricity business and Auguste Deteouf. Most of the Left was more interested in distribution than in growth. Most businessmen were interested mainly in preservation. It was during Vichy that the apostles of growth moved from oddity to commonplace. Vichy ministers of industrial production had more in common with the expansionist 1960's than the protectionist 1930's. The word "productivity" has become a new religious exhortation, wrote the director of the French census bureau in 1946. "[Pilgrimages are organized to those sacred shores [i.e., the United States] where productivity was first revealed to men."³⁸

At the deepest levels of mass social consciousness, Frenchmen decided to have more children. After the interruptions of 1939-40, French family size began to climb, although the continued separations of the occupation kept that new affirmation of French national vigor from showing up in statistics. It was in 1945 that the postwar baby boom became perceptible, and for the first time in a century France's population figures turned sharply upward. It is hard to overestimate the importance of this change of mood, and it is hard to explain it. It meant that with Vichy the period when the French population contained more and more old people began to close. Indeed Vichy was the climax of that process. During Vichy, the number of Frenchmen over sixty kept climbing from 14.7 percent of the total population at the beginning of the war to 16 percent at the end, and it would have mounted still higher if the death rate of the elderly had not risen in that period of cold, undernourishment, and grief. Vichy stands as the triumph of gerontocracy in France and the beginning of its end.³⁹

Nowadays everyone talks about the "new France" of the 1950's and 1960's. Statisticians' figures are less vivid than the astonishing physical changes that any tourist can see: the old

villages in which a few croncs in black shawls were replaced in a decade with crowds of brightly dressed children. The shift to farm machinery and tractors, not to mention television and washing machines, was equally rapid. The middle 1950's were the point at which the changes began to show in consumption, production, and population figures.

Some of the roots, though, go back to the shock of 1940 and to the experiences of Vichy. It was then that the nostalgic vision of France was finally discredited; not eliminated, but reduced to enclaves. It was then that a new generation of technicians and businessmen acquired new experience and new power. It was then that the baby boom began. Only one part of the Vichy leadership worked consciously for that kind of France. Many of them abhorred it. In retrospect, however, Vichy's surface struggles will perhaps be less significant in the end than the beginnings here of one current, which was to merge with one current of the Resistance to make the New France. François Lehideux could have written the first chapter of that all-time best-seller of the 1960's in France, *Le défi américain*.

Was Vichy a Lesser Evil?

IN THE END, ONE MUST MAKE SOME OVERALL JUDGMENT of the immediate results of collaboration for Frenchmen. With all its one-sided social favors and with all its complicity in the brutal last stages of nazism's paroxysm, did it not save many Frenchmen from still worse direct German administration? Was it not better to have Frenchmen administering Frenchmen than the tender ministrations of a gaulleter? Did not the Vichy regime save France from "Polandization"? Did it not "éviter le pire"?

Marshal Pétain elected to base his defense in 1945 on pragmatic material grounds, and most of the Vichy ministers followed his example. This defensive terrain was marked out for Pétain by Henri Massis, the old Action Française pamphleteer,

³⁸ F.-Louis Closon, in preface to 1946 French census. For the technocratic left before 1940, see Georges Lefranc's journal *Révolution Con-*

³⁹ See age distribution figures in the 1946 census.

in the declaration drafted for Pétain when the retreating German armies carried him off to Germany in August 1944:

For more than four years, resolved to remain in your midst, I tried every day to serve the permanent interests of France. Loyally, but without compromise, I had only one goal: to protect you from the worst. . . . If I could not be your sword, I tried to be your shield. Sometimes my words or acts must have surprised you. Know that they hurt me more than you yourselves realized. But . . . I held off from you some certain dangers; there were others, alas, which I could not spare you.⁴⁰

In his one statement before the High Court of Justice, Marshal Pétain developed the shield theory further:

I used my power as a shield to protect the French people. . . . Every day, a dagger at my throat, I struggled against the enemy's demands. History will tell all that I spared you, though my adversaries think only of reproaching me for the inevitable. . . . While General de Gaulle carried on the struggle outside our frontiers, I prepared the way for Liberation by preserving France, suffering but alive.⁴¹

Pierre Laval, in his turn before the High Court, claimed that his government had managed to "éviter le pire," to act as a "screen" between the conqueror and the French population. The refrain was taken up by succeeding defendants before the High Court and by a stream of self-exculpating memoirs.⁴²

Despite these partisan origins, the material advantage theory has been quite widely accepted. Robert Aron, trying to strike a reasonable balance on the basis of the trial records, the only sources available in 1954, argued that life was easier, statistically speaking, for Frenchmen than for others in occupied

⁴⁰ Georges Blond, *Pétain* (Paris, 1966), 468-69, attributes this text to Henri Massis.

⁴¹ République française. Haute Cour de Justice. *Procès du Maréchal Pétain* (Paris, 1945), 9.

⁴² *Le Procès Laval*; Guy Raïssac, *Combats sans merci* (Paris, 1966), 403. Among memoirs, see, e.g., Yves Bouthillier, *Le Drame de Vichy* (Paris, 1950), I, 138, on "la politique du bouclier," and II, 280; Pierre Pucheu, *Ma Vie* (Paris, 1948), 287; Pierre Cathala, *Face aux réalités* (Paris, 1948), 102-5; Raïssac, *Combats*, 370.

Europe. The reproaches against Vichy, he said, are moral rather than material.⁴³

In its most widespread form, the material advantage thesis argues that Vichy kept France from "Polandization," and everyone knows that the Poles suffered more in World War II than the French. Nazi contempt for Slavic Untermenschen makes Poland an invalid comparison with France, however. Nazi purists might well cast aspersions upon French "mongrelization" and lack of racial self-consciousness, but they did not contemplate French extinction. The shield theory must be understood in terms of actual German demands, rather than in terms of vaguely infinite possibilities of evil. It can be validly tested only in comparison with fully occupied Western countries like Belgium, Holland, or Denmark, or other collaborating regimes like Quisling's Norway. If incomplete occupation or the existence of a quasiautonomous indigenous administration spared France any of the rigors of direct German rule, those favors should show up in comparison with fully occupied Western countries without an indigenous collaborationist regime.

One can suppose two ways in which Vichy France could have suffered less than France under a gauleiter. The German occupation authorities might have asked for less in order to reward and solidify a useful collaborationist regime. Or if the German occupation authorities asked no less of France than of fully occupied Western nations, the Vichy regime might have been better able or more willing to refuse excessive demands than would a gauleiter. A hard comparative look at the material conditions of life in Western occupied countries fails to show any important advantage for France, either granted by or extorted from Berlin.

