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Pétain's Jewish Children: French Jewish Youth and the Vichy Regime

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Focusing on the period 1940–1942, this thesis investigates the nature of the relationship between the Vichy regime and Jews of French citizenship who found themselves under its control. Despite Vichy's implication in the Holocaust, this study examines the possibility for convergence, however partial and temporary, between Vichy's plans for regeneration and Jewish ambitions to participate in the New Order. This investigation aims to explain the seemingly contradictory circumstances in which a French Jew could be at once persecuted under Vichy's anti-Semitic legislation, and rewarded for the promotion of certain French values by the government's programme of National Revolution. This unstudied dilemma is explored in this thesis through an examination of French Jewish youth. An analysis of this social category provides a point of entry into the ambivalences of Vichy's policies. While Vichy enacted legislation in order to marginalise Jewish participation in the national community, the regime was also emphatically in favour of French Jewish youth contributing to the National Revolution.

Methodologically this study moves away from the long-established categories of resistance, rescue and persecution. Rather than merely examining Jewish youth's activities during the establishment of the Vichy regime as a period of formation and preparation for later resistance or rescue activity, this study seeks to investigate the ways in which, from 1940–1942, the Vichy regime and French Jewish youth sought to coexist. This aspect of the war years has almost entirely disappeared from France's collective memory and from the historiographical debates over Vichy and the Jews.

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This thesis investigates the nature of the relationship between the Vichy regime and the Jews of French citizenship who found themselves under its control in the period between 1940 and the summer of 1942. Despite Vichy's implication in the Holocaust, this study examines the possibility for convergence, however partial and temporary, between Vichy's plans for regeneration and Jewish ambitions to participate in the process of National Revolution.

Legislation was enacted in Vichy's first months that intended to marginalise Jews from the rest of the French population. Jews were excluded from the state sector and liberal professions and their entry to universities was controlled by the introduction of a *numerus clausus*. By the summer of 1941, Jews had been forced to register for a compulsory census and they were no longer allowed to own properties or businesses. Yet at the very moment that Jews were excluded from the nation, Vichy was also promoting a series of measures in its quest for national regeneration. France would be rebuilt by a focus on its traditional values of family, agriculture and community. Jews were not excluded from taking part in most of Vichy's regenerationist schemes. The aim of this study is to explain the seemingly contradictory circumstances in which a French Jew could be at once persecuted under the regime's anti-Semitic legislation, and rewarded for the promotion of certain French values by Vichy's programme of National Revolution. For example, Jewish mothers with more than eight children were rewarded with the 'Golden Medal' of French families. After giving birth to her eighth child, Bella Nizard received this award at an official ceremony in spring 1943. Two months later her husband and eldest son were deported to Auschwitz.

Manifold tensions existed between Vichy's ambition for national and social regeneration and its racial policies, rendering simplistic references to the regime's anti-Semitism misleading. Naturally, these tensions were not apparent to the regime: for many of Vichy's principal ideologues and administrators, social regeneration and the marginalisation of the Jewish minority of French citizens were part of a broader whole. But, in action, these policies were often riven with contradictions.

This study suggests that the dominant narrative of the Holocaust has prevented alternative approaches of investigating the Jewish experience of the Occupation from coming to fruition. Hitherto, historiography focusing on Jews during the Second World War has been viewed through the lenses of resistance, persecution or rescue. Historiographical contexts and debates have taken these directions and have not considered the possibility of any other forms of engagement between Vichy and the Jews. The heterogeneity of the Vichy regime is generally overlooked when considering Vichy's position towards the Jews. Existing studies have not analysed those wings and persons in positions of power which were not anti-Semitic and they

have ignored any differences which may have existed between the anti-Semitic legislation amongst these groups and individuals.

Many existing studies address the mechanics of the regime's racial laws through a top-down examination, investigating the political and economic manifestation of the persecutory measures. Others, while incorporating the political and economic dynamics of persecution, place their emphasis on the social aspects of the Jewish experience, to consider how, rather than *whether*, Jews reacted to the racial laws.

However, to consider the relationship between Vichy and the Jews through the lens of Jewish victimisation does not have to be the only approach. This enquiry will test the predetermined conclusions that lie at the heart of most existing investigations. It considers that an emphasis on persecution, formative for the current Jewish memory of Vichy, has blurred many distinctions both in Vichy's attitudes towards the Jews and Jewish responses to the regime. Looking at the coexistence between Vichy and the Jews, and focussing less on the regime's legal and political measures and more on the social relationship between the two sides offers interpretations that are omitted from an approach that takes Vichy's persecutory measures as a starting point. To consider the decisions of French Jewry within a framework that explores the possibility for coexistence with the new regime seems to indicate a more complex relationship during this tumultuous period.

To analyse how Jews coexisted for a period of two years with the regime, this project will examine the interface between Vichy's dual priorities of regeneration and exclusion. As has long been recognised, the Jewish population in France was not a passive object of Vichy policy-making. Jews from many backgrounds and with many political views responded in a variety of ways to the sudden change of regime. Some reacted by displaying a hyper-patriotic loyalty to Pétain as the saviour of the nation; others, as is well known, opted for resistance or fled abroad, particularly to North Africa and to London. Some retreated into community politics, seeking to protect the Jewish community against the dangers which surrounded it. All of these forms of behaviour are evident in the responses of Jewish youth in 1940, the category of the Jewish population which forms the basis of this investigation. While Vichy enacted legislation in order to marginalise Jewish participation in the national community, the regime was also emphatically in favour of French Jewish youth contributing to the National Revolution. It is therefore in the tension between these two priorities that the value of this analysis rests. Youth, being neither adult nor child, was key to the social construction of the new social order and was immediately pushed to the forefront of Vichy's rhetoric. In the aftermath of the defeat, youth became a central player in the debate over how to regenerate the nation and it was this category, rather than men who had brought about the defeat, or women or children, which was to be the bearer of the National Revolution.

Methodologically, this enquiry encourages a bottom up and top down analysis in order to best seek out patterns and similarities in the reactions of Jewish youth towards Vichy, and attitudes towards Jewish youth displayed by their neighbours and organisms of the regime. The diffused nature of the evidence has led to sustained periods of archival research being undertaken in France, the USA and Israel. A combination of official and private sources, together with a large number of oral

history interviews, reveals the ambiguities that prevailed during Vichy's first two years.

The first chapter initially explores the sociology of French Jewry on the eve of the Second World War and shows that by 1939, French Jewish youth were completely embedded into French Republican values. It analyses how Jews sought to adapt and integrate into France and will consider how immigration and Zionism affected the existing model. A short examination of EIF at this time will show why it had implemented a return to the land project long before Vichy had come to power. Under the Occupation, Jewish youth sought to cooperate with Vichy by taking part in its youth projects and agricultural schemes. To illuminate the heterogeneity of Vichy policy makers over the Jewish Question, a second half of this chapter will examine how certain Vichy ministers in control of youth and agriculture negotiated the participation of Jewish youth inside of programmes that fell under their jurisdiction.

A second chapter investigates the reactions of certain Jewish youth movements to the regime. It illustrates that a common project based on scouting and a return to the land, led the EIF to seek coexistence with the regime. As a full member of Scoutisme Français, the EIF took part in activities with the other scouting associations and was invited to participate at public ceremonies. A focus on the Yechouroun and the Zionist youth will explain why these organisations did not seek cooperation with the New Order. This chapter will investigate the points of intersection between the Vichy and the Jews, by exploring the participation of Jewish youth in a series of state-sponsored youth movements.

Two in-depth case studies lie at the foundations of this thesis. In chapters three and four, a first case study investigates the creation of the EIF's Chantier Rural at Lautrec. Chapter three examines Jewish youth's everyday life at the Chantier. It weighs up the success of the return to the land project and considers how Vichy provided the opportunity for so many Jewish youths to become acquainted with Judaism and Zionism for the first time. Chapter four examines the specificity of the Tarn as the location of the EIF's Chantier Rural. By delving into the personalities of local figures, it investigates how Lautrec's neighbours and local officials reacted to the Jewish presence.

A second case study, taken up in the fifth and sixth chapters, investigates the hitherto ignored participation of Jews in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse. Chapter five focuses on how individual Jewish youths integrated and contributed to the Chantiers. A focus on the youth's daily routine will illustrate the multiple ways in which they were able to live out a dual Jewish and French identity. Through a dual top-down and bottom-up approach, the sixth chapter examines how anti-Semitism was expressed in the Chantiers. It interrogates the ways in which certain officials at the top of the organisation perceived the Jewish Question and how they sought to filter anti-Semitic propaganda down to the Chantiers in the localities.

Taking all the chapters together, this thesis argues that Vichy adopted multiple attitudes towards the Jewish Question. Throughout the study, it reveals instances when Vichy showed its flexibility by allowing Jewish youth to participate and contribute to the construction of the New Order. Similarly, it overturns any possibility which suggests that Jewish ambitions to coexist with Vichy were founded upon a

series of loopholes which were exploited by Jews in their efforts to survive. Above all, it argues that there was no 'typical' Jewish response to Vichy. It is in the diversity of the responses to the new regime that the richness of Jewish political and social attitudes can be found.

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List of abbreviations

Abbreviations in the text:

ADAC	Association des Anciens des Chantiers de la Jeunesse
BPO	<i>Bulletin Périodique Officiel</i>
CGQJ	Commissariat Général aux Questions Juives
CERPA	Le Centre de recherches historiques du patrimoine des anciens combattants des <i>Chantiers</i> de la jeunesse
EIF	Eclaireurs Israélites de France
ENA	École nationale d'administration
EU	Eclaireurs Unionistes
Gt	Groupement [Individual Chantiers de la Jeunesse, also known as Groupements, were numbered between 1 and 47].
JO	<i>Journal Officiel</i>
JOC	Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne
MJS	Mouvement de Jeunesse Sioniste
OJC	Organisation Juive de Combat
ORT	Obshchestvo Remeslenofo zemledelcheskofo Truda (Society for Trades and Agricultural Labour)
OSE	Œuvre de Secours aux Enfants
PQJ	Police aux Questions Juives
SDF	Scouts de France
SF	Scoutisme Français
SGJ	Secrétariat Général à la Jeunesse
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association

Abbreviations in archival references:

AHICC	Avraham Harman Institute of Contemporary Jewry
AIU	Alliance Israélite Universelle
AML	Archives Municipales de Lyon
AN	Archives Nationales
ADG	Archives départementales du Gard
ADHG	Archives départementales de la Haut-Garonne
ADR	Archives départementales du Rhône
ADT	Archives départementales du Tarn
ADTG	Archives départementales du Tarn-et-Garonne
BN	Bibliothèque Nationale
CC	Consistoire Central
CDJC	Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine
IHTP	Institut d'Histoire du Temps Présent
JOINT	The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee
USHMM	United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
YIVO	Yidisher Visnshaftlekher Institut (YIVO Institute for Jewish Studies)
YV	Yad Vashem

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Je vais dire quelque chose d'horrible. Ça [la Shoah] ne m'a pas touché directement
[...] Si par hasard, mon père et ma mère étaient gazés, je verrais des choses d'une
façon différente [...] Je n'ai pas ce couteau planté dans le cœur.
USC Shoah Foundation, Interview with Pierre Cahen, July 1997.

Vous dites qu'on insiste trop sur la Résistance, mais c'est la seule chose qui compte.
Interview with Denise Weill, 3 April 2007.

Introduction

Research Question

In June 1942, a team of builders was hired to begin work at the main synagogue in Toulouse. For a cost of 35.000 Francs, the men were required to carry out a complete renovation of the premises on rue Palaprat.¹ Amongst other things, new tiles were ordered for the floors, fresh paint for the walls and a new mechitza to stand in the centre of the building.² Crucially and perhaps even symbolically, the building's foundations were also to be reaffirmed. While a derelict synagogue is a reminder of a Jewish presence that once was, the expensive restoration of a community building generally indicates a desire for Jews to remain in place and even to build for their future. Such a reconstruction strongly indicates that in the spring-summer of 1942, Jewish communal figures in Toulouse did not believe that they were presiding over a community that was slowly evaporating.

The story of the Jewish experience under Vichy is a familiar one. A series of anti-foreigner measures enacted over the summer of 1940 culminated in the first *Statut des Juifs* in October 1940, affecting both French and foreign Jews. This marked the first in a series of legal measures which had as their aim the elimination of Jews from the economy and their marginalisation from the rest of French society. If one is to judge the experience of Jews in the non-Occupied Zone solely by the legislation on paper that affected them and from the propaganda that emanated from the state, it would appear that their situation was extremely ominous. Laws were passed at an early stage

¹ Archives Association Culturelle Israélite de Toulouse, Detailed description of the works to be carried out by P. Callusio, 15 June 1942.

² A mechitza is usually a wall-like object, which divides the men from the women during the religious services.

that restricted Jews from the civic, legal and medical professions. In the spring of 1941, Vichy created a governmental bureau to administer Jewish affairs which enacted a series of spoliation and aryanisation measures. Finally, from August 1942, the Vichy police began to round up foreign Jews and to place them in internment camps, the antechambers of the Nazis' extermination camps. From March 1943, French Jews became subject to roundups and deportation.

The situation of Jews in the Occupied Zone was even worse, where Jews found themselves subject to both Vichy and Nazi anti-Semitic legislation. Here, Jews were forbidden from entry into public places that included telephone boxes, parks and libraries. Jews could only do their shopping in designated hours and were only allowed to ride in the last carriage on the metro. From May 1941, all Jews in the Occupied Zone were subject to roundups and on 7 June 1942 wearing the yellow star became obligatory for all Jews over the age of six years old. In the month of June 1942, four convoy trains left France for Auschwitz. Out of a total of 4,111 Jewish men, women and children on board, only 157 returned to France in 1945.

The unequivocal passing of these laws, coupled with the deportation of 76,000 Jews from France, has led most histories of Vichy to emphasise the marginalisation of Jews from the rest of the French population. Descriptions of the first two years of the Occupation generally emphasise Jews' reactions to the racial laws as a time in which Jews, fully aware of the legislation to which they were subject, sought to initiate survival strategies. As Zuccotti has argued, 'most Jews regarded the laws as of earth-shattering importance'.³

³ S. Zuccotti, *The Holocaust, the French and the Jews* (New York, 1993), p. 59.

At the height of Vichy's legislative campaign, at a time when avenues and opportunities were becoming closed to Jews, what can explain the decision of the rue Palaprat synagogue to spend such a substantial sum of money on bricks and mortar, when, with so many Jews seeking exit visas and more still detained in internment camps, the money could, arguably, have been spent on a more worthwhile cause? To answer this question through a lens that considers Jews to have been aware of, and reacting to, their status as victims can reveal certain possible explanations. Leading Jewish figures, sensing that a noose was tightening, decided to invest the money in community apparatus as a last ditch attempt to signal French Jewry's unyielding commitment to France. Another explanation, which also interprets this decision within the framework of persecution, is that Vichy's discriminatory measures had made a significant number of Jews turn towards community structures for spiritual and practical support. Improved facilities thus became imperative to accommodate the newfound demand.

However, to consider this question through the lens of Jewish victimisation does not have to be the only approach. Looking at the coexistence between Vichy and the Jews, and focussing less on the regime's legal and political measures and more on the social relationship between the two sides offers interpretations that are omitted from an approach that takes Vichy's persecutory measures as a starting point. To consider the decisions of French Jewry within a framework that explores the possibility for coexistence with the new regime seems to indicate a more complex relationship during this tumultuous period. For the rue Palaprat synagogue was not unique in seeking to plant its roots deeper into a country that, from the statute books

at least, appeared to have long since turned its back on its Jewish minority. On the contrary, across the non-Occupied Zone, Jewish groups and individuals took part in a range of initiatives, all of which signalled their intention to accommodate the new regime.

The purpose of this thesis is to explore, test and elucidate this paradoxical situation and others like it by investigating the nature of the relationship between the Vichy regime and the Jews of French citizenship who found themselves under its control in the period between 1940 and the summer of 1942. Despite Vichy's implication in the Holocaust, there is a need to investigate the possibility for convergence, however partial and temporary, between Vichy's plans for regeneration and Jewish ambitions to participate in the process of National Revolution. The aim of this study is to explain the seemingly contradictory circumstances in which a French Jew could be at once persecuted under the regime's anti-Semitic legislation, and rewarded for the promotion of certain French values by Vichy's programme of National Revolution. For example, although decrees that discriminated against Jewish citizens were introduced as early as October 1940, Jewish widows and wives of prisoners of war continued to receive pensions throughout the Occupation, while Jewish mothers with more than eight children were rewarded with the 'Golden Medal' of French families. After giving birth to her eighth child, Bella Nizard received this award at an official ceremony in spring 1943. Two months later her husband and eldest son were deported to Auschwitz.⁴

⁴ YV, o.33 3488, Histoire de la famille Armand Nizard sous le Gouvernement de Vichy 1940–1944.

Manifold tensions existed between Vichy's ambition for national and social regeneration and its racial policies, rendering simplistic references to the regime's anti-Semitism misleading. Naturally, these tensions were not apparent to the regime: for many of Vichy's principal ideologues and administrators, social regeneration and the marginalisation of the Jewish minority of French citizens were part of a broader whole. But, in action, these policies were often riven with contradictions.

To analyse how Jews coexisted for a period of two years with the regime, this project will examine the interface between Vichy's dual priorities of regeneration and exclusion. As has long been recognised, the Jewish population in France was not a passive object of Vichy policy-making. Jews from many backgrounds and with many political views responded in a variety of ways to the sudden change of regime. Some reacted by displaying a hyper-patriotic loyalty to Pétain as the saviour of the nation; others, as is well known, opted for resistance or fled abroad, particularly to North Africa and to London. Some retreated into community politics, seeking to protect the Jewish community against the dangers which surrounded it. All of these forms of behaviour are evident in the responses of Jewish youth in 1940, the category of the Jewish population which forms the basis of this investigation. A study of French Jewry as a whole would only scratch the surface of the ambivalences of Vichy's policies. Rather, to focus on a single component of French Jewry and to test from a variety of angles how it adapted, reacted to, and positioned itself with or against Vichy, permits a thorough reassessment of the relationship between Vichy and its Jewish citizens. Further, it lays the foundations for future in-depth studies of additional categories of Jews, who momentarily benefitted from some form of

coexistence with the regime, such as Jewish ex-servicemen or the families of Prisoners of War [hereafter, POWs].

Jewish men, women and children all sought various modes through which to accommodate the New Order; however, this investigation believes that an examination of Jewish youth provides the most effective lens through which to analyse the coexistence between the two parties. While Vichy enacted legislation in order to marginalise Jewish participation in the national community, the regime was also emphatically in favour of French Jewish youth contributing to the National Revolution. It is therefore in the tension between these two priorities that the value of this analysis rests. Youth, being neither adult nor child, was key to the social construction of the new social order and was immediately pushed to the forefront of Vichy's rhetoric.⁵ In the aftermath of the defeat, youth became a central player in the debate over how to regenerate the nation and it was this category, rather than men who had brought about the defeat, or women or children, which was to be the bearer of the National Revolution.

Analysing Jewish youth's coexistence with Vichy nevertheless requires further boundaries to be drawn. Of course, some Jews did not enter into a reciprocal relationship with Vichy, be it because they immediately opposed the nature of the regime, or because Vichy did not seek to cooperate with them. For example, Jewish youth without French citizenship were ineligible to receive state subsidies and their

⁵ The investigation supports the opinions of Pierre Bourdieu who argued that 'youth is just a word', a 'biological datum, socially manipulated and manipulable'. See P. Bourdieu, *Sociology in Question* (London, 1993), pp. 94–102. To locate young people within the social unit of youth fails to appreciate their vicissitudes and multiple experiences. Nevertheless, interrogations over the theoretical concept of 'youth' and its deconstruction as a social category of analysis lie beyond the scope of the current project. For an excellent overview on the social construction of youth, see G. Jones, *Youth* (Cambridge, 2009).

presence was not permitted in the majority of the regime's youth movements. With such obstacles to coexistence, these youths lie beyond the scope of this investigation and attention shall instead focus upon the Jewish youth who took part in state-sponsored youth movements. Such organisations included both the official Vichy youth movements, notably the Chantiers de la Jeunesse, and also those Jewish movements which were looked upon favourably by the new regime.⁶ However, although they occupy much of the focus, this study is not confined exclusively to Jews whose families had been in France for more than five generations. On the contrary, the analysis broadens out to incorporate those 'foreign' Jewish youths who, after acquiring citizenship in the 1920s and 1930s, became eligible to take part in Vichy's state-sponsored youth schemes. These 'naturalised' Jews do not usually feature in traditional studies that investigate 'native' French Jewry. Their inclusion by Vichy to participate in its youth projects renders their presence central to this study, first as an illustration of how Vichy placed its commitment to youth above its exclusionary policies and second as a means of illuminating the heterogeneous composition of French Jewry, which influenced certain Jewish reactions to the regime. Central to this project is the fact that there was no 'typical' Jewish response to Vichy. It is in the diversity of the responses to the new regime that the richness of Jewish political and social attitudes can be found.

⁶ For this project, 'youth' is defined as those adolescents who were eligible to take part in Vichy-organised youth movements. They would usually have been between 18 and 25 years old in the period 1940–42.

Historiography

Hitherto, historiography focusing on Jews during the Second World War has been viewed through the lenses of resistance, persecution or rescue. Historiographical contexts and debates have taken these directions and have not considered the possibility of any other forms of engagement between Vichy and the Jews. Until the early 1980s, studies of Jewish acts of resistance dominated the scholarship on Jewish life under Vichy.⁷ Focus was on the acts of resistance themselves, and little consideration was paid to the motivations and circumstances that prompted Jews to become resisters. Historians generally agree that in the aftermath of the Second World War the voices of Jewish victims who sought to testify as to their experiences of discrimination and deportation during the Holocaust were largely ignored.⁸ In the immediate post war years, Jewish institutions actively avoided portraying Jews as victims and instead sought to mould the Jewish experience to be more in line with an emerging resistance mythology. After the war, France had suffered a great loss of national pride, yet Vichy had also left in its wake scores of divided families and communities. At the Liberation, De Gaulle advanced the claim that France had been united in resistance from the start in order to draw a line under the Vichy years and to

⁷ See J. Lazarus, *Juifs au Combat* (Paris, 1947); D. Knout, *Contribution à l'histoire de la Résistance juive en France, 1940–1944* (Paris, 1947); J. Ravine, *La Résistance Organisée des Juifs en France, 1940–1944* (Paris, 1973); A. Rutkowski, *La Lutte des Juifs en France à l'Époque de l'Occupation, 1940–1944* (Paris, 1975).

⁸ Annette Wieviorka has shown that after the return of the survivors, few people made any distinctions between the political survivors of concentration camps and the Jewish survivors of extermination camps. See A. Wieviorka, *Déportation et Génocide: entre la mémoire et l'oubli* (Paris, 1992). Moreover, until recently, the dominant view had been that Jewish victims deliberately avoided speaking about the Holocaust in order to fit back into regular post war life. However, this interpretation has now shifted to one that argues that Jewish voices wanted to speak, but they did not have an audience willing to listen. See D. Cesarani, 'Introduction' in D. Cesarani, S. Bardgett, J. Reinisch, J-D. Steinert, (eds.), *Survivors of Nazi Persecution in Europe After the Second World War. Landscapes after Battle* (London, 2010), pp. 1–11. This view, with specific reference to the French case, has also been put forward by Jean-Marc Dreyfus: 'Témoigner de la Shoah', Lecture at the Maison Française, Oxford, 19 February 2010.

put an end to the infighting.⁹ According to this official narrative of the Occupation, a deportee was rarely connected with a Jewish person; rather, the term was assigned mainly to resisters, or on occasion to men who had served in the Service du Travail Obligatoire [hereafter, STO]. At this time, the Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine [hereafter, CDJC], the principal collator and publisher of documentation of the experience of Jews under the Occupation, placed Jewish armed resistance at the heart of its investigations and considerable attention was paid to the Jewish *Maquis* in the Tarn and the *Armée Juive* in Toulouse.¹⁰ Despite this focus on collective acts of Jewish resistance, studies of individual Jewish participation in movements of national resistance also came to the fore.¹¹ While scholarship on Jewish armed resistance has for some years remained on the margins of enquiries into Vichy and the Jews, it has never entirely disappeared and is currently experiencing something of a revival amongst Israeli scholars.¹²

By the early 1970s, Jewish armed resistance was no longer the only focus and new investigations that showed Jewish rescue as a legitimate means of resistance had

⁹ For more on the myth of the resistance, see L. Douzou, *La Résistance française: Une histoire périlleuse: Essai d'historiographie* (Paris, 2005). On De Gaulle's involvement, see S. Hazareesingh, *Le mythe gaullien* (Paris, 2010).