Frenchmen were no better nourished than other Western occupied countries. Comparison of caloric intakes in France and fully occupied Western nations is, of course, treacherous ground, for access to food depended greatly on one's location, ready cash for the black market, or connections—and a cousin on the farm

⁴³ Robert Aron, *Histoire de Vichy* (Paris, 1954), 736. See also Guy Raïssac, *Combats*, 23, 348, on Vichy leaders' "l'ouable dessein de tempérer les éprouvés."

might be more useful in that respect than a cabinet minister. Average figures mean even less in this case than in most, and agricultural statistics are certainly less reliable for French *peasants* than for Danish dairy farmers. Nevertheless, it appears that French caloric intake was the lowest in Western Europe, with the exception of Italy, which is astonishing for so rich an agricultural country. Furthermore, in Eastern Europe, Rumania, Bulgaria, Hungary, and the Protectorate of Bohemia-Moravia seem to have eaten better than France. French caloric intake is estimated to have descended under the occupation as low as 1,500 calories a day where there was access to black market supplies and even lower for city populations where there was not.⁴⁴

Not all the French hunger can be attributed directly to German occupation policy, of course. With much food production in the hands of a notoriously small, independent, and secretive peasantry, France suffered as much from maldistribution as from genuine shortages. Moreover, France had depended before the war upon imports of some staples, such as vegetable oils, so that Allied blockade and shipping shortages made matters worse.

There is no sign, however, that Vichy managed to win significant concessions in those areas where German policy added to French hunger. The armistice provision (copied from that of 1918) that French prisoners of war should not be repatriated until the peace produced a serious labor shortage in agriculture, keeping French agricultural production from ever returning to prewar figures. The petroleum shortage prevented the replacement of farm laborers with machines. Moreover, the gigantic German requisitions of French foodstuffs, for the occupying army and for export to the Reich, were among Germany's most important single sources of nourishment. France supplied more foodstuffs to Germany, both absolutely and relatively, than did even Poland.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ I have accepted the figures of Karl Brandt, *Management of Agriculture and Food in the German-Occupied and Other Areas of Fortress Europe* (Stanford, Calif., 1953), passim; League of Nations Economic, Financial, and Transit Dept., *Food, Famine, and Relief, 1940-46* (Geneva, 1946), 4.

⁴⁵ Brandt, 33, 564.

It was indeed explicit German policy that the French should have a lower standard of living than the Germans. Both Goering and Abetz, as we have seen, thought that Frenchmen should have less to eat than Germans. Abetz stated early in July 1942 that French wages must remain lower than those in Germany (which had been the lowest in industrial Europe in the 1930's) so that French workmen would go to work in Germany.⁴⁶

It begins to look as if material conditions of life in occupied Europe depended less upon avoiding total occupation and having an indigenous regime than upon Germany's ethnic feelings about the occupied power and upon simple opportunity. Bargaining by Vichy was quite incapable of preventing increases in Germany's food delivery quotas in France in the summer of 1942 and in early 1943 or of preventing France, the richest agricultural producer of the occupied nations, from experiencing localized malnutrition.⁴⁷

The same pattern prevails in other material conditions of life—inflation, for example. Pierre Cathala claimed after the war that if Germany had collected taxes directly, as in Belgium, inflation would have been worse. In reality, the franc depreciated more rapidly in 1940-44 than the currency of any other Western European country except Italy.⁴⁸ All the Western occupied countries faced roughly comparable inflationary pressures: drastic shortages of goods coupled with high public expenditures. All of them, whether quasi-autonomous regimes as at Vichy or not, retained their local currency. All of them tried to defend it by controlling the market. The Vichy regime, however, was unsuccessful in trying to remove the special inflationary pressures contained in the armistice arrangements. Under the armistice provisions for French payment of occupation costs, support costs, and clearing deficits in Franco-German international accounts, the German occupation authorities were getting 58 percent of the French annual budget. Much of this was being pumped

⁴⁶ See above, p. 310. Abetz (Paris 2857) to Berlin of 7 July 1942 (T-120/434/220101-5).

⁴⁷ For the food delivery negotiations of July-August 1942, see T-120/

434.

⁴⁸ Pierre Cathala, *Face aux réalités* (Paris, 1948), 84. A. J. Brown, *The Great Inflation* (Oxford, 1955), 304-5.

back into the economy, further inflated by the German use of scrip (Kreditkassenscheinen). Although the Vichy authorities managed to reduce German use of scrip in the Occupied Zone, their attempts to reduce occupation costs are an eloquent example of their inability to negotiate a favored position.

Occupation costs were levied at 20 million marks a day, and the exchange rate set at 20:1 by *dekrét* in August 1940. Vichy declared a unilateral cessation of occupation costs on December 1940, in an evident attempt to cash in on the German "new policy" that had been expected at Vichy to lead to conspicuous concessions. The German occupation authorities insisted that the issue was nonnegotiable, and during the German "cold shoulder" of early 1941, Vichy was unable to broach the issue. When Darlan was received at Berchtesgaden in May 1941, Vichy believed it had won a reduction in occupation costs and even announced the fact. The reduction was agreed upon only months later, however, and the French had to agree to pay 10 million marks a day in francs and another 5 million in gold and foreign exchange. Then, after the total occupation of November 1942, occupation costs were raised to 25 million marks a day. Vichy was never able to negotiate a less inflationary armistice arrangement.⁴⁹ France remained most subject to inflation of the Western occupied nations, second only to Italy.

Nor can it be claimed that Vichy won any territorial immunities by collaborating. With the exception of Belgium, shorn of the few square miles of Eupen and Malmedy-Moresnet that she had gained from Germany in 1919, none of the other Western occupation nations suffered the de facto territorial annexations and amputations that France did. Alsace and Lorraine were placed under Nazi gauleiters and administered as part of the Reich. The rest of northeastern France was also sealed off from returning refugees and from French officials in a "Sperrzone," and farms "abandoned" there during the campaign were re-

⁴⁹ Alfred Münz, *Die Auswirkungen der deutscher Besetzung auf Währung und Finanzen Frankreichs*, Studien des Instituts für Besatzungsfragen in Tübingen zu den deutschen Besetzungen im 2. Weltkrieg, 9 (Tübingen, 1947), 76; Cour des comptes, *Rapport au président de la République, 1940-45*, 25; *Ministère public c/Bouhilière*, fasc. 2, 74 ff.; Weizsäcker files, *passim*.

settled with German settlers by an agency of the German Ministry of Agriculture called the Ostland Company.⁵⁰ Finally, the two northwestern channel coast departments of the Nord and Pas-de-Calais were placed under the German military government in Brussels rather than the Militärbefehlshaber in Frankreich.