¹⁰ R. Poznanski, 'Resistance and the Rescue of Jews in France: From History to Historiography', Keynote lecture at: The Rescue of Jews in France and its Empire during World War II, University of Columbia, 25 March 2011.

¹¹ See D. Diamant, *Les Juifs dans la Résistance Française, 1940–1944* (Paris, 1971).

¹² See S. Courtois, D. Peschanski, and A. Rayski, *Le Sang de l'Étranger: Les immigrés de la MOI dans la Résistance* (Paris, 1989); A. Wieviorka, *Ils étaient juifs, résistants, communistes* (Paris, 1986). The Israeli scholars Anat Gueta and Tsilla Hershco currently work on the armed resistance: Gueta, A., 'The Communist Jewish Resistance in France during the Nazi Occupation: The Marseille Cell', Paper delivered at the Fifteenth World Congress of Jewish Studies, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 5 August 2009, and T. Hershco, 'The Jewish Resistance in France during World War II: The Gap between History and Memory', in *Jewish Political Studies Review*, 19: 1–2, Spring (2007). Studies on Jewish armed resistance fit into a broader transnational historiography that has existed since the 1960s, following Raul Hilberg's downplaying of the Jewish resistance in the concluding chapter of his magnum opus. See R. Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (Chicago, 1961). A flurry of studies followed this work and continue to be published, all of which demonstrate collective Jewish resistance against the Nazis. See Y. Bauer, *They Choose Life: Jewish Resistance in the Holocaust* (New York, 1973); I. Gutman, *The Heroism of the Jewish People in the Second World War* (Tel Aviv, 1985) and R. Rozett, *Jewish Armed Resistance in Hungary: A comparative view* (New York, 1997).

managed to ‘sneak into the CDJC historiography’.¹³ The frameworks and conclusions in the studies of Anny Latour and Lucien Lazare are neatly summed-up by the title of Lazare’s work in English translation: *Rescue as Resistance*.¹⁴ These investigations emphasised that the danger and secrecy that were involved in the illegal rescue of Jewish children by Jews, in itself categorised resistance to Vichy.

It was the 1981 publication of Marrus and Paxton’s *Vichy France and the Jews* that put to rest the accepted view that Vichy’s policies towards the Jews had been created on German orders.¹⁵ Since this time, scholarship on Jewish persecution at the hands of Vichy has remained the dominant method through which to consider Jewish life under the regime.¹⁶ Publications in the 1990s and the new millennium have broadly continued to adopt this method of enquiry, resulting in a plethora of investigations that analyse this aspect of *les années noires*.¹⁷ A large number of these studies address the mechanics of the regime’s racial laws through a top-down examination, investigating the political and economic manifestation of the persecutory measures.¹⁸ Other studies, while incorporating the political and economic dynamics of persecution, place their emphasis on the social aspects of the Jewish experience, to

¹³ Poznanski, R., ‘Resistance and the Rescue of Jews in France: From History to Historiography’.

¹⁴ A. Latour, *La Résistance Juive en France* (Paris, 1970); L. Lazare, *La Résistance Juive en France* (Paris, 1987) and L. Lazare, *Rescue as Resistance: How Jewish Organisations fought the Holocaust in France* (New York, 1996).

¹⁵ M. Marrus and R.O. Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews* (New York, 1981). All reference to this work is from the second edition (Stanford, 1995).

¹⁶ Rousso identified the final phase of the *Vichy Syndrome*, that is to say 1974 to the present, as being marked by an obsession in public life with the Jewish memory of the occupation. See H. Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome* (Cambridge, MA, 1994), p. 132. Studies exploring the victimisation of Jews did exist before this time but received only scant attention. See J. Billig, *Le Commissariat Général aux Questions Juives, 1941–1944* (3 vols, Paris, 1955–1960); G. Wellers, *L’Etoile Jaune à l’Heure de Vichy* (Paris, 1973).

¹⁷ Amongst the most important general studies, see S. Klarsfeld, *Vichy-Auschwitz: Le rôle de Vichy dans la solution finale de la question juive en France*, 2 vols, (Paris, 1985); L. Joly, *Vichy dans la Solution Finale: Histoire du Commissariat Général aux Questions Juives 1941–1944* (Paris, 2006).

¹⁸ In the bibliography to his recent study on the CGQJ, Laurent Joly lists more than 300 secondary sources under the heading: ‘Politique antijuive et antisémite en France de 1940 à 1944’. See Joly, *Vichy dans la Solution Finale*, pp. 971–984. This list mainly covers enquiries into the bureaucratic functioning of anti-Semitic policy and does not include social histories of the period.

consider how, rather than *whether*, Jews reacted to the racial laws.¹⁹ Further, micro-studies focusing on Jewish participation within a particular group or industry adopt persecution as a lens through which to describe the relationship between their research subject and the regime.²⁰

Investigating the Jewish experience through the lens of persecution is so powerfully explanatory that local studies into Vichy and the Jews have adopted it as the only framework with which to construct their enquiries. After establishing Vichy's responsibility for the racial laws at the national level, it did not take long before scholars began to investigate how the regime's anti-Semitic policies were administered in the localities. Attempts to encourage researchers to employ local archives when investigating Jewish life under Vichy had been made as early as 1966, with the publication of Szajkowski's *Franco-Jewish Gazetteer*.²¹ However, until the 1990s, scholarship on Jews in the provinces was limited to local or amateur historians.²² The tendency amongst professional historians to examine Jews in the regions began with the works of Donna Ryan and Jean Estèbe in the early 1990s.²³ Ryan and Estèbe based their analyses on local and municipal archives, which they combined with private community collections. In so doing, they sought to adopt a similar methodology to those employed by historians of Vichy (such as Sweets and

¹⁹ See notably: A. Kaspi, *Les Juifs Pendant l'Occupation* (Paris, 1991); Zuccotti, *The Holocaust the French and the Jews* and R. Poznanski, *Jews in France during World War II* (Hanover, NH, 2001).

²⁰ See C. Singer, *Vichy, l'université et les Juifs* (Paris, 1992) and R. Weisberg, *Vichy Law and the Holocaust in France* (Amsterdam, 1996).

²¹ Z. Szajkowski, *Analytical Franco-Jewish Gazetteer* (New York, 1966), Szajkowski's book provides a detailed overview of every departmental archive in France, listing files which relate to Jews in France under the Occupation. This groundbreaking study is seldom consulted by contemporary historians and the BNF does not hold a copy. The author eagerly awaits the publication of the following piece: L. Leff, *The Archive Handler: Zosa Szajkowski and the Salvaging of French Jewish History*, (forthcoming).

²² L. Landau, 'La Communauté de Strasbourg-Limoges (1939–1944)' in *Almanach KKL-Strasbourg*, 1964–1965.

²³ See D. Ryan, *The Holocaust and the Jews of Marseille* (Urbana and Chicago 1996) and J. Estèbe, *Les Juifs à Toulouse et en Midi-Toulousain au Temps de Vichy* (Toulouse, 1996).

Kedward) that investigated how the regime functioned in the provinces.²⁴ This method had never been undertaken by historians exploring the regime's relationship to its Jewish population, who had relied on Paris-based sources to construct their analyses. More recently, however, scholars have been able to take their studies further, following the passing of France's sixty year rule limiting the consultation of certain archival documents that relate to the Occupation. The release of these files has facilitated the task of researchers and has led to a deeper understanding of the mechanisms behind Jewish persecution under Vichy.²⁵

The experience of Jews in the Tarn, which is of central importance to the present study, has been the subject of several enquiries. Jean Estèbe's study of Jews in the Toulouse region under the Occupation includes important information that relates to the spoliation and aryansisation measures in the Tarn.²⁶ Yet, beyond the prism of Jewish victimisation, Estèbe's study reveals little about how Jews experienced everyday life in the department. The Tarn features as one of nine departments under consideration and somewhat surprisingly, evidence from the Archives départementales du Tarn was not sought in the compilation of Estèbe's analysis, which instead relied on Paris and Toulouse-based documents. Other studies have drawn on particular case studies that relate to the Jewish experience. The daily life of foreign Jews in Lacaune has been the subject of a study by a local historian.²⁷ The

²⁴ H.R. Kedward, *Resistance in Vichy France: A Study of Ideas and Motivation in the Southern Zone 1940–1942* (Oxford, 1978); J.F. Sweets, *Choices in Vichy France: The French under Nazi Occupation* (Oxford, 1986).

²⁵ For a case study of the Occupied Zone, see B. Reviriego, *Les Juifs en Dordogne 1939–1944* (Périgueux, 2003). For a study on Lens in the Zone Interdite see M. Mariot, and C. Zalc, *Face à la persécution. 991 Juifs dans la guerre* (Paris, 2011). For the non-Occupied Zone, see A. Doulut, *La Spoliation des Biens Juifs en Lot-et-Garonne* (Nérac, 2005) and M. Iancu, *Vichy et les Juifs. L'Exemple de l'Hérault* (Montpellier, 2007).

²⁶ Estèbe, *Les Juifs à Toulouse*.

²⁷ S. Marc, *Les Juifs de Lacaune Sous Vichy 1942–1944* (Paris, 2001). In 1942, a compulsory order of residence relocated 648 Jews to the village of Lacaune.

camps of Saint-Sulpice and Brens, in which foreign Jews were interned, have been the subject of a study by another local historian.²⁸ In 2001, a conference was held in Lacaune under the title: ‘Juifs et non Juifs dans le Tarn pendant la Seconde Guerre Mondiale’, and the conference proceedings were later published by Jacques Fijalkow. This ‘actes de colloque’ is the broadest account of the Jewish experience in the Tarn, yet it still falls short of a full study.²⁹

To date, Alain Michel’s 1984 study on the *Éclaireurs Israélites de France* [hereafter, EIF] under Vichy remains the most comprehensive account of Jewish life at the EIF’s Chantier Rural at Lautrec (Tarn) and only Valérie Ermosilla’s 1987 Masters dissertation has come close to matching Michel’s extensive knowledge of the Chantier.³⁰ Nevertheless, Ermosilla’s study is let down by its exclusive focus on how Jews in the Tarn resisted Vichy. It is from this angle alone that she has investigated the everyday experiences of youth at Lautrec. Michel’s analysis, conversely, suffers above all from the limitations of his evidence, which was confined exclusively to Paris-based Jewish sources (memoirs, private correspondence and oral interviews). Writing in the 1980s, Michel was prohibited from consulting official Vichy sources, under the sixty year rule. He was thus limited to considering the Jewish experience in isolation from the regime and he did not investigate interactions between Lautrec and local Vichy officials. Finally, there have been three articles on the Chantier Rural at Lautrec in the *Revue du Tarn*. Two of these were written by the local priest at Lautrec,

²⁸ D. Fabre, ‘Les Camps d’Internement du Tarn: Saint-Sulpice et Brens’, in M-L.Cohen and E. Malo, (eds.), *Les Camps du Sud-Ouest de la France* (Toulouse, 1994), pp. 71–79.

²⁹ Conference organised by Jacques Fijalkow, 15–16 September 2001. J. Fijalkow, (ed.), *Vichy, les Juifs et les Justes: L’Exemple du Tarn* (Toulouse, 2003). Only half of the articles in the collection relate specifically to the Tarn. Of these, only the article by Alain Michel investigates Jewish daily life with the remaining articles focusing on Jewish internment, the local Justes and the Resistance.

³⁰ A. Michel, *Les Éclaireurs Israélites de France pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale, septembre 1939 – septembre 1944: Action et Evolution* (Paris, 1984); V. Ermosilla, ‘La Résistance Juive dans le Tarn 1939–1944 : Réalités et Représentations’ (Université de Toulouse-Le-Mirail, Master’s Thesis, 1987).

Abbé André Maynadier; the third, charting the trajectories of two members, was written by a Masters student.³¹ Until now, Abbé Maynadier remains the only person to have fully consulted the EIF files on Lautrec at the Archives départementales du Tarn. However, through his focus on administrative documents, Maynadier fails to consider the dynamics of the relationship between the Jewish scouts and their neighbours. Moreover, his articles have a number of significant shortcomings, above all his selective use of evidence: for example, he purposefully omits all the letters of complaint from neighbours that were sent to the prefecture.

The study of the *Shoah* in the localities is now attractive territory for historians because of the support, both moral and financial, that they may receive from distinguished scholars and philanthropic organisations. Writing in the preface to Bernard Reviriego's meticulous investigation of the Dordogne, Serge Klarsfeld wrote of the need for a study of the *Shoah* in every French department. This would, he noted, lead to:

Une centaine d'ouvrages qui permettraient probablement d'élaborer de nouvelles synthèses concernant le sort des Juifs de France, confirmant ou infirmant les travaux de référence en place aujourd'hui.³²

These local investigations are important in revealing how anti-Semitic policies were applied and how Jews reacted to their implementation. Crucially, they chart how the

³¹ A. Maynadier, 'Le Chantier Rural des Ormes, des origines à août 1942', *Revue du Tarn*, no 192, Hiver (2003), pp. 639–658; A. Maynadier, 'Le Chantier Rural des Ormes (1940–1944). Deuxième Période', *Revue du Tarn*, no. 203, Automne (2006), pp. 455–467 and M. Orjekh, 'Adrien Gensburger et Jean-Paul Bader : Du Scoutisme Juif à la Résistance', in *Revue du Tarn*, no 203, Automne (2006). Orjekh did not make use of the Archives départementales du Tarn [ADT]. I am grateful to Abbé Maynadier for his helpful suggestions during a meeting at Lautrec on 12 February 2009.

³² Klarsfeld, in the preface to Reviriego, *Les Juifs en Dordogne*, p. 5.

racial laws were first interpreted and then enacted in the regions, illuminating the nature of the problems faced by local officials confronted with orders from above.

In analysing the social experience of Jews in the localities, the current investigation builds on the important work of Poznanski, Ryan and Estèbe. Nevertheless, this study would suggest that the methodologies employed by such investigations at both the national and local levels are fundamentally problematic. Until now, studies into Vichy and the Jews have fit into one of three main interpretations outlined in this section. Some studies only touch upon one aspect and others encapsulate all three; yet none have escaped the gravitational pull of resistance, rescue or persecution, when seeking to formulate new interpretations of the experience of Jews under Vichy.³³

In the existing literature, the years 1940–42 are almost always seen as a precursor to the later tragic events of the period 1942–44, a time in which the roundups and deportations exposed French Jewry's unambiguous victimisation by the regime. Memorable titles of certain historical works such as Serge Klarsfeld's *Vichy – Auschwitz* only exacerbate the teleology linking between the two periods.³⁴ In his chapter on the non-Occupied Zone, Kaspi begins by charting the discriminatory measures from 1943, thereby creating the impression that a Jew's life in France in 1943 would have differed very little from his or her life two years prior.³⁵ Similarly, Poznanski, who treats in great depth the years 1940–1942, seeks to qualify this period as a time when Jews became aware of their victimisation and sought primarily to

³³ The investigations by Renée Poznanski and Asher Cohen cover resistance, rescue and persecution. See Poznanski, *Jews in France* and A. Cohen, *Persécutions et sauvetages; Juifs et Français sous l'Occupation et sous Vichy* (Paris, 1993).

³⁴ Klarsfeld, *Vichy-Auschwitz*.

³⁵ Kaspi, *Les Juifs Pendant l'Occupation*, p. 162.

protect themselves or their fellow Jews.³⁶ There is little doubt that Jews working in the civil service and in the liberal professions would have been very aware of the first and second *Statut des Juifs*. However, should this imply that all French Jews in the non-Occupied Zone were affected by the racial laws? To an extent, the answer must be affirmative. Although many French Jews did not own property and did not exercise professions that fell under the auspices of the *statuts*, the compulsory census of July 1941 placed them in direct contact with the racial laws. However, while the census was later to become an important tool with which to round up Jews, how far in the summer of 1941 did Jewish signatories believe that it represented an instrument of discrimination?

Approaching the subject through the lenses of resistance, rescue and persecution can thus take the historian only so far. They do not allow investigation into the areas that this study seeks to address, namely cooperation and accommodation between Vichy and the Jews. For example, the existing interpretations do not allow enquiry into any differences that may have existed at Vichy over the Jewish Question. As Adler has noted:

All [Vichy Ministers] 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.³⁷

The heterogeneity of the Vichy regime is generally overlooked when considering Vichy's position towards the Jews. Existing studies have not analysed those wings and persons in positions of power which were not anti-Semitic and they have ignored

³⁶ Poznanski, *Jews in France*, pp. 66–103.

³⁷ J. Adler, 'The Jews and Vichy: Reflections on French Historiography', *The Historical Journal*, 44, 4 (2001), p. 1069.

any differences which may have existed between the anti-Semitic legislation amongst these groups and individuals. In the same vein, examination of the Jewish experience has treated Vichy as a bloc against which to explore Jewish aspects of the Occupation, namely resistance, rescue and persecution. These categories do not permit a full investigation into the diversity of French Jewry's experiences under Vichy. Instead, they offer an image of a shared Jewish experience under the Occupation. Inquiry into Jewish life under Vichy generally observes how a monolithic Jewish community reacted to a constantly deteriorating situation from the summer of 1940.³⁸ It is argued that Jews were generally aware of the discriminatory legislation and developed collective responses to counter them. Such an approach prevents deeper enquiry into how, or even whether, ordinary Jews not affiliated with Jewish communal institutions sought to negotiate their relationship with the regime.

The sensitivity of the Holocaust as an area of historical investigation offers an explanation as to why scholarship based on these three canonical factors has remained so entrenched. Historiographical trends are strongly influenced by contemporary factors. When writing about history so directly connected to the Holocaust, historians often feel an obligation to display increased sensitivity. Media interest and regular exhibitions and commemorations across France have served to place suffering at the heart of the Jewish remembrance of Vichy. In France, school children compete each year in an essay-writing prize, the *Concours de la Résistance et de la Déportation*. Survivors are regularly invited to French schools and children are brought from across France to the *Mémorial de la Shoah* museum in Paris.

³⁸ Poznanski, *Jews in France*, pp. 42–43. This is also demonstrated by the very title of Donna Ryan's investigation; *The Holocaust and the Jews of Marseille*.

The influence of such external factors on historians of Vichy and the Jews affects the framework that governs their methods of enquiry. During the late 1980s and 1990s, the media attention given to the trials of Klaus Barbie and Paul Touvier, and the assassination of René Bousquet, propelled Jewish persecution – as a dominant discourse – to the forefront of the nation’s remembrance of the war time years.³⁹ This was further captured in 1995 when President Chirac publically recognized France’s responsibility in the persecutions:

Oui, la folie criminelle de l’occupant a été secondée par des Français, par l’État Français [...] La France, patrie des Lumières et des Droits de l’Homme, terre d’accueil et d’asile, la France, ce jour-là, accomplissait l’irréparable. Manquant à sa parole, elle livrait ses protégés à leurs bourreaux.⁴⁰

The Jewish memory, publically legitimised by President Chirac, declared that Vichy and the Holocaust were inextricably connected. Persecution or Jewish resistance to it has remained the only lens through which to examine Jewish life at this time. Critically, this debate has spread far beyond the limits of the Jewish community. It represents how France, not just Jews in France, remember Vichy.

This study suggests that until now, the sensitivity of the Holocaust has meant that alternative approaches of investigating the Jewish experience of the Occupation, though conceived, have not come to fruition. Writing in 1991, André Kaspi identified the limitations of persecution and resistance for historians who sought to interrogate Jewish life under Vichy and tried to put forward new historical methods that he felt

³⁹ For more on the memory of the Occupation during the specific historical context of the 1990s, see R.J. Golsan, *Vichy’s Afterlife: History and Counterhistory in Postwar France* (Lincoln, NE, 2000).

⁴⁰ Speech by President Chirac at the anniversary of the Grands Rafles de Vél d’Hiv, 16th July 1995, quoted in J. Chirac, *Mon combat pour la France: textes et interventions, 1995–2007* (Paris, 2007), pp. 30–31.

were needed in this area.⁴¹ In the year that followed the release of Pierre Laborie's groundbreaking study of public opinion, Kaspi maintained that enquiry into the everyday life of Jews under the Occupation was pivotal in determining the multiple experiences of Jews at that time.⁴² Kaspi argued that not all Jews were involved in rescue activity and that not all Jews were caught in the round-ups.⁴³ The publication of his work in 1991, the year in which René Bousquet was indicted for crimes against humanity and at the height of the Touvier Affair, meant that Kaspi's book appeared at a crucial moment in the debate over France's memory of its Vichy past. This study argues that Kaspi's call for a more developed analysis of the everyday life of Jews under Vichy came too early and that the Jewish memory of Vichy was not – and perhaps is still not – ready for such an undertaking.

Nevertheless, historiographical boundaries in other areas have, in recent years, been pushed back to make way for a variety of new interpretations of French society under Vichy. As a result, the dichotomy of resistance versus collaboration, which for so long dominated historiographical debates, has now almost completely been put to rest. New studies that employ innovative methodologies have revealed the shortcomings of this adamant approach. Enquiry into Vichy in the localities has revealed the complexities of everyday life under the Occupation. Studies by Cobb, Sweets and Gildea into aspects of everyday life that were experienced by ordinary French people have illustrated an intricate web of personal relations that have thoroughly blurred the

⁴¹ Kaspi, *Les Juifs Pendant l'Occupation*, p. 13

⁴² Ibid. See also P. Laborie, *L'Opinion Française sous Vichy* (Paris, 1990).

⁴³ Unfortunately, his call to enlarge the approach for studies into Vichy and the Jews was buried in his introduction and Kaspi himself did not waver from investigating the subject through a prism of persecution. See Kaspi, *Les Juifs Pendant l'Occupation*, pp. 13–17.

boundaries between collaboration and resistance.⁴⁴ The contribution of Philippe Burrin, who has suggested looking at the choices of French people through their accommodation of, rather than their collaboration with the Germans, has further stimulated the historiography. At a time of such confusion and uncertainty, to accommodate Vichy as a means of ‘getting through’ the Occupation became a way of life for many millions of French people.⁴⁵ Recently, the work of Bénédicte Vergez-Chaignon on what have been labelled the *Vichysto-Résistants*, those resisters who were pro-Vichy, has gone even further in hammering the final nail into the coffin of the ‘resistance versus collaboration’ dichotomy.⁴⁶ However, in spite of this historiographical renewal, scholars investigating Jews under Vichy have, until now, isolated the Jewish experience of everyday life within the existing interpretations of resistance, rescue and persecution and have not considered adapting their methodologies to be more in line with recent frameworks of investigation.

This study emerges from a historiographical tradition that seeks to explore heterogeneity within the Vichy regime. Since the mid-1970s, notions of a monolithic Vichy have been successfully unravelled, thus allowing scholars to examine the complexities that existed within a great number of institutions, components and theories of the regime.⁴⁷ The conclusions of these recent studies, in exposing the diversity of the regime, have explored the possibility of an alternative Vichy. In the

⁴⁴ R. Cobb, *French and Germans, Germans and French. A personal interpretation of France under Two Occupations, 1914–1918/1940–1944* (Hanover and London, 1983); Sweets, *Choices in Vichy France*; R. Gildea, *Marianne in Chains: In Search of the German Occupation, 1940–1945* (Basingstoke and London, 2002). While for many years examinations of Vichy in the localities remained the terrain of Anglo-Saxon historians, this is no longer the case and a conference at Sciences-Po Bordeaux organised by Pascal Ory in December 2010 around the theme of ‘Villes et Culture sous l’Occupation’, is testament to the changing attitude of French historians towards regional studies.

⁴⁵ P. Burrin, *France under the Germans, Collaboration and Compromise* (New York, 1996), p. viii.

⁴⁶ B. Vergez-Chaignon, *Les Vichysto-Résistants: de 1940 à nos jours* (Paris, 2008).