It is, of course not possible to know what the territorial disposition of Western Europe would have been in the event of eventual German victory. Holland and Belgium might have been swallowed up entirely. France, it appears from the German Foreign Office's preparations for an eventual peace treaty, would have survived as an independent if truncated nation, probably excluded from the *Grosswirtschaftsraum*, or German-centered European free-trade zone.⁵¹ Vichy cannot claim to have saved the very existence of France, for that existence was not at stake. As for saving France from partition, it is not clear to what extent German sympathy for Breton, Flemish, and Burgundian autonomists (the last virtually fictitious) was ever meant to turn France into some kind of "Confederation of the Seine." The local German support for such movements never reflected a settled Berlin policy of partition, and that support was quietly withdrawn in the fall of 1940. The most one can claim for Vichy in this respect is that an amenable united France had been proven more useful to Hitler than a series of provinces; even a gauleiter would have hesitated to drive a population to desperate resistance by threatening to carve up the country.⁵²

⁵⁰ The Ostland Company settled German farmers on some 166,000 hectares in the departments of the Ardennes, Meuse, Meurthe-et-Moselle, Vosges, Haute-Saône, Doubs, and parts of the Aisne, Somme, and Jura. Cour des Comptes, *Rapport au président de la République, 1940-45*. See map in Brandt, 486.

⁵¹ For economic and political draft peace terms, see the Foreign Office "Friedensverhandlungen mit Frankreich" files: T-120/365, 368. See also Ribbentrop's "Grosswirtschaftsraum" file, T-120/830.

⁵² Various German proposals and opinions about the future of France (there was no settled policy for the eventual peace settlement) are ably summarized in Eberhard Jäckel, *La France dans l'Europe de Hitler* (Paris, 1968). See also the work of the army officer who drafted the armistice terms, [Colonel] Hermann Böhm, *Entstehung und Grundlagen des Waffensstillstandes von 1940* (Stuttgart, 1960), for Hitler's intentions in the summer of 1940.

Moreover, Vichy efforts to halt the *de facto* annexations of Alsace, Lorraine, and the northeastern "Sperrzone," mentioned above, were utterly unsuccessful. In the very honeymoon of the "new policy" of November 1940, trainloads of dispossessed Frenchmen from the two provinces were dumped into France with little more than the clothes on their backs. Laval's straggle of acquiescing in the loss of Alsace while suggesting plebiscites in Lorraine received no flicker of response from Germans. Darlan reopened the question of both provinces in Berlin in May 1941, but the only concession he obtained was permission for French soldiers on leave to visit their homes in the northeastern forbidden zone. Vichy did manage, by and large, to avoid direct German occupation of the empire until the battle for North Africa began in November 1942, with the major exceptions of German inspection teams in Morocco and Dakar and German use of French airfields and equipment in Syria for support of the Iraqi rising of May 1941. Berlin simply ignored the efforts of both Laval and Darlan to obtain a German guarantee of French frontiers and an equivalent imperial territory in an eventual peace settlement. Collaboration won no territorial favors for France.⁵³

Vichy's effectiveness as a "shield" has been most persistently claimed in the areas of forced labor for German factories and the Jewish Final Solution. Laval claimed after the war that while the Germans took 80 percent of Belgian workers to Germany, they took only 16 percent of French workers.⁵⁴ As for Jews,

⁵³ Vichy protested more vigorously over German measures in Alsace-Lorraine than over any other issue except the execution of hostages. See *DFC44*, II, 383-86; *DGFP*, Series D, XI, documents no. 271, 331, 354/56; T-77/OKW-1444/5594,611; T-120/4634/E208639 ff.; and T-120/308/passim. For Laval's acceptance of the loss of Alsace, see his conversation with Grimm on 28 August 1940 (T-120/2624H/D525934-37), his United Press interview of May 1941 (*Le Temps*, 28 May 1941), and his proposals of November 1942 for a German territorial guarantee (T-120/296/297075-76). For Darlan, see the Paris Protocol negotiations of May-July 1941. Vichy even had the support of Otto Abetz, who feared the repercussions of German policy in Alsace-Lorraine upon improved Franco-German relations in late 1940. See Abetz (Paris) 1049 of 31 October 1940 (T-120/121/120107-8). The Militärattachéstab and the Armistice Commission were opposed to possible further expulsions in August 1941 (T-120/855/285106; T-77/OKW-1444/5594,613-14).

⁵⁴ Laval testimony in *Procès Pétain*, 206. Less absurd but erroneous figures were published later in *Laval parle*, 130, and *Pierre Cathala, Face*

Xavier Vallat, who had been Commissaire aux Questions Juives in the Vichy government from 29 March 1941 to 6 May 1942, claimed in his trial that Jews were better off under Vichy than under a gauleiter.

So, the basic question is this: was it better that the French government concern itself with the Jewish problem or leave the entire material and moral responsibility for it to the occupation authorities?

As for me, I think it was better that the French Government got into it. . . .

At a time when out of 4,343,000 native Jews who lived in Austria, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Greece, Holland, Luxembourg, in Poland, and in Yugoslavia only 337,500 survived—that is to say that 92% of the Jews disappeared, the figures given for France [by the Anglo-American Commission of Enquiry on the Palestine Question, 1946] . . . prove that if, alas, most of the foreign Jews died in deportation, 95% of the Jews of French nationality are fortunately still living. That is my answer.⁵⁵

Unfortunately the shield was less successful in either case than the Vichy defense claimed.

If few French workers went to Germany in the earlier stages of the war, it was because Polish and then Russian prisoners of war and women were the mainstay of German forced labor. Only when those sources were exhausted by the very brutality of their treatment was volunteer labor replaced by forced labor in the Western occupied countries. In April 1942, Hitler appointed Fritz Sauckel, former gauleiter of Thuringia, to the office of plenipotentiary for foreign labor and authorized him to impose conscription of labor on occupied Belgium, Holland, and France.

It would be a striking justification for the Vichy shield theory if at this point the Germans had asked less of collaborationist

aux réalistes (Paris, 1948), 102, where it is claimed that while 50 to 80 per 1,000 of the total population of Belgium, Holland, and Poland were sent to work in German factories, only 13 per 1,000 of the French population were forced to work in Germany. Cathala, 105, then repeats Laval's claim to have "saved 7% of the French."

⁵⁵ *Le Procès de Xavier Vallat présenté par ses amis* (Paris, 1948), 117-18.

France or if Laval had proven able to win concessions for his new ministry.

The Germans asked no less of the Occupied Zone of collaborationist France than of totally occupied Belgium and Holland, and much more of France than of collaborationist Norway and Denmark (who contributed little to foreign labor working in the Reich).⁵⁶ Only the Paris embassy, among German agencies, seems to have been worried about the political cost to Vichy of forced labor in 1942. Rudolf Schleier, Abetz' second-in-command at the Paris embassy, warned Laval on 24 April 1942, through Consul-General Krug von Nidda, of what was coming and urged Vichy to counter the blow by making the volunteer system much more effective. At first Laval took this advice, permitting the establishment on May 1, 1942, of permanent German recruitment offices in Lyon, Marseilles, and Toulouse, enjoying the full support of French labor offices.⁵⁷ These efforts to increase French volunteer labor for Germany did not prevent the eventual introduction of forced labor in France, however. In fact, France became the largest single supplier to Germany of foreign male labor in all occupied Europe in 1943, east or west. Sauckel's Anordnung Nr. 4 of 7 May 1942, instituting forced labor in the west, makes no distinction between the French Occupied Zone and other occupied areas. And after November 1942, all of France was occupied. By November 1943, 1,344,000 French males were working in German factories, slightly ahead of the Russian and Polish male contingents. French women workers, at 44,000, came in third place, well behind the Russian and Polish women. Moreover, on January 5, 1944, Sauckel said he planned to draft an additional million Frenchmen to work in Germany. The German government spared Frenchmen none of the agonies of forced labor.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Edward L. Homze, *Foreign Labor in Nazi Germany* (Princeton, NJ, 1966), 148, 200.

⁵⁷ Schleier (Paris) 449 to Krug von Nidda (Vichy), 24 April 1942; Schleier (Paris) 526 to Krug von Nidda (Vichy), 5 May 1942. Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine, Paris, document nos. CLXXXIV-23, 24.

⁵⁸ Homze, 195. Sauckel's Anordnung Nr. 4 is found in T-120/5636/F407359-68.

There remains the possibility that Pierre Laval, working within the quasi-autonomy of Vichy, delayed or mitigated the application of forced labor to the unoccupied zone. His old associate Pierre Cathala tried to prove after the war that Laval had managed to "éviter le pire" with his famous Auvergnat peasant horse-trading: "Sauckel wants men, I will give him legal texts." Laval is supposed to have said.⁵⁹

Cathala's claims don't stand. Sauckel got legal texts and men too.

Never a man to leave the initiative to others, Laval was ready with a counterproposal when Sauckel came to Paris in mid-June 1942 to apply the new German labor policy to France. France enjoyed a unique tactical position in occupied Europe with respect to manpower. Two million able-bodied young Frenchmen were already in Germany as prisoners of war, and Laval now threw them into the bargaining scales with the notorious *relève* scheme: the release of one prisoner of war for every three French workers who volunteered to work in Germany. Hitler accepted this plan after a telephone conference with Sauckel on 15 June, and Laval worked out the details with Sauckel on the spot.

Laval clearly thought he had gained something, as the volume of French propaganda shows. The return of war prisoners, however few, touched the deepest emotions of both the French public and Pétain himself. Laval marked the political importance of the *relève* by going in person to greet the first trainload of returning prisoners at Compiègne on August 11, with maximum publicity. The other thing Laval thought he had gained was French sovereign control over one more area of threatened German direct administration.

And so the French government worked frantically to meet the quota of French volunteer workers. It supplied the names and addresses of specialists, arranged the closing of inefficient shops, and extended the work week, all measures designed to release a skilled labor pool for the *relève*. More strikingly, Laval asked German authorities secretly for a letter threatening direct

⁵⁹ Pierre Cathala, *Face aux réalités* (Paris, 1948), 97 ff.

German forced labor if the *relève* did not work. He and Pétain thought this would help convince the reluctant.⁶⁰ Although the *relève* got off to a slow start, with only 19,000 skilled workers signed up by 7 October, Vichy's strenuous efforts had recruited 181,000 workers by 21 November, of whom 90,000 were specialists.⁶¹

Even if Laval had managed to shave off direct forced labor until 1944 by means of the *relève*, it would have been a questionable bargain. In concrete terms, it was not really the three-for-one exchange which propaganda claimed. Laval and Sauckel agreed on 15 June that France would supply 400,000 workers, including 150,000 with special skills. The *relève* applied only to skilled workers; i.e., a maximum of 50,000 prisoners would be freed in return for eight times that many volunteer workers. Moreover, the exchange returned mostly farm boys to France at the expense of men with such vital industrial skills as lathe-turning, a short-term gain perhaps for French food production but a bad bet for the French future in Europe. The Germans, in turn, merely lowered the expense of keeping French war prisoners. The net result was that Vichy wound up doing Sauckel's job about as well as Sauckel could have done it himself. Most damning of all, the *relève* didn't buy any French exemption from forced labor in the long run anyway.

None of these Vichy efforts prevented Sauckel's general labor draft decree from being promulgated in occupied France on 20 August 1942 anyway, along with the rest of occupied Western Europe (a violation of Article III of the armistice, which attributed administration of both zones to the French.) Furthermore, in the effort to forestall the extension of the August 20 decree to the rest of France, Laval chose to exercise the shadow of remaining French sovereignty by issuing a French law "in the

⁶⁰ Schleiter (Vichy) 1842 to Paris, 6 October 1942 (T-120/5367/E407490-91). Schleiter talked to Pétain too.

⁶¹ The whole labor question is best followed in the files of the German embassy in Paris: Deutscher Botschaft, Paris—T-120/5635H, 5636H, 5637H, and in Edward L. Homze, *Foreign Labor in Nazi Germany* (Princeton, 1966), chap. 9. Homze's data, drawn mostly from Berlin materials, needs to be supplemented with the local perspective of the Paris embassy.

same sense" on 4 September 1942. This act established machinery in the unoccupied zone for drafting individual French skilled workmen, prevented French workmen from changing jobs freely, and made it more difficult to escape German recruitment. Thus the basic statutes for forced labor were already on the books when the rest of France was occupied in November 1942. When Sauckel came up with a new quota of 500,000 more workers from all France in January 1943, the Service du Travail Obligatoire was set up in February to draft whole age groups. Thereafter, all Frenchmen were subject to forced labor.⁶²

How much time had been won? The Sauckel decrees had gone into operation in Holland on 6 April 1942, and the largest Dutch annual contingent went that year. In Belgium an *arrêté* of 6 October 1942 established obligatory work in Germany for Belgian men and women, although it was not until September 1943 that individual conscription was replaced by the kind of call-up by year-classes that had been instituted in France in the preceding February. Thus France had a forced labor draft a bit after Holland and a bit before Belgium. Since Frenchmen were being more or less coerced to go to Germany under the *relève* anyway, the few months gained over Holland in unoccupied France before the STO of February 1943 does not seem a very good bargain.