⁴⁷ S. Hoffman, *Decline or Renewal? France Since the 1930s* (New York, 1974); Kedward, *Resistance in Vichy France*.

summer of 1940, many people saw Vichy as an unknown entity with multiple possibilities. The disappearance of the Third Republic ensured that adjusting to Vichy was not like adjusting to a known phenomenon. Rather, it was something new and unimagined. These investigations have shown that in its early days, Vichy was malleable and very open to rival influences. Peschanski observes that at the beginning of the regime, groups and individuals not associated with the traditional Right sought to mould Vichy into something they could work with to implement their ideas on social, political or economic renewal.⁴⁸ That said, such a re-writing has only gone so far and although scholarship on ‘a plural Vichy’ has increased since the early 1990s, it has not complicated the anti-Semitism of the regime, whose image as an anti-Semitic bloc has been left largely uncontested.⁴⁹ In exposing the plurality that existed at the highest levels of policy regarding the Jewish Question, this study builds on revelations of the plurality of the regime by exploring how this plurality manifested in the domain of Vichy and the Jews.

Additional historiographical developments have also taken place which have enabled the current study to surface. Research into French youth and the *Homme Nouveau* across a range of historical periods has received considerable scholarly attention in recent years. This focus on youth has helped shed important light on their position as historical agents and as objects of state planning.⁵⁰ The study of youth under Vichy

⁴⁸ D. Peschanski, ‘Vichy Singular and Plural’, in S. Fishman, L-L. Downs, I. Sinanoglou, L. Smith, and R. Zaretsky, (eds.), *France at War: Vichy and the Historians* (Oxford, 2000), p. 116.

⁴⁹ For more on a plural Vichy, see H.R. Kedward, *La Vie en Bleu: France and the French Since 1900* (London, 2006), p. 267.

⁵⁰ For an important recent overview spanning the early nineteenth century to the present see L. Bantigny, and I. Jablonka, *Jeunesse oblige. Histoire des Jeunes en France XIXe–XXIe siècle* (Paris, 2009). On the French Revolution, see A. de Baecque, ‘L’homme nouveau est arrive. La régénération du Français en 1789’, *Dix-huitième Siècle*, 20 (1988); M. Ozouf, ‘La Révolution française et la formation de l’homme nouveau’ in *L’homme régénéré : Essais sur la Révolution française* (Paris, 1989), pp. 116–145. For some of the most interesting case studies on the nineteenth century see L.R. Berlanstein, ‘Vagrants, beggars and thieves. Delinquent boys in mid-nineteenth century Paris’, *Journal*

has also been carefully analysed from top-down and bottom-up perspectives, resulting in a series of studies illuminating how the Secrétariat Général à la Jeunesse [hereafter, SGJ] functioned in the localities and the responses of youth to the regime.⁵¹ Seeking to investigate the sort of youth who were intended to form the elite of the new society, a number of studies in the 1980s and 1990s turned their attention towards Vichy's leadership schools and the regime's quasi-obsession with creating the *Homme Nouveau*.⁵² More recently, scholars have turned away from treating youth as a bloc which Vichy sought to mould and have instead started to look at the various subsections that constituted France's youth.⁵³ Existing studies on youth under Vichy have largely failed to include Jewish youth as part of their analyses.⁵⁴ Claude Singer's wide-ranging study of Jews in French universities is an important exception. The present study has benefited from Singer's approach, which focuses on the relationship

of *Social History*, 12, (1979) and J-C. Farcy, *La Jeunesse rurale dans la France du XIX siècle* (Paris, 2004). Amongst the many studies of youth in the twentieth century, see L-L. Downs, *Childhood in the Promised Land: Working-Class Movements and the Colonies de Vacances in France, 1880–1960* (Durham, NC, 2002) and R.I. Jobs, *Riding the New Wave: Youth and the Rejuvenation of France after the Second World War* (Stanford, CA, 2007).

⁵¹ Halls' analysis on the functioning of the SGJ remains the most detailed study of this government ministry. See W.D. Halls, *The Youth of Vichy France* (Oxford, 1981). Pierre Giolitto adopted a similar administrative approach to Halls, which he combined with a survey of the various youth movements. See P. Giolitto, *Histoire de la Jeunesse sous Vichy* (Paris, 1991). A 1983 colloquium was organised by the Institut National d'Éducation Populaire around the theme of the youth of Vichy France. This brought together historians, former bureaucrats at the SGJ and former participants in Vichy's youth organisations. See P. Gallaud, (ed.), 'Éducation Populaire Jeune dans la France de Vichy: 1940–1944', *Les Cahiers de l'Animation: Une Publication de l'INEP*, No 49 and 50 (Paris, 1985).

⁵² See B. Comte, *Une Utopie Combattante: L'École des Cadres d'Uriage 1940–1942* (Paris, 1991); J. Hellman, *The Knight-Monks of Vichy France: Uriage, 1940–1945*, 2nd edn (Montréal, 1997). Limore Yagil is the only scholar to have researched in-depth the *Homme Nouveau*. However, as has also been shown by Jackson, there is a need to treat this study with considerable care owing to the way in which Yagil does not follow the trajectories of Vichy's rhetoric, thus failing to consider how it was implemented and reacted to on the ground. See L. Yagil, *L'Homme Nouveau et la Révolution Nationale de Vichy (1940–1944)* (Lille, 1997) and J. Jackson, *France the Dark Years* (Oxford, 2001), p. 639.

⁵³ See B. Casiglia, 'La Jeunesse Agricole Catholique (JAC), 1939–1945', in J.W. Dereyemez, (ed.), *Être Jeune en France, 1939–1945* (Paris, 2001), pp. 217–223. S. Fishman, *The Battle for Children: World War II, Youth Crime, and Juvenile Justice in Twentieth-Century France* (Cambridge, MA, 2002) S.B. Roberts, 'A Case for Dissidence in Occupied Paris: The Zazous, Youth Dissidence and the Yellow Star Campaign in Occupied Paris (1942)', *French History*, Vol 24, No 1, (2010), pp. 82–103.

⁵⁴ A notable exception is a collection of case studies edited by Jean-William Dereyemez. Nevertheless, Jewish youth are investigated within the parameters of their resistance activity. See R. Poznanski, 'Être jeune et juif en France pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale' and L. Lazare, 'Un Jeune Français au carrefour de la Résistance et de la Résistance juive', in Dereyemez, (ed.), *Être Jeune en France*, pp. 71–88 and 271–277.

between a subsection of Jews and a particular Vichy ministry.⁵⁵ A lack of crossover between scholars investigating multiple features of Vichy and others focusing solely on Jewish aspects of the regime may explain this absence. Halls attributes the deliberate exclusion of Jews from his study by explaining that the issue was to be dealt with by Marrus and Paxton in their study of Vichy and the Jews, at that time forthcoming.⁵⁶ In doing so, Halls implies that the study of Jewish youth merits consideration within a framework specifically designed for the study of Vichy and the Jews, and not within general studies of Vichy. In the same vein, this omission may also emerge from an assumption amongst scholars working on social dimensions of the regime that Jewish youth were immediately prohibited from schemes organised by the SGJ. As Pollard has argued, Jewish youth ‘did not have the choice to “rally” for a new France. Rather, their youth was brutalized and destroyed’.⁵⁷ Through a focus on Jewish youth’s engagement with state-sponsored initiatives, this study will, for the first time, bring together two historiographies that have never previously been joined.

Over the course of the last twenty years, scholarship on Vichy France has gradually moved away from an entrenched focus on the Resistance to one which considers the panoply of experiences that existed under the Occupation. Scholars investigating Vichy and the Jews have also shifted their enquiries, which, while still addressing Jewish persecution, have broadened their lines of investigation to consider Jews’ interaction with their non-Jewish neighbours. Accordingly, a focus on the victim has shifted to a focus on the rescuer, be they Jewish or non-Jewish. Unlike the earlier investigations of Latour and Lazare, however, recent studies on rescue have not been

⁵⁵ Singer, *Vichy, l’université et les Juifs*. Singer based his study on intense archival investigation on the ministry of public instruction. Although Singer demonstrates the heterogeneity of French Jewry, his study fails to consider in-depth the diversity of Vichy policy makers over the Jewish Question.

⁵⁶ Halls, *The Youth of Vichy France*, pp. vi–vii.

⁵⁷ M. Pollard, *Reign of Virtue: Mobilizing Gender in Vichy France* (Chicago, 1998), p. 95.

situated within a broader narrative of Jewish resistance and have instead considered the dynamics at the heart of Jewish rescue acts, many of which were dependent on cooperation with non-Jews.⁵⁸ Contrary to the opinion of Limore Yagil, the rescue of Jews by their non-Jewish neighbours is currently amongst the most researched areas of enquiry in the field of Vichy and the Jews.⁵⁹ This has been sparked by a renewed interest in *Les Justes*, non-Jews who for no financial motivation risked their lives to assist persecuted Jews.⁶⁰ Studies of *Les Justes de France* have become an important category of historical enquiry that situates itself independent of the resistance.⁶¹ At public ceremonies across France, officials from Yad Vashem and the Israeli embassy regularly award the ‘médaille des justes’ to non-Jews who rescued Jews during the Second World War.⁶² Interest in *Les Justes* coincides with a broader research project

⁵⁸ Despite the growing interest in the rescue of Jews by non-Jews, Jewish rescue continues to remain a central lens through which to consider Vichy and the Jews. For an excellent recent overview on Jewish rescue acts, see B. Moore, *Survivors: Jewish Self-Help and Rescue in Nazi-Occupied Western Europe* (Oxford, 2010). On the EIF see C. Lewertowski, *Les Enfants de Moissac, 1939–1945*, 2nd edn (Paris, 2009). On OSE, see K. Hazan and S. Klarsfeld, *Le sauvetage des enfants juifs pendant l’Occupation, dans les maisons de l’OSE, 1938–1945* (Paris, 2009). Miranda Pollard is currently writing a book on the Réseau Marcel in Nice. M. Pollard, *Odette Abadi and a Holocaust Soundscape (Nice-Auschwitz-Bergen Belsen-Paris), 1939–1947* (Forthcoming). A recent conference organised by Robert Paxton and Pierre Sauvage, was entitled ‘The Rescue of Jews’ (University of Columbia 24–25 March 2011). A large number of presentations addressed the acts of rescue carried out by Jews (University of Columbia 24–25 March 2011). See notably the interventions of Harriet Jackson and Georges Weill, available online at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=irhBBB1r0wI&feature=relmfu>, accessed 25 May 2011.

⁵⁹ According to Yagil, scholars investigating the rescue of Jews have only concentrated on Jewish rescue efforts in which; ‘les chrétiens en étaient totalement absents’. See L. Yagil, *La France terre de refuge et de désobéissance civile (1936–1944)*, Vol 1 (Paris, 2011), p. 30. The work of Renée Bédarida on *Témoignage Chrétien* or Philip Hallie on *Le Chambon-sur-Lignon* reveals just how far Yagil is incorrect on this point. See R. Bédarida, *Les Armes de l’Esprit: Témoignage Chrétien (1941–1944)* (Paris, 1977); P. Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood be Shed: The Story of the Village of Le Chambon and how Goodness Happened There* (New York, 1979). Further, the summer 2012 volume of *French Politics, Culture and Society* will be a special issue that will concentrate exclusively on ‘The Rescue of Jews’. At Paxton and Sauvage’s recent conference, a large number of presentations addressed non-Jewish acts of rescue. See notably the interventions of Susan Zuccotti and Sarah Gensburger, available online at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yGIqzSL-18Y&feature=relmfu>, accessed 25 May 2011.

⁶⁰ Since 1963, *Les Justes*, or the Righteous amongst the Nations, have been awarded medals for their rescue efforts.

⁶¹ See S. Gensburger, *Les Politiques Publiques de la Mémoire: Les Justes de France* (Paris, 2010).

⁶² At the time of writing there are 3,340 *Justes de France*. See <http://www.ajpn.org/tousjustes-65.html>, accessed 25 May 2011.

amongst scholars of Jewish-non Jewish relations, who are currently investigating the history of philosemitism.⁶³

With the rescue of Jews arguably at the centre of social histories of Vichy, historians not investigating the Jewish experience directly have, where viable, sought to weave it into their narratives. A fitting illustration is the way in which the history of the Chantiers de la Jeunesse has been written. Jews were not mentioned at all in the first studies of the Chantiers.⁶⁴ However, recent works by amateur historians and those sympathetic to the Chantiers have tapped into the dominant Jewish memory of the Occupation, namely persecution, in order to show how the Chantiers de la Jeunesse sought to reduce Jewish suffering.⁶⁵ The work of the Research Centre of the Association of former members of the Chantiers de la Jeunesse (CERPA) has gained from the recent interest in *Les Justes* in placing rescue and shelter at the core of Jewish interactions with the Chantiers.⁶⁶ Emphasis on the Chantiers de la Jeunesse and its relations with Jews has shifted towards the period 1942–1944 in which, as is well known through Jewish memoirs and testimonies, certain Jews were able to find safe haven in some of Vichy’s Chantiers de la Jeunesse.⁶⁷

⁶³ See J. Karp, and A. Sutcliffe, (eds.), *Philosemitism in History* (Cambridge, 2011). Maurice Samuels (Yale) is currently working on the history of philosemitism in France from the Revolution to the present.

⁶⁴ J. Delage, *Grandeurs et servitudes des Chantiers de la Jeunesse* (Paris, 1950) and A.S. Van-Hecke, *Les Chantiers de la Jeunesse au secours de la France: souvenirs d’un soldat* (Paris, 1970).

⁶⁵ The first of these was: A. Huan, F. Chantepie, and J-R. Oheix, *Les Chantiers de la Jeunesse 1940–1944: Une expérience de Service Civil* (Nantes, 1998).

⁶⁶ *Centre de Recherche Historiques du Patrimoine et des Anciens Combattants des Chantiers de la Jeunesse*. The journal of this group, *Mémoires des Chantiers*, has been issued three times a year since its initial publication in 1999. For a recent example on the sheltering of Jews in the Chantiers, see *Mémoires des Chantiers*, no.30, June 2008, pp. 7–8.

⁶⁷ See the case of well-known French singer Francis Lemarque in F. Lemarque, *J’ai la mémoire qui chante* (Paris, 1992), pp. 216–220.

The nature of historical investigation into Vichy and the Jews has come a long way since Marrus and Paxton's groundbreaking political study. At present, the social history of the Jewish experience dominates scholarship, which as has been explained, has recently moved from an entrenched focus on the victim, to include the personal trajectories of the non-Jewish rescuer. This shift away from exploring Jews in isolation and towards a more comprehensive analysis that includes examining their interactions with non-Jews, has greatly refined the historiography of the period and helped pave the way for the present investigation. However, with these enquiries unable to disentangle themselves completely from the firmly-rooted framework of resistance, rescue and persecution, this important development represents only a first step towards writing a broad social history of Jews under Vichy.

This enquiry will test the predetermined conclusions that lie at the heart of most existing investigations. It considers that an emphasis on persecution, formative for the current Jewish memory of Vichy, has blurred many distinctions both in Vichy's attitudes towards the Jews and Jewish responses to the regime. Crucially, this investigation suggests that the situations faced by French Jewry in the period 1942–44 have come to dominate the nation's collective remembrance of Jewish life under Vichy. In seeking to consider the plurality of the Jewish experience during the earlier, more ideologically heterogeneous period of 1940–42, the choice of a suitable methodology – one which does not treat Vichy as a bloc against which to explore Jewish victimisation – becomes invaluable.

Method

This enquiry considers that the most effective way in which to investigate and assess the cohabitation of Jewish youth and Vichy policy making at the centre is to discover how this worked in practice in the localities. This approach does not purport to be new. Rather, it gains its inspiration from the precedents set by other historians seeking to find Vichy in the localities.⁶⁸ Methodologically, this enquiry encourages a bottom up and top down analysis in order to best seek out patterns and similarities in the reactions of Jewish youth towards Vichy, and attitudes towards Jewish youth displayed by their neighbours and organisms of the regime. This approach allows for an ongoing examination of certain Vichy institutions, above all the CGQJ and the SGJ, whose sustained presence throughout this investigation, offers constant reassessment of Vichy's multifaceted attitude towards the Jews.

The analysis is based on a combination of national and local investigations that are underpinned by two case studies. First, through crystallising on the experiences of a loose group or network of Jews at the EIF's rural commune at Lautrec (Tarn), this study examines Jewish youths' practices at the local level. Second, it explores Jewish youth participating as individuals on the national level through their involvement in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse.

By conducting local studies, historians of the regime are exposed to different dynamics affecting real people and diverse communities, upon whose lives Vichy did or did not impact. The complex ways in which groups and individuals interact at the

⁶⁸ Most notably, Gildea, *Marianne in Chains*; Kedward, *Resistance in Vichy France* and Sweets, J.F. *Choices in Vichy France*.

local level are crucial in exposing the grey areas that are not always obvious from national studies. They draw out the immense variety of choices and experiences to reveal the multifaceted nature of everyday life under Vichy. Such an approach offers an important reassessment of how local communities responded towards Jews and Jews towards communities. After the *Exode* a high proportion of Jews found themselves in the south-west, an area which had never been home to a sizeable Jewish population (**Figure 1**). The EIF's decision to build its largest Chantier Rural at Lautrec rendered the Tarn a logical department with which to investigate how Jewish youth sought to work with Vichy and the reactions of the local population and administration towards Jewish youth. Despite geographic diversity, a micro-study of Lautrec mirrors the complex dynamics that existed between Jews and French society across the non-Occupied Zone. As Sweets has argued, the experience of the people in one town; 'offers many insights that are valuable for understanding the attitudes and behaviour of other French citizens'.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Sweets, *Choices in Vichy France*, p. vii.

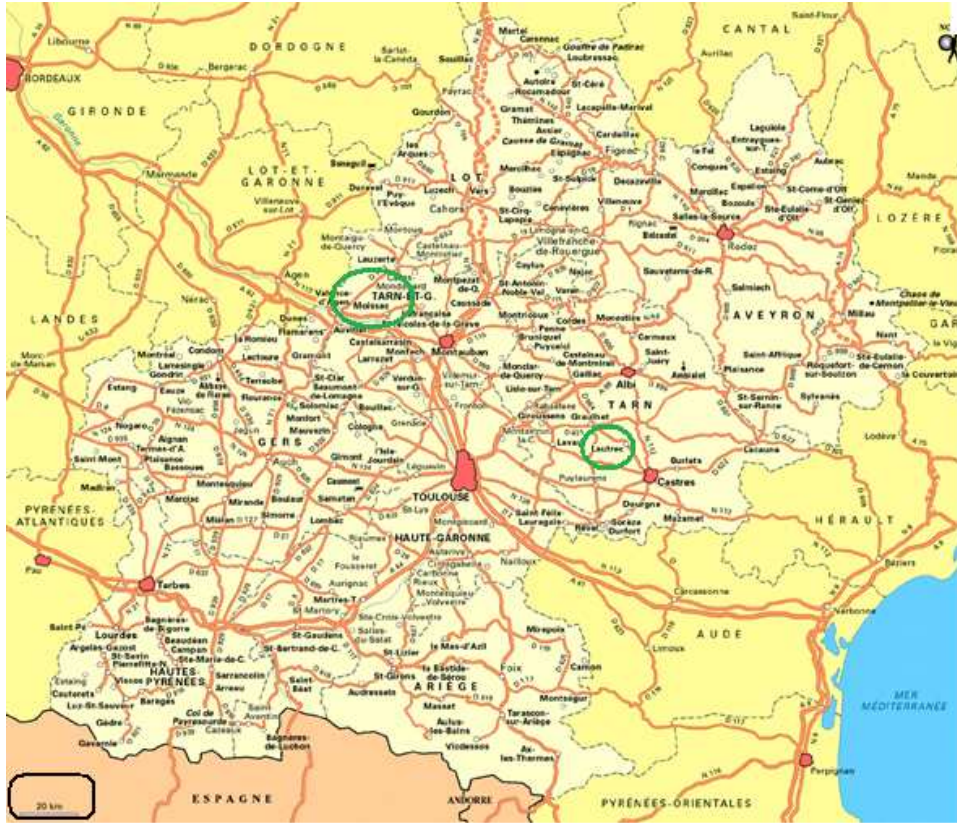


Figure 1. Map of south west France

The arrival *en masse* of Jews to Lautrec in November 1940 brought about the creation of a specific ‘Jewish Space’ to the region.⁷⁰ In this enclave of the Tarn, Jews had no territorial connection with a collective consciousness. Crucially, their pariah status in the commune led to the creation of what Foucault has described as an ‘other’ space, which throughout the Occupation existed in conjunction with the existing, majority, Lautrécois space.⁷¹ The Jewish experience of Lautrec thus provides an opportunity to consider spatial practices, or what Mary Louise Pratt has termed ‘contact zones’,

⁷⁰ Discussion on space entered the social sciences in the 1980s. See the groundbreaking works by M. de Certeau, ‘Spatial Stories’, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (London, 1984), pp. 115–130 and H. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford, 1994). However, it has only been since the early 2000s that scholars have investigated notions of a ‘Jewish Space’. See J. Brauch, A. Lipphardt, and A. Nocke, ‘Exploring Jewish Space: An Approach’ in Brauch, J., Lipphardt, A., and Nocke, A., (eds.), *Jewish Topographies: Visions of Space, Traditions of Place* (Aldershot, 2008), pp. 1–23. In 2010 a conference was held at St Antony’s College, Oxford to investigate the phenomenon of Jewish Space: ‘Jewish Spaces in Modern Societies and Cultures: Germany in Comparative Perspective’, 26–27 May 2010. Conference organised by Jane Caplan and Simone Lässig. Chris Pearson’s work on space under Vichy has been pioneering. See C. Pearson, *Scarred Landscapes: War and Nature in Vichy France* (London, 2008).

⁷¹ M. Foucault, ‘Of Other Spaces’, *Diacritics*, 16.1, Spring, (1986), 22–27.

through which to analyse the interaction between and co-presence of Jews and the rest of the population.⁷² Nevertheless, communal activities between Jews and villagers and interactions with Vichy show that Jews were entangled in a complex spatial existence, where they passed regularly from an isolated Jewish space into a hybrid, public space in which they were the minority. Approaching how Jewish youth at Lautrec negotiated their engagement between these spaces serves as an important indicator of how Jews experienced Vichy at the macro level.

In order to discover how far the reactions of local people in the Tarn were representative of the majority of the French population and to ascertain why policies were implemented unevenly, relevant comparisons have been drawn with neighbouring departments. The Tarn-et-Garonne offers an excellent department for such an evaluation. Like the Tarn, the Tarn-et-Garonne was a sparsely populated rural department whose Jewish population increased under Vichy, thanks largely to the relocation of the EIF headquarters to Moissac in June 1940. The significance of Toulouse as an administrative centre, coupled with its position as being home to more Jews than any other department in the south west, renders the Haute-Garonne an important location from which to consider the cooperation between Vichy and Jewish youth.

This local study will be combined with an analysis of Vichy's policies insofar as they impacted on the question of Jewish youth. There is a need to unlock the policy making process in regards to Jewish youth in Vichy. Retracing policy thinking from the local level and back to Vichy will illuminate where instructions were coming from

⁷² Pratt defines contact zones as 'social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power'. See M-L. Pratt, 'Arts of the Contact Zone', *Profession 91*, 1991, p. 34.

and who was giving them. To this end, establishing the outcome of conflict over policy decisions which arose between the national and the local level, serves as an important indicator in revealing how much room for adjustment and compromise existed by delegates concerning the Jewish question.

Exploring Jewish involvement in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse at the national level reveals elements that would not be produced by limiting the scope to a local study of life in a single or even several Chantiers. Studying a range of Chantiers produces a variety of Jewish experiences and illuminates multiple attitudes amongst the *chefs* over the question of Jewish youth. Moreover, a national study of the Chantiers benefits from a top-down and bottom-up approach, elucidating the tension between Châtel-Guyon (Puy-de-Dôme), the headquarters of the organisation, and local officials over the Jewish Question. It is only through investigating multiple case studies at the national level that patterns and answers begin to emerge which reveal a range of attitudes by Jewish youth towards the regime and by local people towards Jews. Local factors alone do not adequately explain such patterns. What factors allowed *chefs* at different Chantiers to illegally place Jews in positions of responsibility? What explains why some *chefs* were aware of Jewish dietary requirements while others claimed not to know what a Jew was? Jews with a variety of religious, linguistic and cultural backgrounds participated in the everyday life of the Chantier. This unexpected melting pot is important in reassessing the grey area that lay between French Jewry and Vichy's definitions of what constituted French and foreign Jews. Finally, assessing Jewish participation of a particular organisation on the national level sets the groundwork for future comparative research. If Jews in the Chantiers were exempt from anti-Semitic legislation and, in some instances, were

even looked upon favourably, might this suggest that a similar mentality was replicated in other national institutions of the New Order?

Sources

The variety of sources used for this study exposes the vicissitudes that existed at Vichy over the Jewish Question and the mixed reactions amongst Jewish youth over its engagement with the regime. Rather than giving preference to Paris-based sources, this investigation has been enriched by uncovering fresh evidence which is diffused in national, local and private collections across France, Israel and the USA. The sources used for this enquiry fall into four principal categories: official state sources, the post-Liberation accounts of Vichy policy makers and those involved with youth affairs, written sources from Jewish organisations or individuals, and oral testimony. Such a wide and intricate range of sources with a variety of interpretations has nuanced the research questions and has permitted a reevaluation of some of the long-established conclusions of the historiography.

The conventional administrative sources, that is to say, those archival series in the national and departmental archives, have also been employed by other historians seeking to investigate Vichy and the Jews.⁷³ At the National Archives, these collections are mainly the papers of the Commissariat Général aux Questions Juives

⁷³ Until the late 1970s, access to administrative documents concerning the Occupation was extremely limited. This changed following the law of 1979 which liberalised access to public documents. Although a large number of documents then became available for consultation under the 'thirty year rule', this was not the case for all official papers. A sixty year rule was imposed on documents 'threatening privacy', rendering important papers on Vichy unavailable until the early 2000s. See E. Conan and H. Rousso, *Vichy: An Ever-Present Past* (Dartmouth, 1998), pp. 60–68.

(AJ38), the Ministry of the Interior (F1a), the Head of State (2AG2) and the Prime Minister (F60). State sources are also plentiful at the CDJC, which despite their haphazard order, are able to fill in some significant gaps at the level of policy making. In the same vein, studies of Jews in the localities have also benefitted from the departmental archives, in which the files of the Cabinet du Préfet are rich in detail concerning the local Jewish population. Further, as the greatest studies of Vichy France and the Jews have shown, there is also a need to go beyond the confines of the Hexagon to locate additional state sources from the era.⁷⁴

An inherent problem exists in studies on how Jews experienced Vichy which have based some or all of their conclusions on their discoveries in the administrative papers. First, following the Liberation, a large amount of documents related to Jews was weeded from state archives.⁷⁵ Second, this investigation suggests that historians have been too selective in their employment of these sources – both nationally and locally – which have tended to rely on police records, prefects’ reports and files marked ‘Jews’ from which to formulate their conclusions.⁷⁶ This should not imply

⁷⁴ Some of the most crucial documents for this study were located at the YIVO archives in New York and at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. Marrus and Paxton, Poznanski and Lazare are, regrettably, in the minority of researchers who have made extensive use of archives in the USA and Israel in the search for administrative records. The Hoover Institution at Stanford University should be the first port of call for researchers in the USA investigating the Vichy regime. The Institution contains the private papers of Jean Delage, a senior figure in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse. The archive recently acquired the private papers of Jacques Benoist-Méchin. In addition, YIVO also has a vast array of Vichy’s administrative documentation, all of which was stolen from France after the war by its archivist Zosa Szajkowski.

⁷⁵ Notes requesting the destruction of documentation emanating from the racial laws were sent out from the Ministry of the Interior to Prefects on 6 September 1946 and 31 January 1947. See Szajkowski, *Analytical Franco-Jewish Gazetteer*, p. 13.

⁷⁶ For Lyon, see L. Douzou, *Voler les Juifs* (Paris, 2003), for the Hérault see, Iancu, *Vichy et les Juifs. L’Exemple de l’Hérault*, for the Isère, see T. Bruttman, *Au Bureau des Affaires Juives* (Paris, 2006). Concerning this last publication, such narrow use of source material comes as a particular surprise, given the author’s former profession as an archivist in the departmental archives of the Isère. The preference for this kind of material has recently been shown by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum’s decision to microfilm only certain files on Jews held in departmental archives. Recently, the museum dispatched a team of researchers to microfilm the collections in departmental archives related to the Jewish experience of Vichy. The researchers were highly selective in their choice of documents, making copies of files relating to internment camps, refugees and Jewish affairs. See in particular the

that files specifically related to Jews are somehow less important to this study. On the contrary, one of the most important series used in this investigation is entitled: 'Ferme-école de l'association des Eclaireurs israélites en France, domaine des Ormes à Lautrec – Surveillance'.⁷⁷

This enquiry has allowed for a broader spectrum of state sources and has employed administrative sources from less conventional series.⁷⁸ At the National Archives this includes, amongst others, using the series on the Chantiers de la Jeunesse and the SGJ (AJ39 and F44) and going through trial records of Lamirand, Caziot and Ybarnégaray (3W), ministers not usually associated with the Jewish Question. Similarly, pamphlets produced by the SGJ and the Chantiers de la Jeunesse and held at the IHTP and the BNF have helped to shed light on Jews taking part in Vichy's youth initiatives.⁷⁹ In the departmental archives, special attention was given to series treating youth and agriculture. Widening the range of state sources has helped to tell a different story of the relationship between Vichy and the Jews.⁸⁰ Not only have they helped to shed light on existing interpretations but as this thesis will show, they also open new areas of enquiry concerning the cooperation of Vichy and the Jews.⁸¹

microfilm on the Tarn, which did not microfilm the files in the ADT on the Jewish commune at Lautrec: USHMM, RG-061M.

⁷⁷ ADT, 506W171 Ferme école de l'association des Eclaireurs israélites en France, domaine des Ormes à Lautrec. – Surveillance.

⁷⁸ In Laurent Joly's 1000 page study of the CGQJ, the author pays scant attention to sources that were not directly related to Jews. This is most obvious from his selection of files in the departmental archives of the Gironde, Rhône and Var. See Joly, *Vichy dans la Solution Finale*, pp. 945–946.

⁷⁹ At the IHTP, this includes the SGJ's pamphlets: *Jeunes de France* and *Solidarité*. The BNF holds an impressive number of the monthly newsletters produced by individual Chantiers de la Jeunesse in the localities. See for instance: BNF, 4-JO-4135, *L'Aigoual*, Newsletter of Groupement 18, Le Vigan (Gard).

⁸⁰ The thesis has benefited from the recent discovery of personnel files of the Chantiers de la Jeunesse, stored at the Ministry of Education. Until now, I remain the only researcher to have consulted these documents, which contain individual files on *chefs* participating in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse. I am extremely grateful to Fabien Oppermann, Chef de la mission des archives et du patrimoine culturel, and to his team at Rue de Grenelle, for granting me full access to these files.

⁸¹ For example, the enquiries of Marrus and Paxton and Baruch make reference to the removal of Jews from the Chantiers de la Jeunesse. However, their conclusions are drawn solely from evidence

While state sources give an insight into Vichy's multifaceted relationship with its Jewish citizens, they do not go far enough in illuminating the personal, private attitudes of policy makers over the Jewish Question and they reveal little concerning Jewish reactions to the regime. To understand how leading Vichy officials with responsibility for Jewish youth conceived of the Jewish Question, efforts were made to consult the private papers of Georges Lamirand and Général de la Porte du Theil, which remain in the possession of their families. The families' refusal to grant access has naturally shaped research questions.⁸² Fortunately, the family of Général Lafont, head of Vichy's Scoutisme Français, was more forthcoming with material and access to Lafont's private papers has revealed the camaraderie between the exceedingly pétainist General and the EIF leadership.⁸³

The post-war testimonies of leading figures of the Vichy regime have illuminated how decisions were made that affected Jewish youth. Care has been taken when employing the post-war trials and the 292 statements of former ministers and civil servants, gathered by René and Josée de Chambrun during the Fourth Republic, which are held

discovered in AJ38. In this instance, combining AJ38 with the administrative records of the Chantiers de la Jeunesse (AJ39) has permitted a reassessment of the factors that led to the Jews' expulsion from the Chantiers. See Marrus and Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews*, p. 127 and n.388 and M-O. Baruch, *Servir l'État Français: L'administration en France de 1940 à 1944* (Paris, 1997), p. 151–152 and n. 598.

⁸² Letter from Jacques de la Porte du Theil to the author, 30 May 2010 and letters from Gilbert Lamirand to the author, 8 July 2008 and 3 January 2009. The Lamirand family has received a lot of unwelcomed attention over the years. Georges Lamirand's daughter Geneviève was the wife of Jean Bastien-Thiry, who had attempted to assassinate De Gaulle at l'attentat du Petit-Clamart in August 1962 and who remains the last person to have been executed by firing squad in France. I am grateful to his daughters, Hélène and Odile for answering questions on their grandfather during an interview in April 2008. The author spent a day in March 2008 with Lamirand's son, Gilbert Lamirand, which proved extremely helpful to gain an insight into his father.

⁸³ General Lafont's private papers are in the possession of his daughter Nicole de Castelbajac, at the family estate in Bayonne (Pyrénées-Atlantique).

at the Hoover Institution.⁸⁴ Many of the ministers and civil servants who either faced trials or who provided extracts for the Hoover Institution did so with a view to constructing a positive image of their wartime decisions. Although these sources must be treated with caution, the degree of precision over certain details that were produced by the former ministers in the aftermath of the Liberation has seldom been revealed elsewhere. The testimonies have thus been employed, after corroboration with additional evidence. Laden with the same rewards and limitations, the study has employed the published memoirs of senior Vichy officials with responsibility for Jewish youth.⁸⁵ Owing to his important role in youth affairs, four of Georges Lamirand's detailed post-war interviews have been used.⁸⁶ So too has a 1960s radio broadcast that featured Lamirand together with several leading figures from the Vichy and Resistance camps.⁸⁷

The contemporary responses of French Jewry to Vichy can be found in the private archives of various Jewish youth movements and other Jewish organisations. At the CDJC, the recently-classified archives of the EIF contain circulars, reports, and correspondence with the authorities and have been a key source in this investigation.

⁸⁴ For the trials, see series AN, 3W and Z6. For the testimonies gathered by René and Josée de Chambrun, see *France during the German Occupation 1940–1944: A Collection of 292 Statements on the Government of Maréchal Pétain and Pierre Laval*, (3 Vol.), The Hoover Institution (Stanford, CA, 1958).

⁸⁵ See the following memoirs: P. Pucheu, *Ma Vie* (Paris, 1948); X. Vallat, *Le Nez de Cléopâtre: Souvenirs d'un homme de droite, 1919–1944* (Paris, 1957); J. Carcopino, *Souvenirs de sept ans* (Paris, 1953) and P. Schaeffer, *Les Antennes de Jéricho* (Paris, 1978).

⁸⁶ The first was an interview with Marcel Ophüls for his documentary 'Le Chagrin et la Pitié', 1969. In the three interviews that followed, Lamirand was asked to elaborate on the Jewish Question and Vichy's racial laws. The Clermont-Ferrand lawyer, Gilles-Jean Portejoie was the first to record a prolonged interview with Lamirand in 1981. Several copies of the transcript exist and the recordings are at the AN (AV1, 34–38), G-J. Portejoie, *Vichyscopie: Entretiens avec Georges Lamirand* (Clermont-Ferrand 1981), transcript in the possession of the author. The second detailed interview with Lamirand was conducted by the head of the section contemporaine at the AN, Chantal de Tourtier-Bonazzi in 1984 (AN, 2AV, 29–33). Bonazzi met with Lamirand on four occasions during 1984. Finally, the purpose of filmmaker Pierre Sauvage's interview with Lamirand was centred on the Jewish Question. See 'Les Armes de l'Esprit', 1989.

⁸⁷ Lamirand and De la Porte du Theil both participated in this broadcast. See C. Jamet, *Le Rendez-Vous Manqué de 1944* (Paris, 1964).

The archives of the Consistoire Central have also been decisive in unravelling French Jewry's ambiguous relationship with the authorities.⁸⁸ The correspondence between the rabbis and the local authorities in the non-Occupied Zone, and the multiple reports sent to the Grand Rabbin, have revealed the diverse reaction of French Jewry to Vichy during its early years. Youth was important to the Consistoire and this is reflected in a large number of files dedicated to the spiritual training of Jewish youth under the Occupation and the Consistoire's interactions with the EIF.⁸⁹ The papers of the principal Zionist youth movements and Zionist resistance in France are held in Israeli archives.⁹⁰ Other than the Yechouroun, the papers of the Zionist youth movements contain little on French Jewish youth under Vichy, however there are numerous letters and reports from 1938–1940 which go far in revealing the heterogeneity of Jewish youth in the years immediately preceding Vichy. Further, under the Occupation, Zionist organisations based in Palestine were anxious to discover precise information on the state of French Jewry. The letters and reports from their representatives in France are also found in Israel.⁹¹ Finally, the archives of the American Joint

⁸⁸ These archives are divided into the Fond Moch, held at the Consistoire, and the remainder which are held at the AIU.

⁸⁹ An entire box exists that is full of the correspondence and reports between the Consistoire and the EIF (AIU, CC-43). This crucial series for any analysis on Jews under Vichy only became available to researchers in 1990, which explains its absence from Alain Michel's 1984 study on the EIF. It comes as a surprise that this box was not cited in Renée Poznanski's otherwise meticulous examination of the CC archives.

⁹⁰ The Massuah Institute (Kibbutz Tel Yitzhak) contains the archives of Hanoar Hatzioni. The Jabotinsky Institute (Tel Aviv) contains the archives of Betar. The Moreshet Centre (Givat Haviva) holds the papers of Hashomer Hatzair. The Michlala library (Jerusalem) holds the papers of the Yechouroun. For the papers of the Zionist resistance, see the Abraham Polonsky Collection at the Yad Tabenkin Archives (Ramat Efal). The papers of the Mouvement de la Jeunesse Sioniste are in the possession of its founder, Toto Giniewski, now Eytan Guinat, in the Protea Village retirement home (Tel Mond). A significant portion of the archives of the Organisation Juive de Combat have remained in France where they are in the possession of Monique-Lise Cohen (Toulouse), daughter of Joseph Georges Cohen, a member of the OJC.

⁹¹ The archives of the various Zionist organisations are stored at the Central Zionist Archives (Jerusalem). For detailed accounts on the situation of Jewish youth in France, see the reports sent by representatives of the Jewish Agency and in particular the Youth and Hechalutz Department (S32). The reports written by delegates of Keren Hayesod (the Palestine Foundation Fund) and the KKL (the Jewish National Fund) also contain important references.

Distribution Committee (Jerusalem) shed important light on the financing of the EIF and other Jewish organisations under the Occupation.

In the same way that administrative sources only scrape the surface when seeking to unravel the relationship between Vichy and the Jews, the papers of the Jewish organisations also have their drawbacks. Although they provide some excellent insight into the collective thinking and actions of Jewish movements, they fall short of illuminating how individual Jews negotiated their relationship with Vichy. Accordingly, this enquiry has made substantial use of private papers that have remained chiefly in the possession of the protagonists or of their families.⁹² To provide one example, René Klein wrote over thirty letters to his family during his eight month service in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse.⁹³ While these letters would be useful for any study on youth under Vichy, their constant reference to Jewish festivals and dietary requirements make them vital to this study.

As for some of Vichy's leading figures, a range of post-Liberation primary sources have also been used when seeking to analyse the experiences of Jewish youth. Memoirs have been especially helpful to fill in gaps that had been omitted from contemporary sources. Sometimes, these gaps resulted from a detail or event being considered superfluous at the time of writing. It is only with hindsight that the actor

⁹² One notable exception is the published diary of Raymond-Raoul Lambert, which is an invaluable source when seeking to uncover the vicissitudes of French Jewry under Vichy. See R-R. Lambert, *Diary of a Witness, 1940–1943* (Washington, 2007).

⁹³ René Klein allowed the author to make copies of all of his letters over the course of two meetings in the autumn of 2008. Since his death in 2009, Klein's private papers have remained in the possession of his wife Nicole Klein at her home in Tréville (Aude). The present study has employed a range of personal archives. This includes the carnets de guerre of Pierre-Emile Meyer, which are in the possession of his daughter Simone Brutlag in Stanford (California). It has drawn on the private papers of Léo Cohn and Robert Gamzon, two of the leading figures of the EIF. Cohn was deported from Drancy on convoy 77. His archive, which includes the copies of letters that he sent from Lautrec and over a hundred letters that he received there, remain in the possession of his daughter, Aviva Geva, in Gan Yavne (Israel). Gamzon's letters from this time are held at the CDJC, (CMXLV (1)).

recognises and seeks to explain the significance of a particular historical moment in their life trajectories. On other occasions however, details were deliberately left out of the contemporary source. During the Occupation, Jews, like the rest of the population, were aware of the censure and this impacted greatly on how and what they wrote.⁹⁴ A high level of discretion was required of Jewish youth who joined resistance networks early on, which influenced their correspondence and the documents that they could keep in their possession. In such cases, memoirs remain one of the few points of entry into the clandestine existence of these individuals.⁹⁵ The four most senior members of the EIF leadership all left memoirs specific to the Occupation.⁹⁶ When used together, they provide immeasurable detail on the formation and the daily life at Lautrec and the EIF's other Chantiers Ruraux. To complement the published memoirs in gaining an insight into daily life for the Jewish Scouts, this enquiry has been enriched by the written testimony of over twenty former members who publically presented their experiences during a colloquium in 1997.⁹⁷

Finally, this investigation has benefited from the dynamic relationship between oral testimony and other sources. Oral history has been employed with a view to corroborate, elucidate and shed light on the innate ambiguities stemming from the contemporary evidence. It has not been granted a privileged status amongst a wide

⁹⁴ CDJC, CMXLV (1). For example, in November 1940, one of the leading figures in the EIF, Frédéric Hammel, sent a note to all local commissioners, in which he advised them against using their totems (scout names) in their correspondence. He feared that the authorities may consider them communist agitators.

⁹⁵ Claude Vigée (then Claude Strauss) became active early on in the Zionist resistance in Toulouse. See C. Vigée, *La Lune d'hiver* (Paris, 1970).

⁹⁶ Gamzon's memoirs, like those of Lucie Aubrac, were published in the form of a diary, although he wrote them in the 1950s, they were published after his death in 1961, see R. Gamzon, *Les Eaux Claires* (Paris 1981). Denise Gamzon's memoirs, written in 1997, have not been published and are held at the CDJC. Isaac Pougatch's detailed essay on everyday life at the Chantier Rural at Charry was published in the immediate aftermath of the Liberation, see I. Pougatch, *Charry: Vie d'une Communauté de Jeunesse* (Paris, 1946). Frédéric Hammel's memoirs are interwoven into his general account of the EIF under Vichy; see F. Hammel, *Souviens-toi d'Amalek* (Paris, 1982).

⁹⁷ The conference proceedings have been published; see 'Les Éclaireurs Israélites de France dans la Guerre', *Revue d'Histoire de la Shoah: Le Monde Juif*, No 161, 1997.

range of sources. However, the vast majority of people whose experiences would have been central to this study did not write memoirs, and few deposited their private papers in archival collections. In cases where written sources do not exist, oral history remains the only way to gain access into how French Jews experienced, perceived of and engaged with Vichy during the Occupation. Naturally, as is the case with all evidence, oral testimony has its limitations and this enquiry has been extremely critical when seeking to draw conclusions from its findings.

This study is interested in the range of stories being told by interviewees and the ways in which these are recounted long after the event. As oral historian Alessandro Portelli has argued ‘there are no ‘false’ oral sources’. It was many years after the Liberation that interviewees constructed a narrative which gave meaning to their experiences under the Occupation. As Portelli notes, ‘oral sources tell us not just what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, and what they now think they did’.⁹⁸ As it is impossible to ever know what exactly happened, oral testimony provides an interesting, multi-dimensional way of considering the permutations by singling out dominant stories. In the case of Jewish participation in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse, it has been useful to identify patterns, such as between those that regaled a story of rampant anti-Semitism and those for whom anti-Semitism did not feature their accounts.

A number of factors have helped to shape the interviewees’ memories and understanding of the Occupation. The location in which the interviewee lived out the post-war period offers one explanation. Depending on whether this was in France,

⁹⁸ A. Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and meaning in Oral History* (Albany, 1991), p. 50.

Israel or the USA, important and subtle differences are revealed by the opening question of the interview, which asked respondents to speak on his or her experiences during the war. Whereas in France the interviewee did not hesitate to begin reflecting on the Occupation, in Israel, however, the question appeared ambiguous, and a typical response was ‘which war would you like to me talk about?’ To this end, this investigation found that interviewees living outside France were more able to separate aspects of persecution from their narratives of the period 1940–1942, than those who remained in France after the Liberation.⁹⁹ In the same vein, those in France with minimal ties to the Jewish community also appeared more able to see anti-Semitic discrimination as more of a gradual process during the Vichy years.¹⁰⁰

The majority of the interviews that have been used for this investigation were carried out personally by the author between 2007 and 2011.¹⁰¹ Locating interviewees to discuss their participation in the EIF did not prove a difficult task. In Paris, a series of networks and friendship circles continue to exist amongst former members of the movement. The first few interviews produced somewhat of a snowball effect, which led to the names and telephone numbers of potential interviewees being made available. This word of mouth method was also used in order to locate former EIF members who had taken part in the movement’s return to the land scheme at Lautrec. Locating interviewees from Lautrec proved harder because the vast majority of its two

⁹⁹ This could be explained by the systematic reference to Vichy, the Occupation and the deportations, which are evoked in the French media and are subject to regular commemorations.

¹⁰⁰ Félix Calek and Pierre Cahen did not marry Jewish women and brought their children up without religion. Interview with Félix Calek 3 September 2009 and USC Shoah Foundation, interview with Pierre Cahen, July 1997.

¹⁰¹ Fifty interviews were personally carried out all of which have been recorded. A list of interviewees together with the place and date of the interview can be found in the bibliography.

hundred participants are no longer alive. At a visit to Lautrec, discussion with some of the local residents with vivid memories of the Jewish presence proved invaluable.¹⁰²

Jewish participation in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse was restricted to men who were born between 1919 and 1922 and who were living in the non-Occupied Zone during the Occupation. Finding first hand testimony was thus a challenging process. Interviewees were located in three principal ways. First, an ‘appeal for witnesses’ was placed on ASIJA, the largest website for Jews of Alsatian and Lorraine heritage.¹⁰³ Second, the author was able to launch an additional ‘appeal for witnesses’ during his participation in a radio interview with journalist Claude Bochorberg, for the programme ‘Mémoire et Vigilance’.¹⁰⁴ Third, some former EIF members had either themselves participated in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse, or knew people who had carried out a service.¹⁰⁵ Further, some interviewees, who had not replied to the ‘appeal for witnesses’, or who had not agreed to be interviewed via a third party, were located by chance.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² I am especially grateful for the information given by Mme Hérial, 12 February 2009.

¹⁰³ Les Amis du Site Internet sur le Judaïsme Alsacien. This ‘appel aux témoins’ was on the welcome page of the site for several months: <http://judaisme.sdv.fr/index.htm>. The extract remains on the site and the author continues to receive messages from former Jewish participants of the Chantiers. See <http://judaisme.sdv.fr/actual/chantier/chantier.htm> (accessed 20 May 2011).

¹⁰⁴ 18 March 2009. For further information on ‘Mémoire et Vigilance’, a programme dedicated to Holocaust memory, which Bochorberg has broadcast weekly since 1981, see http://memoireetvigilance.com/accueil_032.htm (accessed 20 May 2011).

¹⁰⁵ During an interview on the EIF in April 2007, it emerged that Pierre Kauffman had also completed a spell in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse. Lucien Lazare, who had been in the EIF was too young to take part in the Chantiers, but provided details of his friend, Roger Fichtenberg who had undertaken a service. In the same vein, Fichtenberg arranged for a further interview with René Klein, who in turn arranged for an interview with Théo Klein.

¹⁰⁶ A list of every Jew resident in Nîmes during the Occupation was discovered in the private papers of local historian Lucien Simon (Bibliothèque Municipale de Nîmes, Fonds Lucien Simon, Document 15.1). Under the address section of twelve of the names, it was marked: ‘Chantiers de la Jeunesse’. After going through the national telephone directory of France and other channels, only one of the twelve men, Philippe Presberg, could be located, and he agreed to be interviewed in February 2009. It is known that two of the men (Prosper Chich and André Lévy) were deported to Auschwitz.