A little calculation establishes that in the long run, French people suffered proportionally about as much as Belgium, and a little more than Holland, from forced labor. Total French labor figures in Germany, including prisoners of war who were set to work, amount to about 3.3 percent of the total population, as compared with about 3.4 percent of Belgian and 3.0 percent of Dutch total populations. Vichy France failed to win real relief from forced labor for the French in either zone.⁶³

Two forces finally did save a number of Frenchmen from the STO. In fact, of the million men Sauckel asked for in January 1944, only 38,000 French workers actually went to Germany in the remaining months before the Liberation. Vichy can take credit for neither of these effective barriers. One was Albert

⁶² For the 4 Sept. 1942 law, see T-120/4634/E208594-602.

⁶³ Figures from Homze, 195; the calculations are mine.

Speer, who struggled for influence against Sauckel in 1943-44. Speer, whose approach was technocratic rather than punitive, believed that it was more efficient for workers to produce for Germany in their own countries than to be brought to Germany where they had to be fed, supplied, and protected from Allied bombardment. Since plants were earmarked as "Speerbetriebe" or "S-betriebe" all over Western Europe, no special favors were being shown in France. No doubt a number of young French workers owed their lives to Albert Speer, however.

The other real barrier to the STO was the *maquis*. It became very difficult to compel young French skilled workers to go to Germany after the beginning of 1944 and virtually impossible after the Allied invasion of Normandy in June 1944. Vichy can take no credit for either of these shields, of course. They would have developed and worked as well, all other things being equal, under a gauleiter.⁶⁴

There remains the somber business of the Jewish Final Solution. It is true, as Xavier Vallat claimed, that a larger proportion of the Jewish populations of totally occupied Holland, Belgium, Norway, and Italy (totally occupied after 1943) perished than that of France, even taking refugees and citizens together.⁶⁵ The real question, however, is not whether fewer Jews were deported from France than from the totally occupied countries, but whether more Jews were deported from France because of Vichy

⁶⁴ For Speer, see footnote 59, page 322. Homze, 224-25, estimates that 14-20 percent of factories in Italy and France were earmarked "Speerbetriebe." Laval and Cathala, *Fare aux réalistes*, tried to claim credit for Speer's policy, and that no doubt would also have been a defense of Bichelonne had he not died in Germany in 1945 before standing trial. STO figures used here for 1944 are taken from Jacques Desmarest, *La Politique de la main-d'oeuvre en France* (Paris, 1946), 176 ff. They do not include the number of prisoners of war also working in the Reich.

⁶⁵ I have accepted the figures in R. Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (Chicago, 1961), 670, which show that the prewar Jewish population of Holland had declined at the Liberation by 86 percent, Belgium by 55 percent, Norway by 50 percent, Italy by 35 percent, France by 26 percent and Denmark by 15.4 percent (my percentages). Concentrated in Amsterdam, the Dutch Jews were the most vulnerable; 105,000 out of 140,000 perished. Werner Warmbrunn, *The Dutch under German Occupation* (Stanford, California 1963), 12, 35, 61 ff., 165 ff. There seem to be no figures in German archives distinguishing between French citizens and refugees in France among the victims of the Final Solution.

preparations and assistance than would have been the case if the Germans had had to do it all alone. Vichy bears a heavy burden of responsibility, seen in these terms.

It is true that the unoccupied zone of France provided a refuge of sorts for tens of thousands of Jewish refugees from Germany and Eastern Europe for the first two years. Republican France having taken over from England the role of Europe's refugee haven in the late nineteenth century, German Jews and then, after September 1939, Polish Jews, followed a well-worn path to the west. The fact that the armistice and the division of France into two zones kept many of these refugees one jump ahead of the German armies was not the result of any Vichy sentimentality about the refugees. In fact, Vichy objected vigorously when the Germans delivered more expatriate Jews into the unoccupied zone in the fall of 1940. After protest, Vichy acquiesced in Article 19 of the armistice, which empowered Germany to demand the extradition of German citizens who had sought refuge in France. Under this provision, such prominent figures as Herschel Grynszpan (who had assassinated a German diplomat in Paris in 1938) and the socialist economist and Weimar minister Rudolf Hilferding were delivered back into German hands—an ominous first warning about the precariousness of asylum in Vichy France. Moreover, Vichy did everything possible to encourage the further emigration of Jewish refugees. At a time when French Jews were being uprooted from the economy, there was no possibility of foreigners settling. Vichy also revoked some recent citizenships, enlarging the number of Jews in France without the protection of citizenship. Finally, Vichy gathered destitute Jewish refugees into work camps. Although Pétain spared them the yellow star, thousands were waiting behind barbed wire when the Germans came into the unoccupied zone in November 1942. Only those with money had managed to use southern France as a springboard for safer havens. For the rest, the French tradition of refuge made the unoccupied zone a trap.

The possibilities of sheltering Jews in southern France were far greater, say, than in the ghetto of Amsterdam. Furthermore, by the time the Germans actually arrived in southern France, in

November 1942, there had been ample time for emergency arrangements. The final irony is that Italian-occupied Alpine France provided the cover in 1943 that Vichy refused. Many French citizens did the same, but the Vichy authorities deserve none of their credit. Vichy bears the guilt for not having used its opportunity for the kind of escape operation that the totally occupied Danes managed to carry out by moving almost the entire Jewish population by small boat to Sweden in September 1943.

This survey suggests that the shield theory hardly bears close examination. The armistice and the unoccupied zone seemed at first a cheap way out, but they could have bought some material ease for the French population only if the war had soon ended. As the war dragged on, German authorities asked no less of France than of the totally occupied countries. In the long run, Hitler's victims suffered in proportion to his need for their goods or his ethnic feelings about them, not in proportion to their eagerness to please. Vichy managed to win only paltry concessions: a few months of the *relève* instead of a labor draft, exemption from the yellow star for Jews in the unoccupied zone, slightly lower occupation costs between May 1941 and November 1942, more weapons in exchange for keeping the Allies out of the empire. Judged by its fruits, Vichy negotiation was barren.

In the last analysis, fruitful negotiation depends upon some comparable capacity of each party to threaten the other with damage if acceptable compromises are not made and to withhold that damage if acceptable compromises are made. Vichy's one serious threat—to take fleet and empire over to the Allied side—lacked credibility. Vichy leaders could not exercise it without suffering more than the Germans. To be sure, the Germans did not want the effort and expense of a total occupation of France. Vichy leaders could delude themselves for the first months that France had found a cheap way out of the war. Even after the sufferings increased, however, they could not flee abroad without sacrificing the National Revolution, their commitment to internal order, and, after the Gaullists took over the empire from the Giraudists, their personal liberty and even life.