Locating non-Jewish former participants in the Chantiers proved a much more straightforward task. Since the late 1960s, a large number of former participants of the Chantiers de la Jeunesse have been members of the Amicale Nationale des Anciens des Chantiers de la Jeunesse Française (ANACJF). The association has a journal, whose editor André Souyris-Rolland was extremely eager to be interviewed in order to promote the philo-Semitic nature of the Chantiers.¹⁰⁷ Until recently, the ANACJF met regularly on the local level and once a year nationally. In January 2009, the author was invited to discuss his research and carry out interviews with delegates at the local Amicale in Albi (Tarn).¹⁰⁸ In September 2009, the ANACJF held its fortieth national conference at Châtel-Guyon (Puy-de-Dôme). The purpose of this conference was to hold a vote on whether or not to dissolve the association.¹⁰⁹ Because conference delegates were entitled to a vote, only former participants of the Chantiers de la Jeunesse or their nominated representatives were allowed entry. As the representative of Aimé Frayssinet of Tanus (Tarn), the author was one of two hundred delegates allowed to take part at this historic meeting.¹¹⁰ The two day event permitted intense discussion with former participants on matters related to everyday life in the Chantiers and the Jewish Question.¹¹¹

For this project, the youngest interviewee was aged 84 at the time of interview. The pool of witnesses available to give testimony has diminished substantially over the

¹⁰⁷ Interview with André Souyris-Rolland, 25 September 2008.

¹⁰⁸ Meeting of the ANACJF, delegation of Albi, 30 January 2009. A meeting was also carried out with Auguste Gourmand, the president of the ANACJF for the Rhône, 4 May 2009.

¹⁰⁹ The leadership of the Association, which had 1500 paid members in 2009, believed that with its youngest member being 84, it was the right time to disband.

¹¹⁰ The author, together with a large proportion of the delegates, did not participate in the vote, which decided to disband the association by a majority of 87 to 2 (with 2 further abstentions). I am extremely grateful to Aimé Frayssinet whose help assured my participation at this historic conference.

¹¹¹ The author did not meet a Jewish member at this conference. In fact, when asking a participant whether there were any Jews at the meeting, I was informed that the delegate from Languedoc was Jewish. Discussion with the latter revealed that he was in fact head of the Protestant branch of the Amicale.

last fifteen years. However, the conclusions of this investigation have not been formed on the basis of the last remaining witnesses. Access to additional testimonies increased after employing the evidence of three oral history projects, each with varying research questions, which were undertaken when a greater pool of interviewees was alive.¹¹² The first set of interviews investigated the Jewish resistance and was carried out between 1959 and 1963.¹¹³ The historian Haïm Avni, now an international expert on the oral history of contemporary Jewry, personally interviewed over seventy men and women who had been involved in smuggling children across the Pyrenees. Avni was interested in the factors that motivated rescue efforts and this is reflected by his intense questioning on the period before 1943.¹¹⁴ A second set of interviews are those carried out by Anny Latour during the mid 1960s, which formed the backbone of her study on the resistance activities of the EIF.¹¹⁵ Special consideration has been used when using these interviews. Having herself taken part in the Jewish resistance, Latour was eager to portray the EIF in a heroic light, which is explained through her decision to concentrate on the period after 1942. Being in the privileged position of having spent the war years alongside many of her interviewees, Latour was not an objective interviewer and she did not record her questions in the transcripts. The extent to which she omitted certain basic questions is nonetheless clear from the responses of the interviewee. The Latour collection is thus a personal source which the author did not intend to be employed by future historians.

¹¹² Approximately seventy interviews, recorded between the late 1950s and the early 2000s have supplemented those carried out for the purpose of the present enquiry.

¹¹³ The transcripts of these barely-consulted interviews are held at the Oral History Department of the Avraham Harman Institute of Contemporary Jewry, a division of the Hebrew University (Jerusalem). The title of the project was: The Rescue of Jews via Spain and Portugal.

¹¹⁴ The transcript of the interviews contain Avni's questions to the interviewee.

¹¹⁵ The transcripts of Latour's 100 interviews are held at the CDJC (DLXI). See A. Latour, *La Résistance Juive en France* (Paris, 1970).

The final set of oral sources is that of the USC Shoah Foundation, created by Steven Spielberg in 1994 with the aim of interviewing every last Holocaust survivor.¹¹⁶ The nature of Spielberg's project encapsulates Annette Wieviorka's 'era of the witness' phenomenon in which the mass accumulation of testimony takes the place of research and oral history.¹¹⁷ To this end, this exceptional resource presents a number of problems for the historian. First, the nature of the project and the tasks assigned to the interviewer renders them inadvertently subjective. Interviews are structured around a teleological holocaust narrative which seeks to minimise the interviewees' early years and instead to concentrate on aspects of persecution and suffering. Second, interviews were carried out by local volunteers with no historical training or knowledge of the topographical specificities that existed during the Second World War. In France, the level of expertise of the interviewer varied considerably, with some displaying a scant understanding of the Vichy years, while others asked pressing and relevant questions to the interviewee. This was even more evident amongst the French Jews who were interviewed in the USA, where interviewers treated their experiences in the non-Occupied Zone in much the same way as Jews who had endured the ghettos of Eastern Europe.¹¹⁸ This often meant that some crucial elements were glossed over. André Ferber was interviewed in Philadelphia by an interviewer, who, like the rest of the Foundation's volunteers, was more inclined to ask questions on the suffering that prevailed during the period 1940–42 rather than to have interrogated him on his family's personal connection with Pétain.

¹¹⁶ Between 1994 and 1999, 52,000 survivors were interviewed in 32 languages. This digitalised source, for which transcripts do not exist, is only available for consultation at twenty six locations internationally (twenty of which are in the USA). In Europe, this resource is only available in Berlin, Prague, Salzburg and Budapest rendering it a highly impractical research tool for historians of French Jewry.

¹¹⁷ A. Wieviorka, *l'Ère du témoin* (Paris, 1998).

¹¹⁸ See notably the interviews with André Ferber, Maurice Schneigeiger and Isaac Jafet. Before Vichy, Ferber had been the next door neighbour of Maréchal Pétain. The interview would have benefitted had the interviewer been more aware of the role of Pétain during the Occupation. Fortunately, this was able to be built on during two interviews between the author and André Ferber in 2009.

Chapter Outline

Rather than taking a chronological approach the study is organised thematically. Chapter One initially explores the sociology of French Jewry on the eve of the Second World War and shows that by 1939, French Jewish youth were completely embedded into French Republican values. It analyses how Jews sought to adapt and integrate into France and will consider how immigration and Zionism affected the existing model. A short examination of EIF at this time will show why it had implemented a return to the land project long before Vichy had come to power. A second section of this chapter outlines Vichy's project for regeneration in the aftermath of the defeat. A focus on the regime's promotion of a return to the land and its emphasis on youth are explored alongside Vichy's desire to create regeneration through exclusion. However, the regime was not united over the Jewish Question and this is taken up through a case study of leading figures at the Ministry of Agriculture and the SGJ, whose conception of regeneration did not always equate with Jewish marginalisation. With so many of Vichy's youth leaders inspired by the Catholic teachings of Jacques Maritain and Emmanuel Mounier, a final part of this chapter examines the complicated relationship between these leading Catholic intellectuals and the Jewish Question, and explores how these views were manifested in institutions such as Uriage and Jeune France.

A second chapter investigates Jewish youth's responses to Vichy through its participation in a series of youth movements. A first section explores the aims and ambitions of the EIF, the largest Jewish youth movement that existed under the Occupation. Here, the EIF's important relationship with Scoutisme Français is

examined in depth to reveal why this particular Jewish youth movement was able to gain favour with Vichy's SGJ. To act as a contrast to the EIF, this section also considers the actions of the Yechouroun, an orthodox Jewish youth movement and the Zionist Resistance, neither of which sought to cooperate with the regime. After outlining Vichy's programme for regeneration and the responses it generated amongst the Jewish youth movements, a second part of this chapter investigates the points of intersection between the Vichy and the Jews, by exploring the participation of Jewish youth in a series of state-sponsored youth movements. The diverse experience of Jews in institutions such as the Compagnons de France and the Auberges de Jeunesse will illuminate the heterogeneity of Vichy's youth organisations over the Jewish Question.

Two in-depth case studies lie at the foundations of this thesis. In chapters three and four, a first case study investigates the creation of the EIF's Chantier Rural at Lautrec by a loose grouping of individuals. Chapter three examines Jewish youth's everyday life at the Chantier. It weighs up the success of the return to the land project and considers how Vichy provided the opportunity for so many Jewish youths to become acquainted with Judaism and Zionism for the first time. Crucially, the investigation nuances existing interpretations of the Chantier by examining the problems that arose from collective living. Finally, by exploring Lautrec's interactions with its neighbours, the study illuminates how youth at the Chantier believed itself to be perceived its neighbours. Chapter four examines the specificity of the Tarn as the location of the EIF's Chantier Rural. By delving into the personalities of local figures, it investigates how Lautrec's neighbours and local officials reacted to the Jewish presence. A focus on the prefect and Vichy's departmental delegates will reveal the

complete confusion that existed at the local level over how to reconcile Vichy's dual projects of a return to the land and the marginalisation of Jews.

A second case study, taken up in the fifth and sixth chapters, investigates the hitherto ignored participation of Jews in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse. Chapter five focuses on how individual Jewish youths integrated and contributed to the Chantiers. It explores how and why so many young Jews were able to circumvent Vichy's racial laws to find themselves holding positions of responsibility. A focus on the youth's daily routine will illustrate the multiple ways in which they were able to live out a dual Jewish and French identity. Through a dual top-down and bottom-up approach, the sixth chapter examines how anti-Semitism was expressed in the Chantiers. It interrogates the ways in which certain officials at the top of the organisation perceived the Jewish Question and how they sought to filter anti-Semitic propaganda down to the Chantiers in the localities.

Finally, the conclusion to this study will reflect on the logic behind the overlap in Vichy policy-making and will explain its broader implications for our understanding of the regime and of the experience of Jews in Vichy France.

Unlike its parents' generation, on the eve of the Occupation Jewish youth was, in the main, more resolved to publically displaying its dual love for France and for Judaism. However, youth was not successful in becoming completely detached from the internal wrangling that plagued interwar French Jewry. Instead, the debates over assimilation, Zionism and Jewish culture were just as present among the youth. These

multiple conceptions of how to live a Jewish existence in France spilled over and continued to be played out under the Occupation. The uncertainty of Vichy's first two years and the mixed messages sent out over the Jewish Question prevented Jewish youth from adopting a homogenous response to the regime. A willingness to adapt and acculturate to France was a reaction that had developed over several generations and 1940–42 proved no different, with Jewish youth seeking multiple forms of engagement with the New Order. The reasons for this response need to be traced back to the French Revolution, and the Jewish Emancipation which came with it, to illuminate French Jewry's historically complicated relationship with France.

Chapter 1. Regeneration

French Jewry on the eve of Vichy

At the beginning of the Occupation, many young French Jews believed that they were integrated and acculturated into a universal French republican identity. Such sentiments were encapsulated in a letter by Denis Bergmann to the prefect of the Haute-Garonne in July 1941, serving to explain the twenty-year olds' refusal to sign the compulsory Jewish census. In his letter, Bergmann argued against the existence of a 'Jewish race' on scientific grounds. He concluded his protest by stating that 'la seule communauté à laquelle j'appartenais est la nation française'.¹¹⁹ Bergmann did not conceive of this line of thinking suddenly as a means to avoid signing the census. Rather, he had grown up separating his French and Jewish identities, and had been taught to do so by his adoptive father, the prominent radical secularist and nonconformist, Paul Grunebaum-Ballin.¹²⁰ Grunebaum-Ballin's letter to the prefect was as resolute as that of his son. In it, he confirmed his and his wife's complete detachment from the Jewish religion, to the point that:

Nous refusons de nous regarder comme appartenant à la communauté religieuse juive [...] Nous avons toujours vécu en libres-penseurs, détachés de toute croyance religieuse.¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Archives départementales de la Haute-Garonne [ADHG], M2051, Letter from Denis Bergmann to the prefect of the Haute-Garonne, Toulouse, July 1941.

¹²⁰ Throughout the first decades of the twentieth century, Grunebaum-Ballin was a figure of hate by many on the extreme right and in particular the *Action Française*, for his important role in the legislation that separated Church and state. See P. Birnbaum, *La France aux Français: histoire des haines nationalistes* (Paris, 2006), p. 76.

¹²¹ ADHG, M2051, Letter from Paul Grunebaum-Ballin to the prefect of the Haute-Garonne, Toulouse, 11 July 1941.

However evidence suggests that Bergmann and Grunebaum-Ballin's sense of complete assimilation was not representative of the experience of most of French Jewry.¹²² While it is true that, since the nineteenth century, many native French Jews had successfully integrated into society, the majority had managed to strike a comfortable balance between their acculturation within French society and their religious traditions and customs. Grunebaum-Ballin is emblematic of Michael Marrus' conception of French Jewry at the end of the nineteenth century. French Jews, Marrus argued, adopted a 'politics of assimilation', by publically distancing themselves from any sign that might make them appear distinct as Jews.¹²³ French Jewry's unwillingness to respond as Jews to external threats was, according to Marrus, a main factor in its supposed passivity during the Dreyfus Affair. Even though religious elements underpinned all of Franco-Judaism's official organisations, more recent studies have questioned Marrus' 'politics of assimilation' argument. They call for a more complex appreciation of how Jews integrated into French society. By following the personal trajectories of 171 'state Jews' who reached the upper echelons of the Republican administration, Pierre Birnbaum has revealed the diversity of responses towards France and towards Judaism that existed amongst leading figures within French Jewry.¹²⁴ Jewish public displays were not as concealed as was once thought. Indeed, Ruth Harris has recently argued that at the time of the Dreyfus Affair, most Jews did not abandon their Jewish identities even as they sought to forge a place for themselves amongst conventional French society.¹²⁵

¹²² V. Caron, 'Fools for Love of the Republic', *AJS Review*, Vol. 24, No. 1, (1999), p. 102.

¹²³ M. Marrus, *The Politics of Assimilation: The French Jewish Community at the Time of the Dreyfus Affair* (Oxford, 1971).

¹²⁴ P. Birnbaum, *The Jews of the Republic: A Political History of State Jews in France from Gambetta to Vichy* (Stanford CA, 1996).

¹²⁵ R. Harris, *The Man on Devil's Island: Alfred Dreyfus and the Affair that Divided France* (London, 2010), p. 66.

However, on the eve of the Second World War, a number of factors had drastically altered the mosaic of French Jewry. Waves of immigration, the rise of Zionism and the birth of Jewish youth movements had rendered French Jewry virtually unrecognisable from the model that had existed during the Dreyfus Affair. In her study *From Dreyfus to Vichy*, Paula Hyman argued that the integrationist method could not cope with the new challenges facing Jews in twentieth century France.¹²⁶ During the interwar years, French Jewry had to respond and adapt to the external forces that were seeking to reshape it. By 1940, religion was no longer the only means through which French Jewry considered its public relationship with Judaism. Rather, large parts of the population of *israélites français*, and its youth in particular, had begun to embrace a broader definition of a *living* Judaism, which lay beyond the private confines of the synagogue. For native Jewish youth, this new concept of Judaism did not detract them from their commitment to France. Rather, having been raised in a climate of patriotism in the years that followed the First World War, Jewish youth were fully embedded in the French polity, and had no desire to leave France. It was by their dual status as Jew and Frenchman that they sought to serve the nation.

French Jewry was given a new lease of life in 1914, through its participation in the *Union Sacrée* that encouraged Frenchmen of all political and social persuasions to put aside their differences for the sake of la Patrie. 36,000 French Jews were drafted into the French army, while 10,000 immigrant Jews joined the French Foreign Legion. By the end of the war, 6,500 had been killed from a total population of 120,000 Jews in

¹²⁶ P.E. Hyman, *From Dreyfus to Vichy: The Remaking of French Jewry, 1906–1939* (New York, 1979), p. 233.

France.¹²⁷ French Jewry was radically transformed by its contribution to the war effort, which served as the ‘perfect’ integrationist mechanism.¹²⁸ Literature and images of the case of Rabbi Abraham Bloch, who was killed while performing the last rites on a Catholic soldier, was widely disseminated and prompted Barrès to include Jews as one of the four *familles spirituelles de la France*.¹²⁹ It would have been unthinkable for Barrès to have written about Jews in such positive terms twenty years earlier in the midst of the Dreyfus Affair.¹³⁰ However, the fraternity found in the trenches coupled with French Jewry’s commitment and sacrifice for the Union Sacrée, had demonstrated that Jews had earned their right to be in France. For the leaders of interwar French Jewry, Barrès’ book took on ‘mythic proportions and remained a sacred text’.¹³¹

After the First World War, the Franco-Jewish establishment intended to continue its integrationist approach which it believed had served French Jews so well in the past. Since emancipation, traditional elements within native French Jewry had gone to great lengths to deny the existence of Jewish particularist features. Franco-Judaism was a purely spiritual entity to which the notion of a specific Jewish culture was alien. The model of Judaism put forward by the Consistoire Central, the institution which represented French Jewry’s official voice, promoted, above all else, French Jewry’s complete dedication to Republican values. Variation existed amongst the degrees of religiosity with many avoiding synagogue services and only one in four paying membership fees to the Consistoire Central.¹³² Religion was thus a private affair for

¹²⁷ Zuccotti, *The Holocaust*, p. 18.

¹²⁸ Poznanski, *Jews in France*, p. 5.

¹²⁹ M. Barrès, *Les Diverses Familles Spirituelles de la France* (Paris, 1917), p. 93.

¹³⁰ For Barrès’ anti-Semitism during the Dreyfus Affair, see Harris, *The Man on Devil’s Island*, p. 138.

¹³¹ R.I. Cohen, ‘Introduction’ in Lambert, *Diary of a Witness*, p. xx.

¹³² Poznanski, *Jews in France*, p. 4.

the *israélites français*, the majority of whom sought to be indistinguishable from other Frenchman, with the exception that they worshiped in a synagogue rather than in a church.¹³³ Sections of religious services were conducted in French and, perhaps replicating the Catholic liturgy, were often accompanied by a choir and organ.¹³⁴ Moreover, the institutions of French Jewry did not go beyond those offered by their Catholic counterparts and were limited to the maintenance of community buildings, charity and religious education.¹³⁵

The influx of Jewish immigrants in the early twentieth century had far reaching consequences for the 110,000 native French Jews.¹³⁶ While in the nineteenth century only a small number of foreign Jews had moved to France, between 1906 and 1939, around 150,000 to 200,000 Jewish immigrants settled there. More than 75 percent of these came from Eastern Europe.¹³⁷ French Jewry's patriotic and integrationist formula contrasted sharply with to the model that immigrants had left behind. In Eastern Europe, Jews had not enjoyed citizenship rights in their countries of birth where they had been legally defined as belonging to a national minority. A certain type of Jewish ethnicity separating Jews from their neighbours was thus brought to France by these immigrant Jews who were generally more religiously observant than their native French co-religionists. Here too an important distinction arose, with immigrant Jews allowing their religion openly to define their dress, customs and daily routines. The disparity with the French model which for so long had sought to confine religion to the private sphere, could not have been more obvious. Nevertheless, foreign Jews did not constitute a homogenous community and adopted varying

¹³³ Hyman, *From Dreyfus to Vichy*, p. 6.

¹³⁴ Harris, *The Man on Devil's Island*, p. 67 and Zuccotti, *The Holocaust*, p.20.

¹³⁵ Hyman, *From Dreyfus to Vichy*, p. 28.

¹³⁶ Figure quoted in: Lazare, *Rescue as Resistance*, p. 12.

¹³⁷ Hyman, *From Dreyfus to Vichy*, p. 31.

attitudes towards questions of integrating into French Judaism and Republican institutions.¹³⁸

The interactions between these two Jewish ‘communities’ has for some time fascinated North American scholars, who unlike their French counterparts, have focused on the feuding that underpinned these relationships.¹³⁹ French Jews were abhorred by the mores and lack of any integrationist drive of their co-religionists. Foreign Jews, meanwhile, believed that they were constantly looked down upon and they criticised the irreligious existence of French Jews who had become, in their eyes, indistinguishable from Christians. As the number of Jews fleeing Eastern Europe increased and fearful of an anti-Semitic backlash, French Jewry became involved in a series of programmes designed to integrate their co-religionists into France.¹⁴⁰

One main area for division between French and immigrant Jews was the Zionist project. The founders of Zionism argued that the constant re-emergence of anti-Semitism after emancipation revealed the failure of the Jews’ strategy of assimilation. For the Zionists, the only solution to anti-Semitism was Jewish nationhood and the creation of a Jewish homeland. Zionism’s very premise thus ran counter to the integrationist model of French Jewry, explaining its inability to assert itself in France

¹³⁸ Romanian Jews were the most eager to integrate, often shunning their co-religionists and creating few Jewish institutions. I am grateful to Marc Lazar for this information.

¹³⁹ See notably Hyman, *From Dreyfus to Vichy*; N.L. Green, *The Pletzl of Paris: Jewish Immigrant Workers in the Belle Époque* (New York, 1986); V. Caron, *Uneasy Asylum: France and the Jewish Refugee Crisis, 1933–1942* (Stanford, CA, 1999). André Kaspi has argued that not enough attention has been paid to the heterogeneity of ‘foreign’ Jewish citizens, many of whom only received citizenship in the interwar years. See Kaspi, *Les Juifs pendant l’Occupation*, p. 17. A similar argument has been advanced by Michel Abitbol. See M. Abitbol, *Les Deux Terres Promises: Les Juifs de France et le Sionisme* (Paris, 1989).

¹⁴⁰ Education schemes were set up under the auspices of the Consistoire. See Hyman, *From Dreyfus to Vichy*, pp.143–152. Vicki Caron’s groundbreaking study has recently portrayed French Jewry’s work in relief efforts to have been more generous than was previously assumed. See Caron, *Uneasy Asylum*, pp. 302–320.

during the first decades of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, Zionism made inroads amongst the immigrant Jews, whose attachment to France and the politics of assimilation was not as strong as amongst their French co-religionists. From the beginning of the twentieth century, immigrants, many of whom had experienced persecution in their native countries, urged a political response to anti-Semitism. They joined Zionist groups where they participated in meetings and collected funds for the reconstruction of Palestine.¹⁴¹

Zionism was at first viewed as incompatible with Franco-Judaism. Its ideological association with immigrants, from whom French Jewry was so desperately seeking to distance itself, explains why it attracted little popular attention in its early years. Leading Jewish institutions, notably the AIU and the Consistoire Central, did not hold back from publically displaying their anti-Zionist stance. The aim of the AIU was to improve the lives of Jews around the world by spreading the model of Franco-Judaism to its schools and technical training centres in North Africa and the Balkans. Rejecting the concept of a Jewish nation, the AIU took the view that Zionism was subverting its model of emancipation.¹⁴² The rabbis and the Consistoire also adopted this position and in 1919 they drew up proposals to launch a 'declaration of war against Zionism'.¹⁴³ Their anti-Zionism was founded on the belief that the creation of a Jewish state would have severe consequences for Jews that remained in the diaspora, especially in Eastern Europe. Although in public the Consistoire adopted a neutral position on Zionism, in reality it did not prevent leading rabbis such as the

¹⁴¹ Hyman, *From Dreyfus to Vichy*, p. 154.

¹⁴² P.E. Hyman, *The Jews of Modern France* (Berkeley, CA, 1998), pp. 138–139.

¹⁴³ Hyman, *From Dreyfus to Vichy*, p. 163.

Grand Rabbin de France Israël Lévi and Grand Rabbin Maurice Liber from making sermons hostile to the Zionist project.¹⁴⁴

This position however, was not adopted by all French Jews, many of whom vied for a Jewish renaissance and believed that the Zionist project offered a solution. It was especially the case in the aftermath of the Dreyfus Affair, which, as Aron Rodrigue has argued, was not an immediate cause of the renewed interest in Zionism but had nonetheless left far reaching consequences.¹⁴⁵ By following the trajectories of two leading Zionists, André Spire and Edmond Fleg, Rodrigue has shown the complicated route that led these writers to embrace aspects of Jewish nationalism, dismissing the notion of a teleological path from the Affair to Zionism. Nevertheless, the intention of these early French Zionists was never to encourage French Jews to leave France and to help build a Jewish state. Their conception of Zionism was one which, according to Rodrigue, remained ‘deeply rooted in a universalist understanding of France’.¹⁴⁶

By the 1920s Zionism was no longer anathema to traditional French Jewry, who began to donate large sums of money to Zionist causes.¹⁴⁷ This ‘prozionisme’, to borrow the term of Grynberg and Nicault, was intended to develop infrastructure in Palestine that would serve as a home for persecuted Jews from around the world.¹⁴⁸ Although not convinced by the argument of Jewish nationalism, French Jewry continued in its philanthropic tradition to help suffering Jews for whom Palestine

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 163–165.