Early in the occupation, the Vichy leaders did not want to threaten to renounce the armistice; later on, they couldn't. In all of Laval's dealings with German officials, I have found only one threat even to resign. On 27 August 1942 Laval threatened to quit office if Sauckel's forced labor decree, applied to the Occupied Zone on 20 August, were extended to the unoccupied zone. Laval agreed, however, to issue a French law "in the same sense" for the unoccupied zone on 4 September, suggesting that he was much more interested in retaining the outward show of Vichy sovereignty than in blocking the policy of forced labor itself by exercising his ultimate weapon of breaking the armistice. No other threats to resign by Laval, and none by Darlan, turn up in the voluminous German records of their many conversations. Instead, the characteristic Vichy technique was to warn the Germans against creating a hostile public opinion, beyond Vichy capacity to control, by excessive severity. In other words, as long as the armistice and Vichy sovereignty was something they wanted more than the Germans, Vichy leaders were limited to the same sort of threat that lower civil servants could make in totally occupied countries. "Don't push our population too hard," they said in effect, "or it will become unmanageable."⁶⁶

Pétain made no more forceful threats than the others. There remains the curious plan for Pétain to present himself at the Demarcation Line as a hostage in September 1941 when the Germans began their reprisal executions, but we know about it only because Pucheu, perhaps to add negotiating pressure, told Abergz about it. The gesture was of course never carried out. The fact that Pétain did not renounce the armistice in November 1942, upon the total occupation of France—and there is no contemporary evidence that it was ever considered—proved to the Germans that he would never resign. They did not have to take very seriously his brief "strike" as head of state during his

⁶⁶ For Laval's threat to resign on 27 August 1942, see Schleier (Paris) 928 to Krug von Nidda (Vichy), 4 September 1942 (T-120/5637H/E407374-76). For a more typical Laval technique, warning the Germans that public opinion might become so hostile that he would be imprisoned and hence unable to help serve Germany further, see Schleier (Paris) 6280 to Berlin, 31 December 1942 (T-120/935/298646-48).

last effort to get rid of Laval in November–December 1943, and indeed Pétain soon gave in. Pétain ceased exercising the powers of head of state in earnest only when the Germans took him by force off French soil, to the castle of Sigmaringen in August 1944. No one at Vichy ever seriously made the threat that Thiers claimed he issued to Bismarck as they began negotiations at Versailles in February 1871:

You mean to ruin France in her finances, ruin her on her frontiers. Well, take her. Administer the country. Levy the taxes. We shall retire and you shall be left to govern her.⁶⁷

In the last analysis, the sovereignty of Vichy was a negotiating liability rather than a negotiating asset. The Vichy leaders had asked for an armistice in the summer of 1940 to prevent revolution and to remake France along different lines. The continued existence of the Vichy regime had to be defended, as the price of fulfilling those aims. It was something for which Vichy leaders made concessions, rather than something for which Germany made concessions. A gauleiter would have made many Frenchmen suffer; in the end, he might have gotten less.

Profits and Losses

THE VICHY REGIME DID NOT SAVE THE FRENCH PEOPLE from suffering, perhaps even more suffering than that endured by totally occupied countries in Western Europe. That suffering was not endured evenly, moreover, on all shoulders alike. Not even the most conscientious war economy of penury can spread the burdens and equalize sacrifices with a perfectly even hand. The Vichy war economy was colored by ideological favoritism and distorted by the pressures of interest groups. It would be misleading to speak of beneficiaries of the regime, for the occupation was a bitter experience for all Frenchmen. Nevertheless, some

⁶⁷ Louis Adolphe Thiers, *Notes et souvenirs (1870–73)* (Paris, 1904),

Frenchmen found themselves in a less exposed position under Vichy than others, better able to shelter from the blows of a tormenting epoch. A few even enjoyed, for a time, the fruits of power or the economic favors of war production. In that sense, we can ask upon whom the regime smiled more and less, who benefited more and less from the Vichy regime.

Some of the particular victims would have suffered regardless of the existence of an armistice or a quasi-sovereign French regime: the farmers of the northeastern "Sperrzone" whose lands were colonized with Germans by the Ostland corporation; prisoners of war; the victims of bombings, first by the Axis and then by the Allies; refugees under direct German occupation north of the Demarcation Line. To their number were added the particular victims of the Vichy regime itself: Jews, luminaries of the former regime, Communists, workmen recruited to work in Germany. All of these conspicuous victims have their memorial. Other groups were victimized more subtly by Vichy economic policies and interest groups.

Urban wage earners were the unannounced pariahs of the regime. Real wages went down. The inflationary pressures incidental to any great war were enormously magnified in France by the gigantic hemorrhage of occupation costs, which turned about half the national revenue into purchasing power for the German armed forces in France. Even granting that Vichy finance ministers were somewhat more successful in keeping inflation in check than the early Fourth Republic was to be, the official cost of living went up by slightly over half between June 1940 and December 1942 and then doubled again by August 1945.⁶⁸ The official cost of living, however, was not what it actually cost a city dweller to procure the necessities of life. The extreme scarcity of goods, magnified by the uncontrollable nature of small peasants and merchants, helped divert goods into the black market and hoarding. The money for the official price and the correct number of ration tickets might simply not purchase any food at all, if the stores were empty. Cash or a cousin

⁶⁸ A. J. Brown, *The Great Inflation* (Oxford, 1955), 304–5. It increased far more rapidly during 1945–48 than it had during the war, although Yves Bouthillier exaggerates his success in *Le Drame de l'armistice*.

on the farm was sometimes the only way to get anything to eat. Because of the black market, the fragmentation of the French distribution system, and the business orientation of the regime, price controls were less effective than wage controls. Wages fell far behind prices. When Laval was planning a wage increase in July 1942, for example, Ambassador Abetz had figures showing that while prices had increased by 70 percent since the beginning of the war, wages had risen only 30 percent. The gap was even greater by 1944.⁶⁹

Added to this cruel wage-price pinch, labor was made more helpless by the abolition of national trade unions and the outlawry of strikes. The few strikes of which we have knowledge, such as a miners' strike in the Nord in May 1941, were brutally repressed. The "functional" representatives of workers in the corporative organization, the *Comités sociaux*, were formed very slowly where they were formed at all, and workers were placed there in a position of permanent minority by dividing membership three ways among employers, technical staff, and workers. By their very nature, the corporative structures, even those in which some workmen were included, were intended to dismantle the workers' side of the previous adversary system of labor relations. Although unemployment was soon replaced by a labor shortage in the unoccupied zone, working people were subjected almost without redress to long hours and lagging wages, political discrimination in employment, and the threat of forced labor in Germany. Immense ground had been lost since 1936.⁷⁰

On the other hand, it was a time of opportunity for those

⁶⁹ Abetz (Paris) 2857 to Berlin, 7 July 1942 (T-120/434/220101-5). Abetz was torn between his orders to keep French wages lower than German, to encourage volunteers to work in Germany, and his efforts to prove to France that national socialism was "not reactionary."