¹⁴⁵ A. Rodrigue, ‘Rearticulations of French Jewish Identities after the Dreyfus Affair’, *Jewish Social Studies*, vol. 2, no. 3, Spring/Summer (1996), pp. 1–24.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 19.

¹⁴⁷ Hyman, *From Dreyfus to Vichy*, p. 167.

¹⁴⁸ C. Nicault and A. Grynberg, ‘La Résistance Sioniste sous l’Occupation’ *Pardès*, Vol. 16, (1992), Numéro spécial, p. 151.

offered a tangible reality.¹⁴⁹ In the 1920s, French Jewry remained largely opposed to the political Zionist movements such as the Jewish Agency and the World Jewish Congress and instead began to forge relations with Zionist charities such as the Keren Kayemeth LeYisrael [Hereafter KKL].¹⁵⁰ However, from the early 1930s, the growth of Nazism propelled tens of thousands of Central European Jews to seek refuge in France. Jewish refugee committees were set up in France to deal with, and support, the influx of their co-religionists. More than ever, Zionism became a practical reality for native French Jews involved in refugee work. Raymond-Raoul Lambert, general secretary of the Comité d'Assistance aux Réfugiés (CAR), and sympathetic to the plight of the refugees, was convinced that Zionism was the only solution to the refugee problem.¹⁵¹ This approach to the refugee problem was strengthened in 1937 following the endorsement of Zionism by leading French rabbis. In a famous speech Rabbi Jacob Kaplan argued that French Jews had a duty to support Zionism for the sake of their persecuted co-religionists.¹⁵² On the eve of the Second World War, French Jewry, although not entirely convinced by the Zionist project and continuing to see its relevance solely for immigrant Jews, had on the whole abandoned its hostility to the ideology and saw in it a possible solution to the refugee crisis that threatened France.

More than any other segment of native French Jewry, it was the youth who felt a growing sympathy towards Zionism. In the early decades of the twentieth century,

¹⁴⁹ Hyman, *From Dreyfus to Vichy*, p. 167.

¹⁵⁰ Nicault and Grynberg, 'La Résistance Sioniste', p. 152. The KKL was created in 1901 as a fund to purchase land in Palestine to forward Jewish settlement.

¹⁵¹ Caron, *Uneasy Asylum*, pp. 105 and n. 548.

¹⁵² Hyman, *From Dreyfus to Vichy*, p. 172.

youth movements began to emerge across Europe for the first time.¹⁵³ Jewish youth actively took part in this youth renaissance, either joining youth groups that were not dependent on religious affiliation, or participating in uniquely Jewish groups created at the same time.¹⁵⁴ Before the early 1920s, the only Jewish youth movements to have existed in France were the youth factions of the political groupings such as the Jewish Communists or Bundists; by 1939, there were 47 active Jewish youth movements with a combined total of 5000 members.¹⁵⁵

A number of competing Zionist youth movements existed in France at this time. Although popular amongst the children of immigrant Jews, these largely political movements had few native French members during the interwar years. One example of this was Betar, which like other Zionist youth organisations, aimed to prepare its members for their eventual Aliyah to Palestine. Betar was founded in Riga in 1925 as the youth division of the Revisionist Zionists, the right-wing Zionists that was led by Vladimir Jabotinsky.¹⁵⁶ Jewish self-defence was at the heart of Revisionism and Jabotinsky had helped form the Haganah (Jewish defence militia) in Palestine. In France, Betar sought to physically rebuild the new Jewish man with a view to re-conquering Palestine. The movement prepared Jewish youth for the future struggle, even creating a range of combative initiatives such as the *Club juif de Jiu-Jitsu*

¹⁵³ A. Coutrot, 'Le Mouvement de Jeunesse, un phénomène au singulier ?' in G. Cholvy, (ed.), *Mouvements de Jeunesse Chrétiens et Juifs: sociabilité juvénile dans un cadre européen, 1799–1968* (Paris, 1985), pp. 109–123.

¹⁵⁴ D. Rechter, "'Bubermania': The Jewish Youth Movement in Vienna, 1917–1919", *Modern Judaism*, 16, 1, (1996), pp. 24–45; G.D. Sharfman, G.D. 'Between Identities: The German-Jewish Youth Movement Blau-Weiss, 1912–26', in M. Berkowitz, S. Tanenbaum, and S.W. Bloom, (eds.), *Forging Modern Jewish Identities: Public Faces and Private Struggles* (London, 2003), pp. 198–228, C. Schatzker, 'The Jewish Youth Movement as a Historical Phenomenon' *Studies in Jewish Civilisation*, 3, (1992), pp. 149–164.

¹⁵⁵ Nicault and Grynberg, 'La Résistance Sioniste', p. 150. The Bund was a Jewish workers movement that was staunchly anti-Zionist.

¹⁵⁶ For more on Betar see C. Shindler, *The Triumph of Military Zionism: Nationalism and the Origins of the Israeli Right* (London, 2006), pp. 116–133.

(Figure 2).¹⁵⁷ Nevertheless, such radical views attracted nominal attention amongst native French youth, ‘en France, le Betar est presque inexistant’.¹⁵⁸ While native French Jewish youth were largely unreceptive to the messages of the Zionist youth movements this should not imply Zionism’s failure to take hold of French Jewish youth in other ways. On the contrary, by the end of the 1930s French Jewish youth taking part in the Jewish scouts, the Éclaireurs Israélites de France [hereafter, EIF] had accommodated the Zionist cause as a part of their identities as French Jews. The EIF’s success in transmitting these values stemmed from the movement’s wholly religious origins, which were deeply entrenched in the Consistoire Central’s conception of how to live a Jewish existence.

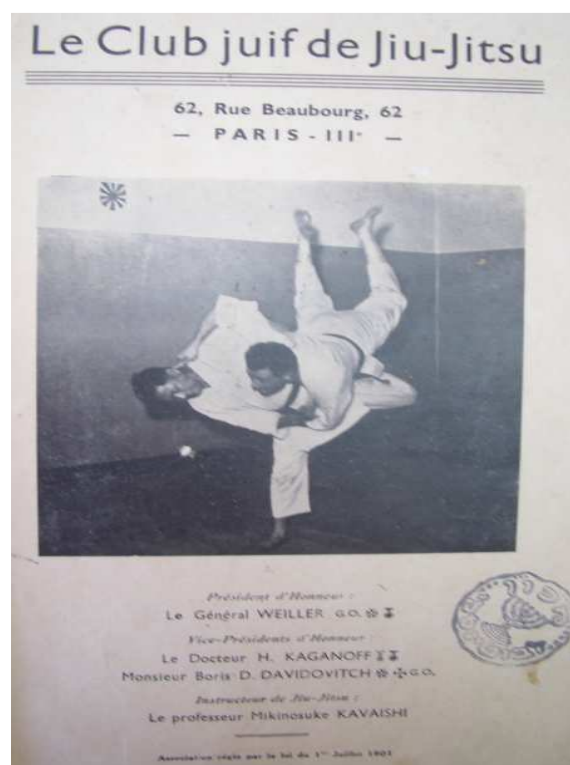


Figure 2. Le Club juif de Jiu-Jitsu, Paris

¹⁵⁷ Archives of the Jabotinsky Institute, B38, 3-1, 1936 Brochure on the Club juif de Jiu-Jitsu.

¹⁵⁸ Archives of the Jabotinsky Institute, B38, 1-2, Betar internal bulletin, 11 December 1934.

In France, the Scouting movement dominated above all other youth organisations. Created in Britain by Robert Baden-Powell in 1906, the Scouting movement had, by 1920, developed separate Catholic (Scouts de France), Protestant (Éclaireurs Unionistes) and secular (Éclaireurs de France) scouting associations.¹⁵⁹ A Girl Guide movement, the Fédération Française des Éclaireuses, was also launched at this time. In 1923, a seventeen year old Robert Gamzon created the first Jewish scout troop in Paris, the EIF. Gamzon's aim was to do away with the in-fighting that had plagued the political youth factions and to create a unified movement equipped with a dual love of France and of Judaism.¹⁶⁰ Unlike some of the other youth movements that were upsetting the assimilationist model by stressing Jewish particularist elements, the EIF was looked upon favourably by the Consistoire Central for being a purely religious organisation that sought to return youth to the synagogues. This was helped by the social background of the early scouts who lived in the most middle class districts of Paris.¹⁶¹ However, despite at first staying within the defined structures of French Jewry, by the mid-1930s, a number of factors had caused the movement to adopt a different approach which, by introducing Jewish ethnicity as a cornerstone of the movement, placed it in direct confrontation with defenders of the assimilationist model.

First, Edmond Fleg's influence transformed Gamzon's conception of Franco-Judaism which the scout leader considered moribund and in desperate need of reinvigoration.¹⁶² Inspired by Fleg's *L'Enfant prophète*, Gamzon moved the EIF away from the Consistoire's model that considered religion as the sole basis of every Jewish

¹⁵⁹ C. Guérin, *L'utopie Scouts de France* (Paris, 1997).

¹⁶⁰ The origins and development of the EIF are set out in Michel, *Les Eclaireurs Israélites de France*, pp.17–38.

¹⁶¹ Michel, *Les Eclaireurs Israélites de France*, pp. 21–22.

¹⁶² Hyman, *From Dreyfus to Vichy*, p. 180.

organisation. To this end, Gamzon announced in 1926 that the EIF would no longer accept only religious Jewish youth into its ranks, but rather, it was open to all Jewish youth ‘y compris les sionistes et même les libres penseurs’.¹⁶³ Such an overt overhaul of the ‘assimilationist model’ prompted a violent response from the Consistoire and Rabbi Liber spoke out against the EIF, arguing that ‘Judaism without religion does not exist’.¹⁶⁴ Second, beginning in 1927, the EIF began joint activities with Hachomer Hatzair, a Zionist youth movement that was also based on scouting.¹⁶⁵ The infiltration of Hachomer leaders into the EIF ranks introduced new and exciting ways of being Jewish, distancing the movement even further from its purely religious beginnings.¹⁶⁶ This move away from religious Judaism was consolidated during the refugee crisis of the 1930s and the introduction of Central and Eastern European youths into the EIF’s ranks. Hachomer and the refugees brought with them a living Judaism which had been hitherto unknown to French Jewry. Large parts of the French Jewish youth were attracted to this brand of Judaism. The scouts earned badges in Judaica, sang Hebrew songs and learn Hasidic and Zionist folk dances.¹⁶⁷ Jacques Weill remembers welcoming the culture brought by the immigrants that he felt would counter the dormant Judaism which had led many to turn away from the religion:

La culture juive a beaucoup diminué et ceux qui sont venu de Pologne, de Roumanie ou d’Allemagne étaient plus compétents dans le judaïsme et plus religieux. On a découvert le Hassidisme ; Ca n’existait pas en France [...] C’était une richesse qu’ils ont apporté, ce n’était pas une source de conflit.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶³ Gamzon, quoted in: L. Lazare, ‘EIF: Les Débuts du Mouvement’, in ‘Les Eclaireurs Israélites de France dans la Guerre’, p. 17.

¹⁶⁴ Hyman, *From Dreyfus to Vichy*, p. 193.

¹⁶⁵ Hachomer Hatzair was founded as a Zionist scouting movement in Austria in 1913. See Rechter ‘Bubermania’.

¹⁶⁶ Hammel, *Souviens-toi d’Amalek*, p. 327.

¹⁶⁷ P.E. Hyman, ‘Challenge to Assimilation: French Jewish Youth Movements between the Wars’, *Jewish Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XVIII, No. 2, Dec (1976), p. 105.

¹⁶⁸ Interview with Jacques Weill, 6 April 2007.

Although the entry of East European Jews to France was looked upon positively by the EIF, mass Jewish immigration provoked a wave of anti-Semitic incidents across France. Newspapers such as *L'Ami du Peuple* and *Je Suis Partout* did not hold back from vicious attacks, attitudes also reflected in the violent confrontations on the streets by the various 'Leagues'. The election of Léon Blum as the head of the Popular Front government gave way to a flood of anti-Jewish hatred. It was in response to the increase of anti-Semitism that Gamzon embarked on a task to change 'la pyramide sociologique des Juifs'.¹⁶⁹ From 1934, the movement transformed itself and placed the Hebrew slogan, 'Simha va-Avodah' (joy and work) at the centre of its ideology.¹⁷⁰ It was vital that Jews were not seen as a drain on the French economy and Gamzon hoped that a return to collective labour would thwart anti-Semitism. He sought to convince Jews to reject their previous roles of intermediaries and instead focus on retraining and learning new skills to become producers and engage in manual tasks. The opening stanza of his call to arms ran:

Je voudrais que tu sois un bâtisseur,
Non pas un discuteur,
Que tes mains ne s'agitent plus dans le vide pour y soutenir des mots
Mais saisissent un outil solide pour CONSTRUIRE.¹⁷¹

At this time, Gamzon was not unique in hoping to bring about Jewish youth's regeneration through a return to the land and manual trades. In seeking to move Jewish youth away from the liberal professions and into physical work, Gamzon's vision appears to be heavily influenced by the leading Zionist and anti-modernist thinker Max Nordau and his theory of degeneration. Nordau had argued that western

¹⁶⁹ Expression of Pierre Kauffmann in an interview, 11 April 2007.

¹⁷⁰ Hammel, *Souviens-toi d'Amalek*, p. 328.

¹⁷¹ Private archives of Léo Cohn, Gamzon letter to Jewish youth.

society had become decadent and degenerate.¹⁷² In *Degeneration*, Nordau laid out the stereotypes attributed to Jews as a nervous, physically weak and urban people. By internalising society's negative image of the Jew, Nordau proposed to end Jews' decadent existence which would come about through the creation of a new Jew. For Nordau, Muskeljudentum (muscular Jewry) needed to replace the existing stereotype and this would be created through manual work and the 'cult of the body'. As George Mosse has observed, 'the new Jew who would emerge from the wreckage of the diaspora symbolized the regeneration of the Jewish people'.¹⁷³

The influence of the Zionist philosopher A.D. Gordon on Gamzon's project was also unmistakable. Like Nordau, Gordon sought to fundamentally change Jews' everyday existence, encouraging a move away from the cities and a return to the land. Gordon idealised the 'religion of work' and the 'sanctity of labour' which he believed would return Jews closer to God. At the age of 48 and with no experience in manual labour, Gordon left his wife and children in Russia to become an agricultural pioneer in Palestine. Nordau and Gordon greatly influenced the Zionist youth movements in 1920s Europe and in particular the Hehalutz movement (the 'pioneer'), which based its ideology around the principles of physical self-improvement and a return to the land. A staunchly Zionist movement, the Hehalutz did not have a membership criteria and took Jewish youth from a range of political positions. A willingness to return to the land was all that was required. The movement flourished in the interwar years and in 1935 it had 89,500 members across twenty-five countries.¹⁷⁴ Most of these youths had spent time in the movement's 'Hachsharot', agricultural training centres across

¹⁷² M. Nordau, *Degeneration* (London, 1895).

¹⁷³ G.L. Mosse, 'Max Nordau, Liberalism and the New Jew', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol 27 (1992), p. 567.

¹⁷⁴ G. Shimoni, *The Zionist Ideology* (Hanover, NH, 1995), p. 233.

Europe.¹⁷⁵ Hachomer Hatzair, who as has been explained had an important influence on the EIF from the late 1920s, was also imbued with this ideology centring on the creation of the ‘New Jew’, and constantly invoked Gordon’s return to the land ethos.¹⁷⁶

Although Gamzon was not at this stage a confirmed Zionist, his project to reform Jewish youth along Zionist lines was heavily inspired by the influence of Hachomer Hatzair leaders, notably Djigo Hirsch, who by 1931 had reached the highest ranks of the EIF. Moreover, the influence of Gamzon’s own wife Denise is unmistakable. Highly educated, Denise Gamzon had travelled extensively in central Europe while pursuing a university degree in German and had been won over at an early stage to the Zionist cause. During the 1930s she had been active in ‘Kadima’, a precursor to WIZO and was at the same time employed by the KKL and also acted as general secretary of the Fédération de la Jeunesse Sioniste et Pro-Palestinienne de France.¹⁷⁷ Her key role in the French Zionist movement led her to participate at the twenty-first Zionist congress in Geneva in 1939.¹⁷⁸

Gamzon launched two major projects in the 1930s with a view to creating the new Jewish worker amongst native French Jewry. A first was the establishment in the sixteenth arrondissement of a community centre, ‘Notre Cité’, which opened its doors at the beginning of 1936. The *Cité* acted as a social space for Jewish youth to interact. Youth formed a choir and were taught Hebrew and Jewish studies. A carpentry

¹⁷⁵ G. Bensoussan, *Une Histoire Intellectuelle et Politique du Sionisme 1860–1940* (Paris, 2002), pp.647–648.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.651–652.

¹⁷⁷ WIZO, the Women’s International Zionist Organisation was created in 1920 as a charity to help women in Palestine. CDJC, *Memoirs of Denise Gamzon*, 1997, pp. 45–47.

¹⁷⁸ See CZA, KH4 4299, Letter from Denise Gamzon to Keren Hayesod, 6 March 1940 and *Memoirs of Denise Gamzon*, 1997, p. 55.

workshop was also created to train Jewish youth and to equip them with technical skills.¹⁷⁹ The second initiative was a return to the land project. At the end of 1938 the EIF's first Hachshara, ferme-école, was set up on the outskirts of Saumur (Maine-et-Loire) for male and female EIF youths. The group was composed of twenty two young people, half of whom were French and came from Paris and Strasbourg, the other half being refugees from Germany and Poland. At Saumur, Jewish youth engaged in physical labour, where they learnt to make hay, to harvest and to look after their vegetable garden.¹⁸⁰ Seminars in Jewish History and Contemporary Jewry were organised by Isaac Pougatch and as a result of weekly visits by Robert Gamzon, the group maintained regular contact with the EIF hierarchy.¹⁸¹ Saumur was the first opportunity for the Jewish Scouts to put into place Gamzon's calls for a return to the land. Although the Second World War meant that Saumur only lasted for little more than a year, the experience proved positive amongst the youths, many of whom pledged to go back to the land as soon as order had been restored.¹⁸²

By the end of the 1930s, the EIF was almost unrecognisable from its *israélite français* precursor of the early 1920s. The influence of Zionism and Jewish culture had reshaped the movement by transforming its conception of Judaism amongst its 2500 participants. Pluralism took the place of religion and sought to attract Jewish youth from a range of social, political and religious backgrounds. As was the case with a number of fascist and communist youth movements in interwar Europe, the EIF placed its 'New Jew' at the centre of its ideology. It sought to convert its youth from

¹⁷⁹ AIU, CC 43, Report on EIF's professional training programme, 15 October 1940.

¹⁸⁰ CDJC, CMXLIV 2^e, Report on Saumur, undated (likely to be from November 1939).

¹⁸¹ CDJC, Memoirs of Denise Gamzon, 1997, p 56, and CDJC, CMXLIV 2^e, Report on Saumur, undated (likely to be from November 1939).

¹⁸² CDJC, DLXI-79, Transcript of interview with Isaac Pougatch and interviews with Pierre Kauffmann 11 April 2007 and 26 September 2008.

what it considered to be a mundane urban and bourgeois existence to one which prioritised physical self-improvement and collective responsibility. A new-found recognition of Jewish ethnicity and a certain support for the Zionist cause did not, in the eyes of native French Jewish youth, compromise or contradict its commitment to France. On the contrary, and as was argued at the time, the scouts sought to give equal service to France and to Judaism. As one EIF leader argued, Jewish youth would be able to contribute more to France once they had recaptured their originality as Jews.¹⁸³ The EIF remained a staunchly French movement which, while instilling a love for Eretz Yisrael amongst its youth, did not consider France as a temporary home before an eventual Aliyah. Henri Bily, born in Paris in 1920 to recently-arrived East European Jewish immigrants, recalled:

Autant que je me souviens, je me suis toujours senti français, et juif en même temps. Juif dans le sens sioniste du mot. Je ne comprenais pas que les juifs n'avaient pas de pays [...] J'ai été du fond de mon cœur sioniste [...] Ce n'était pas dans le but d'aller vivre là-bas [...] Mon désir c'était que les juifs aient un pays.¹⁸⁴

While young people in the EIF did not see a contradiction between their patriotism for France and a love for Jewish culture, such views were not shared by all Jewish youth, most of whom did not take part in a Jewish youth movement during the interwar years. A large number of parents did not want their children to deviate from the traditional Franco-Jewish path and they saw Jewish youth movements as upsetting the integrationist balance. In the 1930s, Pierre Cahen was a member of the secular *Eclaireurs de France*, and Fernand Lévy was active in the Protestant *Eclaireurs*

¹⁸³ Sigismond Haït in a 1933 report, quoted in Michel, *Les Eclaireurs Israélites de France*, p. 35.

¹⁸⁴ USC Shoah Foundation Interview with Henri Bily, June 1997.

Unionistes.¹⁸⁵ Both groups had a large number of Jewish participants and according to Lévy, there was never any reference to religion.¹⁸⁶ Philippe Herzog's parents prevented him from joining the EIF and he instead joined the Eclaireurs Unionistes:

My parents never wanted me to mix with too many Jews [...] they pushed us [Herzog and his sister] to avoid them, as they didn't want us turning into Zionists. They were anti-Zionists.¹⁸⁷

In the same vein, some immigrant parents wanted their children to become fully adjusted to French life and believed that mixing with too many Jewish children would only hinder their successful integration. Michel Kuna was born in France in 1920 to parents who had recently arrived from Poland. Although Yiddish was spoken in the home Kuna had mainly Catholic friends and was a member of the Auberges de Jeunesse movement rather than a Jewish youth organisation.¹⁸⁸ Similarly, Isaac Jafet, whose parents had immigrated from Turkey and whose two brothers had been killed after volunteering for the French army in the First World War, spoke Judéo-Espagnol at home but had no connection with a Jewish youth movement.¹⁸⁹

These Jews who did not participate in Jewish youth organisations lived out their Judaism in multiple ways. Daniel Samuel explained that his father had raised his children in the 'culte de la patrie':

Il m'a amené voir tous les défilés pour le 14 juillet, le 11 novembre, l'enterrement du maréchal Foch. C'était un exubérant. Il criait, "Vive la France!"¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁵ USC Shoah Foundation Interviews with Pierre Cahen, July 1997 and Fernand Lévy, February 1997.

¹⁸⁶ USC Shoah Foundation Interview with Fernand Lévy, February 1997.

¹⁸⁷ Interview with Philippe Herzog, 9 April 2007.

¹⁸⁸ USC Shoah Foundation Interview with Michel Kuna, January 1996.

¹⁸⁹ USC Shoah Foundation interview with Isaac Jafet, January 1997.

¹⁹⁰ USC Shoah Foundation Interview with Daniel Gauthier (né Samuel), October 1996.

His father's patriotism should not suggest an absence of Judaism. Although the family avoided the synagogue and the dietary laws, Judaism still played a symbolic and private role within family life. For instance, Samuel was blessed in Hebrew by his father every time he left him to return to his mother's home.¹⁹¹ Numerous examples of French Jewry's complete integration into France can be found during this period. Hubert Chimènes' family had been in France for several generations and did not keep kosher and never attended synagogue.¹⁹² His family was entirely detached from the israélite français community and especially from the Eastern European Jewish immigrants. As Chimènes recalled:

On connaissait l'existence de la rue des Rosiers, je n'y ai jamais mit des pieds avant l'après guerre. Je savais que ça existait, mais ça n'était pas familier, ni des lieux, ni des boutiques, ni des gens qui y étaient.¹⁹³

André Ferber also grew up detached from Judaism in the bourgeois 7th arrondissement, where his neighbour on the second floor of 8, Square de la Tour Maubourg was Maréchal Philippe Pétain. Pétain's wife attended Ferber's sister's wedding in 1936 and André was on occasion taken to school by the Maréchal himself.¹⁹⁴ Judaism was largely symbolic to the Ferber family. André attempted to engage with the EIF but soon found that he did not fit in and left the movement after having only attended a few sessions.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹¹ Ibid., Samuels' parents had divorced when he was a young child.

¹⁹² USC Shoah Foundation Interview with Hubert Chimènes, 1995.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Interview with André Ferber, 21 August 2009.