⁷⁰ Although the Vichy regime did not repeal the forty-hour law or the paid-vacation law of the Popular Front, it used decree power (as the Reynaud and Daladier governments had done) to authorize longer hours. The best source for unemployment statistics under Vichy is Jacques Desmarest, *La politique de la main-d'oeuvre* (Paris, 1945), 126 ff. The work week grew from an average 35.6 hours in December 1940 to 46.2 hours in March 1944. Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques, *Mouvement économique en France de 1938 à 1948* (Paris, 1950), 62-63.

with scarce commodities to sell. The most obvious new power, for housewives dealt with it twice a day, was the "grocer's dictatorship." Not even the scheming butter-and-egg lady of Jean Dutourd's *Au bon beurre*, of course, had unlimited privileges in a world where even the most commonplace articles were scarce. She had a newfound power to lord it over her former arrogant customers, however, and she reveled in it. And her euphoria colored the regime and the marshal himself in the rosier hues.

Small, self-supporting farmers enjoyed the shelter afforded by primitiveness. The peasant plot on the *massif central*, with no tractor to lie idle and no more than one horse to attract the German army purchasing agent, could probably still turn out the mediocre living it had produced in 1939, provided the sons were not in a German prisoner-of-war camp. By 1942 that mediocre living was worth a king's ransom. Moreover, the chances for lucrative sales in a world with nothing to buy probably improved the cash position of many small farmers. The main enemy was the age-old one, the predatory and inquisitive state.⁷¹

Industrialists can hardly be described as flourishing in an economy whose total production ranged from a half to a third of the mediocre prewar level of 1938. All business sectors, however, enjoyed the benefits of Vichy corporatist self-regulation, the limiting of competition through universal cartels, and the dismantling of organized labor. Some businesses were "more equal than others," of course. Scarce raw materials were allocated by the state (the Offices de Répartition in the Vichy zone, the German military government economic branch at the Hotel Majestic in the Occupied Zone) according to clear priorities. Firms engaged in war production for Germany boomed, while nonessential industries were starved for materials, stripped of machinery, drained of workmen. A look at production figures for the occupation years in the *Annuaire statistique* shows where the favors lay. The new aluminum industry was producing more than

⁷¹ For the wartime position of French farmers, see Pierre Barral, *Les Agrariens de Méline à Pisan* (Paris, 1966), Gordon Wright, *Rural Revolution in France* (Stanford, Calif., 1964), and Michel Cépède, *Agriculture et alimentation en France pendant la IIe guerre mondiale* (Paris, 1961). Thirty-six percent of prisoners of war were from the agricultural sector. *Mouvement économique 1938-46*, 63.

before the war, as were the energy industries—electricity, gas, petroleum. Wood and building materials worked at 70-90 percent of prewar levels. Next, at levels below prewar figures, but still above average, came metallurgy and the transformation of metals. By contrast, textiles, leather goods, chemicals, and paper limped along at barely a third of 1938 business levels. The rubber industry was simply unable to get raw materials. By and large, the most concentrated and rationalized sectors, those dominated by a handful of major firms—automobiles, aircraft, aluminum, steel—were in the forefront of this forced-draft boom. The most dispersed, fragmented, and antiquated sectors of industry, by and large, were among those further discriminated against.⁷²

The stock and bond markets were also up after the bad years of the 1930's. State bonds were all up over par during the occupation for the first time since World War I. Many issues were at their highest level since 1931. The stock market also moved upward. Since these gains for investors and *rentiers* seem to have run ahead of losses due to inflation, at least at first, they help explain how Finance Minister Yves Bouthillier could take pride in the "relative financial stability" that he claimed the armistice had permitted him to assure.⁷³

There were even some illicit fortunes founded. It was open season on Jewish properties that were sold off cheaply. Better still, one might become *administrateur provisoire* of the property of Jews who had fled to the unoccupied zone or abroad and milk it for quick profits. Restitution could not always be made after the war if, for example, there was no one left to repay. There was also the black market and even the possibilities of exploiting the Resistance. We are now in the murky underworld of Vichy profiteering, where documentation is totally lacking. Although there were some prosecutions for illicit wartime fortunes after the war, nothing concrete has been made public.

⁷² Production figures for the occupation period, organized by industry, appear in Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques, *Annuaire statistique*, vol. 57 (1946), Résumé rétrospectif, 100-7.

⁷³ State bond quotations appear in the *Annuaire statistique*, 1946, 149-57, along with selected stock prices. Yves Bouthillier, *Le Drame Larmite* (Paris, 1950), 12.

At the top, Vichy's elite lived well. Laval had amassed his fortune between the wars. The High Court of Justice, with all its unseemly courtroom vituperation of the man, could find no blatant graft in his wealth. As owner of the chateau of the village of Châtelidon, where he had grown up as the innkeeper's son, a few miles from Vichy, Laval enjoyed showing visitors about his acres, mud on boots, pointing out depredations made by the British in the Hundred Years War. His great pleasure was the table, and the country restaurants along the Allier River near Vichy seem to have been able to oblige.

Darlan enjoyed more conspicuous ostentation. An impressive villa near Toulon bought from a Jewish family by the Oeuvres Sociales de la Marine as a rest home for Navy personnel, was actually fitted out at a cost of eight million francs for Darlan's private use. Its sumptuous furniture made the Cour des Comptes doubt the Navy's postwar story that the villa was meant to be a clandestine Mediterranean command post.⁷⁴

Marshal Pétain lived in personal austerity at the Hotel du Parc in Vichy. He was paid, however, in the coin of adulation. Delegations of scouts, veterans, artisans, and peasants crowded his anterooms. Enthusiastic crowds greeted his travels. He indulged his taste for fatherly aphorism in radio and newspaper messages. Despite some attempts to limit the practice, his name was attached to streets, squares, and most of the major public works commenced during Vichy: the one steamship launched during the occupation, the great suspension bridge begun across the Seine at Tancaurville. Admirers bought him a fine Burgundy vineyard and renamed it the Clos du maréchal.⁷⁵ Above all, his cabinet and press reminded him daily that he was his country's savior.

Large sums in secret funds and subsidies went to favored officials and editors. Most of these were the Paris embassy's hangers-on, however, rather than Vichy personnel. Of all the ministers and secretaries of state brought before the High Court

⁷⁴ Cour des Comptes, *Rapport au président de la République pour les années 1940-44* (Paris, 1945), 8.