¹⁹⁵ After Pétain was appointed Ambassador to Spain, the Ferber family lost all contact with Pétain. According to André Ferber, his parents did not attempt to regain contact with Pétain or his wife under the Occupation.

Thus, on the eve of the Occupation, Jewish youth in France negotiated its relationship with Judaism in multiple ways. Apart from the politically orientated Zionist movements, youths, like their elders, were at once fully integrated and embedded into French society. By 1939, the EIF, at the heart of whose project lay a desire to transform the bourgeois existence of youth, had redefined itself around a dual love for France and for cultural Judaism. Jewish youths who were not part of an organised movement had not abandoned Judaism and aspects of the religion continued to shape their existence in a series of ways.

Upon the declaration of war in September 1939, French Jewry contributed to the war effort by enlisting in the army. Keen to reaffirm their patriotism, foreign Jews also sought mobilisation and by 1940, almost 40,000 immigrant Jews were in active service.¹⁹⁶ As the editorial of one newspaper declared, ‘France is marching at the head of civilisation. And the Israelites, who owe so much to her, are ready to give their blood down to the last drop’.¹⁹⁷ The defeat and armistice of 1940 did not alter Jewish youths’ attachment to the *Patrie* and they responded to the new regime’s calls for regeneration during the summer of 1940, in much the same way as their non-Jewish peers.

¹⁹⁶ Lazare, *Rescue as Resistance*, p. 20.

¹⁹⁷ Editorial in *L’Univers israélite*, 15 September 1939, quoted in Poznanski, *Jews in France*, p. 18.

The Jewish Question and the National Revolution

The Nazi victory in June 1940 and the creation of the Vichy regime did not, however, sever the links between France and its Jewish citizens. In the space of only a few months, three fifths of the country became occupied leaving the rest to be governed by an authoritarian regime which did not hide its promotion of anti-Semitism. Nevertheless, their attachment to French society, politics and culture which Jews had developed over several generations could not be so easily dismissed and Jews sought various ways through which to play a role in the New Order. Similarly and in contrast to the regime's anti-Semitic drive, politicians and technocrats in Vichy included Jews in their plans for France's future.

In the immediate aftermath of the armistice, Vichy sought to bring about a moral regeneration of France. Pétain believed that the defeat had been caused by people moving away from France's traditional moral values. It was argued that liberal democracy had allowed confusion and disorder to seep into the national spirit, which had to be rehabilitated in order for France to be reborn. Regeneration was to be achieved through Vichy's project of a National Revolution, an all-encompassing term that laid out the regime's projects for fundamental change. Unity and sacrifice were called upon to replace egoism and corruption. As Pétain noted:

Une révolution ne se fait pas seulement à coups de lois et de décrets. Elle ne s'accomplit que si la nation la comprend et l'appelle, que si le peuple accompagne le gouvernement dans la voie de la rénovation nécessaire.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁸ P. Pétain, Message du 10 octobre 1940, in P. Pétain, *Discours aux Français* (Paris, 1989), p. 93.

From the summer of 1940, Pétain's speeches set the tone for France's authoritarian National Revolution and allowed the regime to present itself as unified behind a single image.¹⁹⁹ Anti-parliamentarianism, natural hierarchies and the repositioning of gender roles were instantly promoted by Vichy as the means to restore France to its days of grandeur. Although the entirety of the National Revolution project impacted on Jews in France, Vichy's prioritisation of youth and its programme for a return to the land had particular resonance with Jewish youth and requires momentary consideration.

From the beginning of the regime, a regenerated youth formed the backbone of the National Revolution. No previous government, not even the Popular Front, had paid such close attention to French youth. A Secrétariat Général à la Jeunesse was created and many important figures in the regime were appointed because of their strong links to pre-war youth movements. Nevertheless, as Pollard has suggested, Vichy's policies towards youth privileged young men and a masculinist vision of renewal.²⁰⁰ A *Homme Nouveau* needed to be created in order to lead the National Revolution and rebuild France.²⁰¹ Vichy thus placed great emphasis on the intellectual, moral and physical capabilities of its young men. Youth movements and training schools were at the heart of this transformation, which aimed to instil in young men the importance of a healthy and virile body, respect for authority and the need for self-sacrifice.

Before the ink was dry on the armistice, Pétain had signalled that agriculture would be another key method through which to reconstruct the nation. Agriculture served a dual

¹⁹⁹ Kedward, *Resistance in Vichy France*, p. 82.

²⁰⁰ Pollard, *Reign of Virtue*, p. 72.

²⁰¹ Vichy's *Homme Nouveau* has been treated in-depth, although with some questionable interpretations, by Limore Yagil. See Yagil, *L'Homme Nouveau*.

purpose for practical and ideological reasons. Pétain's radio messages on 23 and 25 June 1940 were embedded with clear instructions that a return to the land and traditional peasant values would lead France through the calamity of the defeat.²⁰² During the summer of 1940 a series of procedures were put in place to implement radical changes. The agricultural engineer Pierre Caziot took up his role as the Minister of Agriculture on 15 July 1940 and was immediately struck by the scale of the task at hand:

The unoccupied zone produced chiefly wine, fruit, and vegetables, lacking the basic foods such as grains, meat, and milk products [...] Without deliveries from the occupied zone there would be a famine at the end of three months [...] If we were to avoid imminent disaster it was necessary at all costs and with the greatest urgency to bring the workers back to their farms in order to harvest the crops and prepare for the next plantings.²⁰³

German requisitioning and one and a half million POWs in Germany, only added to the precarious situation of French agriculture. From the outset, a number of measures were put into place that aimed to put the *retour à la terre* into practice. To increase the number of family farms, on 20 August 1940 Vichy created a Mission de Restauration Paysanne and on 2 December 1940, Vichy confirmed its peasantism by launching its peasant charter, the Corporation paysanne.²⁰⁴ At this time, financial incentives were offered to entice individuals to leave the cities to take over abandoned land and a law of July 1941 transformed the teaching of agricultural methods to

²⁰² Appel du 23 juin and Appel du 25 juin 1940, in P. Pétain, *Discours aux Français*.

²⁰³ P. Caziot, Report on period as Minister of Agriculture, in *France During the German Occupation: A Collection of 292 Statements on the Gouvernement of Maréchal Pétain and Pierre Laval*, Vol 1, Stanford CA, The Hoover Institution Distributed by Stanford University Press, 1958, p. 251.

²⁰⁴ B.M. Gordon, 'The Countryside and the City: Some notes on the Collaboration Model during the Vichy Period', in Fishman, et al. (eds.), *France at War*, p. 149. For the Corporation paysanne see I. Boussard, *Vichy et la Corporation Paysanne* (Paris, 1980).

specialists and children.²⁰⁵ In its first year, Vichy's agricultural agenda was everywhere. It was vigorously promoted in official pamphlets and in the local press. As Marc Bloch commented, 'j'entends, chaque jour, prêcher par la radio, le 'retour à la terre'',²⁰⁶

However, not everyone in France was expected to take part in the process of National Revolution. French regeneration and renewal was to be brought about through the exclusion and purging of Jews and other internal enemies. The Jew, the epitome of the urban dweller and of business, personified the decadence that had led to France's defeat. Only true Frenchmen, with an understanding of the traditional French way of life had the capacity to rebuild France. In July and August 1940, Vichy passed a series of measures to regenerate the nation from the top-down, cleansing the administration of its undesirable elements. Weisberg has observed that in Vichy's first few weeks, 'the bulk of its statutory work was directed to denaturalisation policy'.²⁰⁷ The German ordinance in the Occupied Zone on 27 September 1940 introduced a number of measures that aimed to marginalise Jews from the rest of the population. This was followed a week later in the non-Occupied Zone by Vichy's promulgation of its first *Statut des Juifs* on 3 October 1940. These laws, which Vichy passed without any prompting from the Occupier, went even further than the German ordinance.²⁰⁸ Vichy's anti-Semitic drive escalated throughout the Occupation and by 1944 Vichy ministers had put their names to several hundred laws and decrees that humiliated

²⁰⁵ P. Caziot, Report on period as Minister of Agriculture, in *France During the German Occupation: A Collection of 292 Statements on the Government of Maréchal Pétain and Pierre Laval*, Vol 1, Stanford CA, The Hoover Institution Distributed by Stanford University Press, 1958, pp. 254–262.

²⁰⁶ M. Bloch, *L'étrange défaite*, (Paris, 1990), p. 180.

²⁰⁷ Weisberg, *Vichy Law*, p. 37.

²⁰⁸ This is illustrated by its definition of a Jew. According to the Nazis, a Jew was defined by having more than two Jewish grandparents. For Vichy, a Jew was also defined by having more than two Jewish grandparents, but added to this were those people with only two Jewish grandparents, should their spouse also be Jewish.

Jews, reduced them to the margins of society and, eventually, paved the way for their deportation.²⁰⁹

In event, those behind Vichy's conservative National Revolution were not united over a series of policy-related issues. An examination into the heterogeneities that lay at the heart of the regime's dual priorities of youth and Jewish affairs reveals that contrary to its appearance of uniformity, differences over the direction that policy should take persisted amongst ministers and civil servants throughout the duration of the regime.

Motivated by pre-war ideals, two camps quickly sprung up offering alternative conceptions on how to transform French youth. A first was based on scouting and Catholic Action activities, while a second sought to reinvent the nation's youth by creating a single youth movement, a Jeunesse unique, along similar lines to the fascist youth organisations that had been created in Germany and Italy. Throughout the summer of 1940, youth policy remained under the auspices of Jean Ybarnégary's short-lived Ministry for Family and Youth. In September 1940, a Secrétariat Général à la Jeunesse (SGJ) was officially created.²¹⁰ The engineer Georges Lamirand was appointed to head this new Ministry. A short overview of Lamirand before 1940 is necessary to better understand his goals for the youth of Vichy France. This is however, no easy task, as Lamirand did not write his memoirs and he has not been the

²⁰⁹ For a complete listing of Vichy's anti-Semitic acts, see C. Andrieu, (ed.), *La Persécution des Juifs de France 1940–1944 et le Rétablissement de la Légalité Républicaine. Recueil des Textes Officiels (1940–1949)* (Paris, 2000).

²¹⁰ For a complete description of the dynamics of the SGJ, see Halls, *The Youth of Vichy France* and Giolitto, *Histoire de la Jeunesse sous Vichy*.

subject of a biography.²¹¹ Born in Toulouse in 1899, Lamirand came from a long line of educationists: his grandfather, François Lamirand, had been the director of a primary school in the Auvergne, while his father, Jean-Baptiste Lamirand, had been the Inspecteur générale de l'Instruction publique.²¹² Lamirand's training at the École Centrale as an engineer introduced him to the world of Catholic militants.²¹³ With the revival of social Catholicism in the 1920s, Lamirand became active in Robert Garric's Équipes Sociales and made regular contributions to Garric's journal *La Revue des Jeunes*.²¹⁴ The Équipes Sociales were founded on the basis of the community spirit across classes, which had been nurtured in the trenches during the First World War. Garric had been deeply inspired by Social Catholic thought and sought to encourage a sense of civic responsibility from students of the Grands Écoles towards the working classes, through what Philip Nord has labelled a 'go-to-the masses Catholicism'.²¹⁵ In deprived districts of France, the Équipes Sociales created study circles, encouraging mutual education and exchange between the educated and working class youths.

From the mid 1920s, Lamirand had become a disciple of Maréchal Lyautey.²¹⁶ In his groundbreaking 1891 article on the 'Rôle Social de l'Officier', Lyautey had conveyed

²¹¹ Georges Lamirand died in 1994 and never renounced his public support for Pétain or for Vichy. In the 1960s, he defended his principles and decisions in government by taking part in a live radio debate with former resisters. In the 1980s he headed l'Association pour défendre la mémoire du maréchal Pétain. For the transcript of the radio debate, see Jamet, *Le Rendez-Vous Manqué de 1944*.

²¹² François Lamirand was remembered fondly by his former pupil, Pierre Laval, who relayed to Georges Lamirand, at their first ever meeting in 1940, that any relative of François Lamirand was a friend of his. See AN, 2AV 30, Recorded interview with Georges Lamirand, 26 March 1984 also interview with Gilbert Lamirand, 14 March 2008.

²¹³ AN, 2AV 29, Recorded interview with Georges Lamirand, 1 February 1984.

²¹⁴ The term 'social Catholicism' refers to groups and individuals who became concerned by the social changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution. Social Catholics aimed to improve the social structure and social relations that had been compromised by industrialisation. For further information see A.R. Vidler, *A Century of Social Catholicism, 1820–1920* (London, 1964).

²¹⁵ P. Nord, *France's New Deal: From the Thirties to the Postwar Era* (Princeton, NJ, 2010), p. 31.

²¹⁶ Interview with Gilbert Lamirand, 14 March 2008. The influence of Lyautey over Lamirand was expressed several times in the interview. After the Rif War in Morocco, Lyautey had permanently retired to Thorey (Meurthe-et-Moselle) in 1926.

the role that the army officer should play in the rebirth of France.²¹⁷ Lyautey's influence on Lamirand is obvious by the title of the latter's 1933 publication, *Le Rôle Social de l'Ingénieur*.²¹⁸ According to Lamirand, it was the social responsibility of the engineer to improve the lives of the workers, which would in-turn result in successful production. By the mid-1930s, Lamirand's ideas on the transformation of the worker and his involvement in the *Équipes Sociales* (of which he had become the vice-president), had given him the reputation as a youth spokesman.²¹⁹ Following the fall of France, Lamirand accepted a position as General Director of Louis Renault's factory in Boulogne-Billancourt. It was from here that Lamirand was recruited in September 1940 to head the SGJ. Pétain, Lamirand later remarked, was adamant that the youth should be led by an apolitical character, a person that put the needs of the youth above any personal allegiance towards the party political.²²⁰ Meeting this criterion, it was, as it has been shown, in the world of social Catholicism rather than political movements and leagues that Lamirand had chosen to affiliate during the 1930s.²²¹

²¹⁷ Anon. 'Du Rôle Social de l'Officier dans le service militaire universel', *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 15 Mars 1891.

²¹⁸ G. Lamirand, *Le Rôle Social de l'Ingénieur* (Paris, 1932).

²¹⁹ Nord, *France's New Deal*, p. 263.

²²⁰ Lamirand, in Jamet, *Le Rendez-Vous Manqué de 1944*, p. 67.

²²¹ Reports into Lamirand's lack of pre-war political affiliation were presented at his trial. See AN, 3W, 203, Reports and enquiries by inspectors Clerbaut and Colleta, 25 April 1947.



Figure 3. Georges Lamirand, c, 1941

In the autumn of 1940, the dual appointments of Lamirand to head the SGJ and Jacques Chevalier to the post of Minister of Education signalled the direction that Vichy's youth policy was to follow. Their Catholic Action work had inspired a paternalistic approach which was placed at the forefront of their project. Under Lamirand, Vichy's policies to revitalise French youth were an amalgam of the various social Catholic initiatives of the 1930s. Former members of the *Équipes Sociales* and scouting associations were heavily represented in youth schemes of the New Order. Robert Garric was asked to lead Vichy's *Secours National* and Père Forestier played an important role as chaplain to the *Scoutisme Français* and the *Chantiers de la Jeunesse*. The scouting commissioners General de la Porte du Theil and Pierre Schaeffer were appointed to head the *Chantiers de la Jeunesse* and *Jeune France*. The self-proclaimed Péguyist, Louis Garonne was throughout 1941 *Directeur de la formation des Jeunes* and Lamirand's right-hand man at the SGJ. Garonne and Lamirand were in broad agreement over the direction that youth policy should follow under the New Order. As a former philosophy teacher at the *École des Roches* and a

devout Catholic, Garonne wanted to regenerate youth by celebrating its pluralism and diversity rather than encouraging its uniformity. For Garonne, It was vital that the young refugees in the non-Occupied Zone maintain their existing regional idiosyncrasies. He sought to avoid their complete assimilation, noting 'l'uniformisation produit le français moyen'.²²² Their background in Catholic Action groups united men like Lamirand, De la Porte du Theil and Garonne over the direction that youth policy should take and they championed the idea of a plural youth. Youth, they believed, would benefit from having the choice of adhering to a variety of youth movements. A plural youth would encourage youth to think creatively and it would give them the desire to develop their organisation through collective work. Further, the idea of a Jeunesse unique along Nazi lines horrified the social Catholics, who believed that it would jeopardise the future of Christianity in France.²²³ A Jeunesse unique was, according to General Lafont the head of Scoutisme Français, a creation that everyone in his circle was trying to avoid.²²⁴

Not all figures at Vichy however, came from this social Catholic milieu. Throughout the Occupation, Georges Pelorson had consistently called for a more totalitarian approach to youth formation, which in his view involved the creation of a Jeunesse unique. In June 1942, Pelorson was catapulted to the top of the SGJ where he became deputy to Lamirand. His ideological position was looked upon favourably by the newly-installed Minister of Education Abel Bonnard and Paul Marion, Secrétaire général de l'information, who sought to radically alter the Catholic model of revitalising French youth that was promoted by Lamirand and the SGJ. Defenders of a

²²² AIU, CC 39, Letter from Garonne to youth delegates in the non-Occupied Zone, 2 April 1941.

²²³ Halls, *Youth of Vichy France*, p. 139.

²²⁴ AN, 2AG 440, Observations présentées par le SF sur le projet de Loi portant organisation de la Jeunesse Masculine. Remarques Générales, Vichy, 27 November 1940

Jeunesse unique believed that the multiple pre-war youth movements had failed in their task of creating a strong, virile Frenchman.²²⁵ A Jeunesse unique would, in their view, pave the way for a single party, the existence of which was fundamental to the modern state. Pelorson's conception of how French youth should be rebuilt was thus diametrically opposite to Lamirand's and the mutual tension and mistrust between the two men lasted until Lamirand's resignation.²²⁶

Pelorson was, for Halls, 'one of the most curious characters that the regime threw up'.²²⁷ Politically situated on the left, Pelorson was a supporter of the Munich accords and staunchly anti-clerical. His yearning for a form of nationalist populism exposes the connection between intellectual non-conformism and fascism and situates him at the heart of Zeev Sternhell's 'Neither Right nor Left' interpretation of fascism.²²⁸ Pelorson's daughter claims that the post-war accusations against her father were libellous provide additional motivation to delve momentarily into Pelorson's function at the SGJ.²²⁹ During the 1930s he contributed to a number of literary reviews including *Transition* and the *Nouvelle revue française*. However, his big break came in 1937 when he created *Volontés*, a monthly avant-garde literary review, which

²²⁵ W.D. Halls, *Politics, Society and Christianity in Vichy France* (Oxford, 1995), p. 278.

²²⁶ After the war, Pelorson was sentenced to fifteen years of forced labour and national degradation, see AN, Z6 417, Dossier 4224, Pelorson's appearance before the Cour de Justice de la Seine, 24 December 1947. He later changed his name to Georges Belmont and died in December 2008. In May 2008, the author was denied an interview with Pelorson based on health grounds. There has to date been surprisingly little scholarship into this senior-ranking Vichy official, whose published memoirs end in 1939. See G. Belmont, *Souvenirs d'outre-monde: Histoire d'une naissance* (Paris, 2001). See also V. Giroud, 'Transition to Vichy: The Case of Georges Pelorson' in *Modernism/modernity*, Vol 7, No 2, April (2000), pp. 221–248. Giroud's insightful article is constructed from Pelorson's writings and from the published memoirs of his associates.

²²⁷ Halls, *The Youth of Vichy France*, p. 136.

²²⁸ Claudine Frank-Elster makes a similar point in reference to Armand Petitjean. See C. Frank-Elster, 'Les Retournements Petitjeaniens: The Return of Armand Petitjean', *Modernism/modernity*, Vol 3, No 1, January (1996), p. 90. See also Z. Sternhell, *Neither Right nor Left: Fascist Ideology in France* (Princeton, NJ, 1986). Non-Conformism will be treated in more detail in a later section on Jeune France.

²²⁹ 'Mon père [...] ayant été trop calomnié toute sa vie'. From Sophie Belmont to the author, 2 May 2008.

attracted a host of leading writers (Henry Miller, Raymond Queneau and Pierre Prévost). From February 1941, Pelorson spent his first sixteen months at the SGJ in Paris, where he was head of the SGJ's propaganda unit for the Occupied Zone. His speeches were, as Hellman has noted, noticeably more '*fascisant*' than Lamirand's.²³⁰ While Lamirand's preferred method to mobilise youth was educative, Pelorson's was political.²³¹ Pelorson's conception of regeneration existed within the confines of a German-controlled Europe. This was evident to his colleagues at Vichy, where some, in reference to the Nazi Minister for youth, referred to him as 'Baldur von Pelorson'.²³²

Yet unity did not exist even amongst those vying for a Jeunesse unique. Henri Massis, a supporter of a Jeunesse unique, represents the complications of attempting to pigeonhole thinkers at this time. Massis was appointed by Pétain in 1941 to Vichy's Conseil National and was made an advisor, a 'chargé de mission', to the SGJ. Jackson has commented that Massis 'shared the political conservatism of the SGJ, but not its naïve social ideas'.²³³ Massis was a Catholic and a supporter of Maurras, l'Action Française and close to Brasillach. He was also a great friend of Lyautey, an admirer of Péguy and yet a firm opponent of Mounier and *Esprit*.²³⁴ Lamirand remarked that although he and Massis did not see eye to eye on Maurrasien thinking, Massis' Catholic Action work in the interwar years had left a mark on Lamirand who saw a role for Massis as a contributor to the SGJ.²³⁵ Although Massis was favourable to a

²³⁰ Hellman, *The Knight-Monks of Vichy France*, p. 66. See for instance Pelorson's speeches in: IHTP, ARC 074-17, *Solidarité*, December 1941 and *Vers l'Unité*, undated.

²³¹ AN, 3W 203, Lamirand at Pelorson's trial, 5 November 1945. The document was later provided for use at Lamirand's trial.

²³² Giroud, 'Transition to Vichy', p. 236.

²³³ Jackson, *France the Dark Years*, p. 339.

²³⁴ Hellman, *The Knight-Monks of Vichy France*, p. 17 and n. 259.

²³⁵ Lamirand, quoted in an interview with Portejoie, in Portejoie, *Vichyscopie*, p.118.

Jeunesse unique, he was not convinced by the model proposed by Déat and Brasillach that relied upon totalitarian indoctrination. This line went too far and Massis later claimed that 'it was against that mystique [totalitarian], merely copied from the Hitler Youth, against which we had first to revolt'.²³⁶ Those in command of youth policy were relieved with Pétain's conclusions at the meeting of the Commission de Jeunesse of the Conseil National that met only once in March 1942. Here, Pétain spoke out firmly against a Jeunesse unique where it was decided that 'à la formule de la jeunesse unique est préférée celle de jeunesse unie'.²³⁷

Vichy's position on the Jewish Question reveals another area of heterogeneity amongst ministers, a fissure which until now has not been properly nuanced. In stark contrast to how Vichy and its relationship with the Jews has been remembered, there existed considerable variation amongst policy makers over the role Jews could play in the New Order. For some figures, the Jewish Question dominated their ministerial briefings, whereas for others, such as Lamirand, the issue entered their departments in the aftermath of external pressures.

As head of the SGJ for two and a half years, Lamirand was a first-hand witness of the regime's exclusionary measures towards Jews. Over the course of the Occupation, dealings between the SGJ and the CGQJ increased and the racial laws gradually affected almost all of the organisms that were dependent on the SGJ. Because of his connection with the regime, Lamirand's views on the Jews have not been nuanced. Instead, all of Vichy's ministers are seen to have responded to the Jewish Question in

²³⁶ H. Massis, quoted in Halls, *The Youth of Vichy France*, pp. 164–165.

²³⁷ Pétain quoted in A. Basdevant, 'Les Services de Jeunesse pendant l'Occupation', in *Revue d'histoire de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale*, no 56, quatorzième année, octobre (1964), p. 70.

much the same way.²³⁸ Lamirand's interview in 1989 with documentary film maker Pierre Sauvage, did little to alter this impression of him.²³⁹ The purpose of the next section is to explore Lamirand's personal relationship with the Jewish Question. For Lamirand, regeneration did not have to come through the exclusion of France's Jews. This analysis does not aim to rehabilitate Lamirand. A minister until the spring of 1943, Lamirand played a key role in an authoritarian government that curtailed the liberty of thousand of its citizens. Not only was he aware of the extent of the racial laws, but he also had first-hand knowledge of the round-ups and deportations affecting Jews. Instead, a consideration of Lamirand's relationship with the Jewish Question illuminates the heterogeneity that existed amongst policy makers at Vichy.