⁷⁵ Cour des Comptes, *Rapport au président de la République pour les années 1940-44*, (Paris, 1945), 22.

of Justice after the Liberation, only Fernand de Brinon, the journalist and founder of the Comité France-Allemagne who became Laval's agent in Paris in 1940 and then the official Vichy government delegate in Paris, seems to have benefited from large-scale corruption. He was arrested at Nancy with his Jewish wife in 1944 with nearly 5,000,000 francs in cash and jewelry valued at 850,000 francs. M. Caujolle, the court's financial expert, established that the de Brinons had lived far beyond their income before and after 1940, with country homes, servants, and thoroughbred horses, without finding exactly where it had all come from. Joseph Darnand, too, was rumored to have profited from the legendary "treasure of the Milice."⁷⁶ The conspicuous high-livers of occupied Paris, such as the actress Corinne Luçhaire, daughter of Jean Luçhaire, *Nouveaux temps* editor and president of the Paris press association, were major recipients of Otto Abetz' press funds.

Vichy's favoritism was nothing as simple and vulgar as graft, however. By and large, the Vichy elite was highly professional and financially correct. The Vichy regime spread its favors by the subtler play of economic and social policy. The regime is hierarchical, Marshal Pétain never tired of saying. It was hierarchical in its profits and losses as well as in the allocation of power. Vichy spoiled the rich.

A Moral Balance Sheet

THERE IS, FINALLY, A GRAVE MORAL CASE TO BE MADE against the Vichy elite. There is, first of all, the charge of using the defeat of 1940 for narrowly sectarian purposes, to seek revenge upon the Popular Front and to remake France along new lines, no less partisan than the old and in the service of narrower interests. This does not mean that they had plotted the defeat of France in advance. But their domestic enmities were so

⁷⁶For Brinon, *Les Procès de la collaboration* (Paris, 1948), 81-87; for Darnand, *ibid.*, 279, 317, 319.

all-consuming, after four years of the Popular Front and its successors, that they committed the most elementary of political errors. They wrote new laws under an armed foreign occupation.

There is also the charge of abetting the further internal division of France. No other major occupied country entered the war so torn; no other major occupied country used the occasion for such a substantial restructuring of domestic institutions. When biographies of Marshal Pétain began to appear in 1966, it became regular practice to blame the poisons of division attending the Liberation upon de Gaulle's rigorous sectarianism and the upwelling of revenge encouraged by Resistance lawlessness.⁷⁷ A will to healing reconciliation co-existed within the Liberation forces alongside a well-justified determination to purge and punish the collaborators, however. It was most visible in the Liberation army, a successful amalgam of Armistice Army, Free French, and Forces Françaises Libres under two ex-Pétainiste officers (Marshals de Latre de Tassigny and Juin) and one Gaullist officer (Marshal Leclerc de Hautecloque). If that will to reconciliation did not prevail over the will to revenge in 1944, it was very largely because the Vichy regime had not been the mere caretaker regime in 1940-44 that its defenders claim. Vichy waged another round in the virtual French civil war of the 1930's. Then, its geopolitical gamble having failed and war having ended neither in German victory nor in a French-mediated compromise but in total Allied victory, Vichy reaped the winds of sectarian passion that it had sown.

There is, finally, the issue of complicity. Continually repurchasing its shadow sovereignty at a higher and higher price, the Vichy regime made many Frenchmen accomplices in acts and policies that they would not normally have condoned. Marshal Pétain, in particular, was a figure to whom millions of Frenchmen looked with more than usual confidence. After the total occupation of France in November 1942, or at least after the constitutional crisis of November-December 1943, it was time to cease lending the stamp of one's approval to an enterprise that

⁷⁷See, for example, Georges Blond, *Pétain* (Paris, 1966); Jean Tournoux, *Pétain et De Gaulle* (Paris, 1966); Guy Raïssac, *Un Combat sans Merci* (Paris, 1966).

no longer worked. "Old age is a shipwreck," as de Gaulle observed, but Germans who met Petain in 1943 still found him fresh and alert.⁷⁸ Moreover, he was surrounded by men whose brilliance of preparation and of administrative career made them superior to the Third Republic leadership of the late 1930's. These able and intelligent men led other Frenchmen deeper into complicity with the besieged Third Reich's last desperate paroxysms: the Final Solution, forced labor, reprisals against a growing resistance. What can explain such egregious choices?

Tactical motives, the hope of saving France from worse, can not explain that complicity after November 1942. Of the four elements composing the Vichy bargaining position—military defeat, continuation of others in the war, the stranglehold of German occupation upon the richest two-thirds of France, and the exclusion from German grasp of the French fleet and empire—only the last one was ever within Vichy's control. After the total occupation of France, the scuttling of the French fleet, and the return of French North Africa to war in November 1942, Vichy no longer had even that leverage. Life was clearly no easier for Frenchmen by then than for the totally occupied Western European countries.

Clearly other motives led Frenchmen deeper into that final complicity. Bureaucratic inertia and blindness to considerations beyond the efficiency of the state were among them. Beyond that was the attraction of the National Revolution for its partisans.

At bottom, however, lay a more subtle intellectual culprit: fear of social disorder as the highest evil. Some of France's best skill and talent went into a formidable effort to keep the French state afloat under increasingly questionable circumstances. Who would keep order, they asked, if the state lost authority? By saving the state, however, they were losing the nation. Those who cling to the social order above all may do so by self-interest or merely by inertia. In either case, they know more clearly what they are against than what they are for. So blinded, they perform jobs that may be admirable in themselves but are tim-

tured with evil by the overall effects of the system. Even Frenchmen of the best intentions, faced with the harsh alternative of doing one's job, whose risks were moral and abstract, or practicing civil disobedience, whose risks were material and immediate, went on doing the job. The same may be said of the German occupiers. Many of them were "good Germans," men of cultivation, confident that their country's success outweighed a few moral blemishes, dutifully fulfilling some minor blameless function in a regime whose cumulative effect was brutish.

Readers will prefer, like the writer, to recognize themselves in neither of these types. It is tempting to identify with Resistance and to say, "That is what I would have done." Alas, we are far more likely to act, in parallel situations, like the Vichy majority. Indeed, it may be the German occupiers rather than the Vichy majority whom Americans, as residents of the most powerful state on earth, should scrutinize most unblinkingly. The deeds of occupier and occupied alike suggest that there come cruel times when to save a nation's deepest values one must disobey the state. France after 1940 was one of those times.

⁷⁸ See the Krug-Pétain meetings of 9 February 1943 (T-120/1832 H/418618-20) and 22 August 1943 (T-120/3546 H/E022155-56).