One method through which to evaluate Lamirand's opinions on the Jewish Question is to consider the assistance that he provided Jews under Vichy. Naturally, to have helped certain individual Jews does not suggest that Lamirand was a defender of the Jewish cause, or even that he was not anti-Semitic. At some point during the Occupation almost all Vichy officials offered assistance to a Jew, usually an associate from the interwar years.²⁴⁰ Lamirand's assistance is distinguishable from that given by other leading figures, not just because it began very early on, but also because of his indiscriminate nature over which Jews should benefit from it. While Vallat helped his comrades from the First World War, Lamirand, who also assisted personal acquaintances, implemented measures to alleviate the suffering of large numbers of Jews with whom he had previously had no contact. Evidence of such assistance was

²³⁸ Jacques Adler has accused all Vichy Ministers of being anti-Semitic. See Adler, 'The Jews and Vichy', p. 1069.

²³⁹ 'Les Armes de l'Esprit' – Film by Pierre Sauvage 1989.

²⁴⁰ The evidence for these acts of rescue was provided at their post-war trials. See notably the case of Xavier Vallat in: L. Joly, *Xavier Vallat: Du nationalisme chrétien à l'antisémitisme d'État* (Paris, 2001), pp. 90–94.

presented at Lamirand's post-war trial and prior to dismissing the case, the judge made unusual reference to it in his summing-up.²⁴¹

On the occasion of the *rafle* du Vél d'Hiv, one of the lowest moments for Jews in Occupied France, Lamirand personally ordered that youths from a Centre de Jeunesse be immediately dispatched to help distribute supplies and to improve the appalling sanitation conditions at the stadium.²⁴² In his report on the *rafle*, Georges Edinger, the President of UGIF described the 'sentiments d'humanité parfaite' that existed amongst the 'Jeunes de Georges Lamirand'.²⁴³ Despite protests from the Germans, Lamirand refused to remove his Jeunes from the Vél d'Hiv.²⁴⁴ In the SGJ, Lamirand did not implement the racial laws with zeal and he was able to keep a number of civil servants in position. In October 1942, Jean Bué who had been the SGJ's délégué départemental in the Gard was promoted to become the SGJ's délégué regional for Lyon.²⁴⁵ When his Jewishness was later revealed in an enquiry by the CGQJ, Lamirand attempted to keep him in his role.²⁴⁶ In the same vein, Maurice Rohrbach was maintained in place as the head of Lamirand's Paris delegation until March 1943.²⁴⁷ Moreover, like so many of his ministerial colleagues, Lamirand also assisted Jews with whom he had been acquainted in the pre-war period. For example, he personally assured the release of his friend Samuel Brull from Drancy in October

²⁴¹ AN, 3W 203, Decision by the Procureur Général, 21 July 1947.

²⁴² AN, 3W 203, Lamirand at his trial, June 1947, corroborated in a letter from Samuel Brull to the judge, 27 July 1945.

²⁴³ CDJC, CCCLXXIX-33, Report by Georges Edinger on the work of UGIF 1941–1944.

²⁴⁴ AN, 3W 203, Lamirand at his trial, June 1947, corroborated in a letter from Samuel Brull to the judge, 27 July 1945.

²⁴⁵ Archives départementales du Gard [ADG], 1W131, Letter from the Prefect of the Gard to the Prefect of the Rhône in which Bué is described as an excellent candidate for the position, 1 October 1942.

²⁴⁶ AN, 3W 203, Letter from Lamirand to Darquier, 23 January 1943.

²⁴⁷ AN, 3W, 203, Appearance of Lamirand before the Haut-Cour, 26 June 1947.

1942 and helped the relatives of another friend Ernest Franck, cross the demarcation line.²⁴⁸

As Secrétaire Général à la Jeunesse, Lamirand did not discriminate against French Jewish youth, believing that they had a right to take part in the rebuilding of the nation. Although this theme will recur repeatedly throughout this thesis, Lamirand's active support of the EIF warrants special consideration. During a visit to Périgueux in March 1941 Lamirand publicly exclaimed that the EIF were integral members of Scoutisme Français and he expected them to participate in the official ceremonies on the same terms as all other youth movements.²⁴⁹ An EIF report reveals that during one of the movement's training camps in the Var in May 1941, Lamirand, who was close by, met with its leaders and spoke very warmly about the movement.²⁵⁰ Finally, after the EIF was disbanded, Lamirand turned a blind eye to the funds that the movement continued to receive from Scoutisme Français.²⁵¹ These attitudes were not kept hidden. From as early as August 1941, Lamirand became the victim of an attack by the Institut d'Études des Questions juives (IEQJ) and by its director Paul Sézille, who described Lamirand as being 'pro-juif' for allowing Jews to continue participating in the Centres de Jeunesse.²⁵² Attacks on Lamirand by the collaborationist press continued until his resignation in March 1943. Above almost all else, it was

²⁴⁸ AN, 3W, 203, Appearance of Mme Brull at Lamirand's trial, 6 June 1947. Samuel Brull had died before the trial began. Appearance of Ernest Franck at Lamirand's trial, 1 July 1946.

²⁴⁹ AN, 3W 203, Appearance of Scout de France chef, Luc Arsène-Henry at Lamirand's trial, 20 June 1947.

²⁵⁰ AIU, CC 42, Séance of the Consistoire Central, 25 May 1941.

²⁵¹ AN, 3W 203, Appearance of General Lafont at Lamirand's trial, 23 June 1947.

²⁵² AN, 3W 203, Report written by Sézille, 11 August 1941. For more on Sézille and the IEQJ, see Kauffmann, G, 'Paul Sézille', in P-A. Taguieff, (ed.), *L'Antisémitisme de plume 1940–1944* (Paris, 1999), pp. 442–446.

Lamirand's support for Jews in state-sponsored youth organisations that was most frequently commented on by the collaborationist press.²⁵³

The fact that certain members of Lamirand's family had married Jews offers only one possible explanation for his position on the Jewish Question.²⁵⁴ Lamirand's devotion to Catholicism, a defining feature of his personality, sheds further light on his reluctance to implement the racial laws.²⁵⁵ As will be explained in a section that follows, French Catholics were divided over the Jewish Question. While many pre-war social Catholics were later active in condemning the regime's racial laws and assisting Jews, this should not imply a concrete link between social Catholicism and philo-Semitism. Despite attacking the radical anti-Semitism of Edouard Drumont, Albert de Mun, a pioneer of social Catholicism, remained a staunch anti-Semite.²⁵⁶ Nevertheless, Lamirand's interpretation of Catholic teaching led him to distance himself from anti-Semitism. As he commented in a 1984 interview, 'j'ai toujours trouvé l'antisémitisme un péché mortel. Ça aurait pu arriver à nous aussi'.²⁵⁷

While Catholicism provided Lamirand with reasons to co-exist with Jews, it provided Xavier Vallat with reasons to exclude them. Vallat's specific brand of state anti-Semitism has fascinated scholars since it was exposed in detail at his post-war trial and it has been well documented in recent years.²⁵⁸ Vallat's reputation as one of France's leading anti-Semites had been cemented by his outburst in the Chamber of

²⁵³ *Je Suis Partout*, 10 and 24 January 1942 and *Révolution Nationale*, 23 January 1943.

²⁵⁴ AN, 2AV 32, Interview of Georges Lamirand and Chantal de Tourtier Bonazzi, 3 April 1984 and interview with Gilbert Lamirand, 14 March 2008.

²⁵⁵ Interview with Gilbert Lamirand, 14 March 2008.

²⁵⁶ See Harris, *The Man on Devil's Island*, pp. 181–184.

²⁵⁷ AN, 2AV 32, Interview of Georges Lamirand and Chantal de Tourtier Bonazzi, 3 April 1984 and interview with Gilbert Lamirand, 14 March 2008.

²⁵⁸ See Joly, *Xavier Vallat*, and D. Carroll, 'What it meant to be a "Jew" in Vichy France: Xavier Vallat, State Anti-Semitism, and the Question of Assimilation' in *Substance*, Vol 27, No 3, (1998).

Deputies following the electoral victory of the Popular Front government and the return of Léon Blum as the president of the Chamber of Deputies. In a parliamentary debate on 6 June 1936, Vallat had publically exclaimed that ‘il vaut mieux avoir quelqu’un dont les origines, si modestes soient-elles, se perdent dans les entrailles de notre sol, qu’un talmudiste subtil’.²⁵⁹

When combined with his fierce nationalism and his Germanophobia, Vallat’s overt anti-Semitism made him an ideal candidate in March 1941 to be Vichy’s first Commissioner for Jewish Affairs, a position that he retained until May 1942 at which point he was removed following German pressure.²⁶⁰ At his trial and in his autobiography, *Le Nez de Cléopâtre*, Vallat claimed that his anti-Semitism took the form of a legitimate defence against Jews that was sanctioned by the Church’s interpretation of the Jewish Question.²⁶¹ For proof, Vallat listed a series of historic Catholic measures that had been passed against the Jews over the ages. Saint Paul, Vallat argued, had claimed that Jews were the enemies of man, while Saint Thomas Aquinas called for restricting Jewish integration into society.²⁶² Vallat claimed that between 1217 and 1755, twenty-nine popes had enacted fifty-seven bills that were intended to reduce Jewish influence over Christians.²⁶³ Vallat, whose personal anti-Semitism stemmed from his reading of the Catholic newspaper *Le Pèlerin*, believed that the marginalisation of Jews went hand in hand with the history of Catholicism.²⁶⁴ He argued that his racial laws were a continuation of French and Catholic restrictive

²⁵⁹ JO, 6 June 1936, pp. 1326–1327.

²⁶⁰ For a detailed overview of the Commissariat Général aux Questions Juives, see Joly, *Vichy dans la Solution Finale* and Billig, *Le Commissariat Général aux Questions Juives*.

²⁶¹ Vallat, *Le Nez de Cléopâtre*, pp. 245–248.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 246.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 247. Writing at the same time, Jacques Maritain refuted such arguments. See J. Maritain, ‘Anti-Semitism as a problem for the Jew’ in *Pour la Justice: Articles et Discours 1940–1945* (New York, 1945), p. 158.

²⁶⁴ For more on Vallat’s reading of *Le Pèlerin*, see Joly, *Xavier Vallat*, pp. 59–61.

measures that sought only to reduce Jewish influence in France. Unlike the Nazis' brand, Vichy anti-Semitism, he maintained, did not force Jews into ghettos, implement a yellow star or a curfew and it did not prevent mixed-marriages. Crucially, its aim was not to expel the Jews and certainly not to physically persecute them. Vallat posited his anti-Semitism as representing the 'Old Guard' rather than the 'New Order'. After the war, it was Vallat's germanophobia and his French interpretation of anti-Semitism that saved him from the death penalty.

In reality, however, Vallat's anti-Semitism was not so clear cut. Contrary to the image of a logical and inherently French brand of *antisémitisme d'État* that he described at his post-war trial, his dealings with Jews and with Jewish youth in particular, were instead hesitant, provocative and at times contradictory. As the Commissioner for Jewish Affairs, Vallat's attempts to marginalise Jews from the rest of the population extended far beyond those in the civil service or the liberal professions. His targeting of Jews in the lowliest of manual positions run counter to the image that he created of himself after the war. As Marrus and Paxton have noted:

Vallat was everywhere, nipping at the heels of bureaucrats too slow to prosecute or too unimaginative in finding areas of Jewish influence to eliminate.²⁶⁵

Jewish participation in agriculture represents an area that on the surface at least, should not have merited much of Vallat's attention. In February 1941, Darlan announced that Jews involved in manual labour trades were not subject to the anti-

²⁶⁵ Marrus and Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews*, p. 105.

Semitic legislation.²⁶⁶ Nevertheless, Vallat's desire to implement the racial laws as broadly as possible, soon led him to focus his attention on Jews who had returned to the land. Indeed, Jewish participation in agriculture exposes the tension between the regime's dual aims of reconstructing the nation and marginalising Jewish influence. Reconciling the confusion between the two priorities was played out at Vichy by Vallat and the Minister of Agriculture, Pierre Caziot. Vallat's position required him to eliminate Jewish influence in areas even as modest as agriculture. On the other hand, Caziot's briefing did not foresee a reduction in the numbers of those engaged in production. On the contrary, his role was to encourage a return to the land in order to maximise agricultural output.

Although Poznanski has shown that by December 1941 Jews were prohibited from purchasing land to cultivate, in reality, the situation of Jews in agriculture was far more complex.²⁶⁷ Legislation to restrict their participation in agriculture did not feature in either the first or second *Statut des Juifs*, nor had it been mentioned in the law of 17 November 1941 which had extended the number of professions that were closed to Jews.²⁶⁸ Its absence should not suggest that it had been overlooked by Vallat, who was instead active behind the scenes in drawing-up proposals that would place restrictions on Jews who returned to the land.²⁶⁹ Vallat did not want to ban Jews completely from undertaking rural work and even encouraged it as an alternative means of employment from commerce and the liberal professions.²⁷⁰ However for Vallat, a Jewish return to the land was subject to control in order to prevent them from

²⁶⁶ Archives départementales du Tarn-et-Garonne [ADTG], 5W25, Darlan to prefects in the non-Occupied Zone, 28 February 1941.

²⁶⁷ Poznanski, *Jews in France*, pp. 126–127.

²⁶⁸ Law of 17 November 1941, appeared in the JO 2 December 1941, p. 5180.

²⁶⁹ AN, AJ38 122, Letter from the MBF to Vallat, 25 November 1941. In autumn 1941 Vallat had sent the text of a proposed law to the Germans that would limit the participation of Jews in agriculture.

²⁷⁰ See Raymond-Raoul Lambert's diary entry on 16 July 1941 in Lambert, *Diary of a Witness*, p. 56.

dominating the industry. A motion to reduce Jewish participation in agriculture was thus put to Vichy's Conseil d'État in December 1941.²⁷¹ Amongst other proposals, Vallat wanted to limit to a single plot the amount of land that Jewish farmers could till and he sought to ban them from holding positions of responsibility.²⁷² The Conseil d'État supported Vallat's proposals in full.²⁷³

Nevertheless, before the decree could be enacted it had to be approved by the Minister of Agriculture. Pierre Caziot represents a Vichy minister for whom, like Lamirand, the marginalisation of Jewish influence had little importance. Like so many of his ministerial colleagues, Caziot arrived at Vichy with no political experience. A renowned farmer, agricultural engineer and member of the Academy of Agriculture, Caziot had made his name in the 1920s as an advocate of family farming and was a 'dedicated peasantist'.²⁷⁴ Having been brought to Vichy to rehabilitate French agriculture, Caziot paid only minimal attention to policy issues falling beyond this remit. He objected to Vallat's specific proposals for agriculture and although it had been approved by the Conseil d'État, he was unwilling for this decree to proceed. At a time of crisis in French agriculture, Caziot noted that reducing the amount of land upon which Jews were entitled to work ran counter to the best interests of the nation.²⁷⁵ For Caziot, the Jewish Question was unrelated to agriculture and Jews wishing to participate should not be prevented from doing so. In January 1942, he noted:

²⁷¹ AN, AJ38 122, Note on the Conseil d'Etat's séance on 6 December 1941.

²⁷² AN, F60 1440, Vallat's proposal to control the access of Jews into agricultural professions, 2 November 1941.

²⁷³ AN, AJ38 122, Note on the Conseil d'Etat's séance on 6 December 1941.

²⁷⁴ G. Wright, *Rural Revolution in France: The Peasantry in the Twentieth Century* (Stanford, CA, 1964), p.78.

²⁷⁵ CDJC, CCCLXXIX-65, Caziot to Vallat, 2 January 1942.

Si certains retours à la terre se révèlent possible, ceux-ci me paraissent devoir être réalisés sous l'angle de la production agricole et non sous l'angle racial ou religieux.²⁷⁶

In order to break this policy deadlock and to find a compromise, there followed a series of correspondence between the two ministers in which neither agreed to back down completely.²⁷⁷ In event, the law was never enacted. Vallat and Caziot were both removed from their ministerial positions in the spring of 1942 and neither of their successors sought to push through the decree.

Caziot's opposition to the recommendations of the Conseil d'État was not the first occasion that he had protested against Vallat's meddling in agricultural policy-making. In October 1941, he had written to Vallat, arguing that Jews needed to be kept in positions of responsibility in agriculture especially in solely Jewish agricultural projects, whose creation he favoured and encouraged.²⁷⁸ Caziot protested against Vallat's aryansation and spoliation measures that affected the output of Jewish farming families. On occasion, Caziot's relentless support for these Jewish farmers proved successful, forcing Vallat to concede to his demands.²⁷⁹ However, his influence could only extend to private individuals. The idea of a Jew remaining in the civil service or in a position of responsibility was unthinkable for Vallat and he refused to bend to Caziot's demands to allow members of the 'corps du genie rural' and 'officiers des Eaux et Forêts' to remain in their position.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ CDJC, CCCLXXIX-65, Vallat to Caziot, 8 January 1942 and CDJC, CCCLXXIX-65, Caziot to Vallat, 9 February 1942.

²⁷⁸ AN, F1a 3686, Letter from Caziot to Vallat, 22 October 1941.

²⁷⁹ CDJC, CII-33, In January 1942 Caziot sought a derogation for the Jews of the Comtat Venaissin (Vaucluse) who had lived in the region for centuries. He petitioned in particular for the Garsin family who had farmed their land since 1844. On the 19 January 1942 Vallat approved the Garsin family's exception to the aryansation and spoliation decrees.

²⁸⁰ CDJC, CCCLXXIX-26, Caziot to Vallat 9 February 1942 and Vallat to Caziot 15 April 1942.

Vallat's anti-Semitism took precedence over the regime's priority of a return to the land. Jews could participate in agriculture, but legislation was needed to ensure they remained at the very bottom of the rural ladder, even if this came at the expense of increased production. Conversely, in his attempts to reinvigorate French agriculture, Caziot sought to keep the most able people in place irrespective of their religion. His post-war trial revealed his success in keeping Jews in top positions of agriculture and his disobedience towards Vallat's policies was often commented on by other Ministers.²⁸¹ The purpose of this section has not been to portray either Lamirand or Caziot as defenders of the Jews of Vichy France. Rather, it has sought to nuance the largely unhelpful distinction of seeing the Jewish Question as a straightforward decision between those that supported Jews and those that did not. Vichy's top officials reacted differently to the Jewish Question. While for Vallat, Jews were not part of the national community, this was not the case for Lamirand who consistently supported Jewish youth's participation in various state-sponsored schemes. The situation was even more complex for Caziot who, like Lamirand, did not exclude Jews from taking part in regeneration from below. However, Caziot's support for Jews was not motivated by benevolence and it did not extend to all Jews. In the main, he was generally uninterested in Jews and the racial laws, which only assumed high importance once they had come into contact with his agricultural brief. Ministers with responsibilities for Jewish youth were thus not unified over the limits of Jewish participation in the New Order. Such heterogeneity was of course not limited to policy-making circles. In fact, few groups had a coherent position on the Jewish Question. Catholic thinkers, who, like Vichy's ministers, were in positions to influence a generation of youth leaders, were also deeply divided on the issue. Their

²⁸¹ AN, 3W130, The following Jews were listed as having stayed in position thanks to Caziot: Garcin, Picard, Weigut, Strauss, Heilbronn, Crémieux, Heilbronn. See Carcopino, *Souvenirs de Sept Ans*, p. 362.

complex position merits further consideration in order to illuminate broader patterns on the Jewish Question across French society.

As Jewish influence was marginalised during the Occupation, the power and visibility of the Church increased.²⁸² The Church's central principles of obedience, sacrifice, family and duty went hand in hand with the aims of the New Order its support became vital to the success of the National Revolution. Nevertheless, the line adopted by the 'official' Church did not represent the whole Christian body which was far from homogenous.²⁸³ The division of French Catholics over the Jewish Question had important consequences for Jewish youth in their attempts to coexist with the new regime. Catholicism was crucial to many of the leading figures charged with renovating French youth, yet, as has been explained, Catholics held contrasting interpretation over the limits of Jewish participation in society. An analysis of the attitudes of Jacques Maritain and Emmanuel Mounier towards the Jews will help to shed light on the ways in which some of their disciples, including Pierre Schaffer and Pierre Dunoyer de Segonzac, responded to Jewish participation in Vichy's youth organisations.

²⁸² The position adopted by the Church under the Occupation has been addressed in a number of detailed studies. See N. Atkin, 'Ralliés and résistants: Catholics in Vichy France, 1940–1944', in K. Chadwick, (ed.), *Catholicism, Politics and Society in Twentieth-Century France* (Liverpool, 2000), pp. 97–118; J. Duquesne, *Les Catholiques français sous l'Occupation*, 2nd edn (Paris, 1996); R. Bédarida, *Les Catholiques dans la Guerre, 1939–1945, Entre Vichy et la Résistance* (Paris, 1998) and Halls, *Politics, Society and Christianity in Vichy France*. For the Protestant Church, see P. Bolle, 'Les Protestants et leurs Eglises' in G. Wellers, A. Kaspi and S. Klarsfeld (eds.), *La France et la Question Juive 1940–1944* (Paris, 1981), pp. 171–195.

²⁸³ Halls, 'Catholics, the Vichy Interlude, and After', in Fishman, et al. (eds.), *France at War*, p. 232.

Prior to the fall of France, French Catholics were fragmented along political, intellectual, social and spiritual lines. In parliament for instance, Catholicism was intrinsically linked to the Right-wing and socially conservative Fédération républicaine, which adopted an anti-socialist, anti-feminist and increasingly nationalist platform.²⁸⁴ The ‘polarisation of Catholic politics’ is best seen at this time by the role of the Christian Democrats on the Centre-Left.²⁸⁵ The left-leaning social Catholics were represented by the Jeune République who rallied to the Popular Front in 1936 and whose députés voted against granting full powers to Pétain in July 1940.²⁸⁶ The Jeune République was founded in 1912 by the charismatic Marc Sangnier following the papal condemnation of Sangnier’s social welfare Le Sillon movement.²⁸⁷ La Jeune République emerged as a small party with an advanced programme for reform to continue the work of Le Sillon. The movement had consistently poor relations with the Parti Démocrate Populaire, the Centre-Right Christian Democrats, whom Sangnier judged as having too many links with the reactionary parties.²⁸⁸ Finally, Sangnier was also extremely vocal at this time in his condemnation of anti-Semitism and for his support for refugees.²⁸⁹

It should thus come as little surprise that under Vichy the clergy and the laity adopted multiple reactions to both the regime and its racial laws. It was, as Jackson has

²⁸⁴ See K. Passmore, ‘Catholicism and Nationalism, the Fédération républicaine, 1927–39’, in Chadwick, (ed.), *Catholicism, Politics and Society*, pp. 47–72.

²⁸⁵ Term used by Martin Conway. See M. Conway, *Catholic Politics in Europe, 1918–1945* (London, 1997), p. 72.

²⁸⁶ The department of the Meurthe-et-Moselle acts as a fascinating microcosm for the heterogeneity of Catholic views. During the 1930s one of its députés was Louis Marin, leader of the Fédération républicaine, while another was Philippe Serre, member of the Jeune République.

²⁸⁷ For more on Le Sillon see J. Caron, *Le Sillon et la Démocratie Chrétienne* (Paris, 1966) and A.R. Vidler, *A Variety of Catholic Modernists* (London, 1970), pp. 191–220.

²⁸⁸ J.-C. Delbreil, ‘Les formes politiques de la démocratie chrétienne en France au vingtième siècle’, in Chadwick, (ed.), *Catholicism, Politics and Society in Twentieth-Century France*, p. 129. See also J.-C. Delbreil, *Centrisme et Démocratie-Chrétienne en France, le Parti Démocrate Populaire des origines au M.R.P 1919–1944* (Paris, 1990).

²⁸⁹ L. Landau, *De l’Aversion à l’Estime: Juifs et Catholiques en France de 1919 à 1939* (Paris, 1980), p. 251.

argued, amongst the Catholic intellectuals that dissent was initially most ardent.²⁹⁰ After a period of accommodation with Vichy, these intellectuals and their followers such as Mounier and his journal *Esprit*, and Fumet and his journal *Temps nouveau*, entered into active resistance activity where they spoke out against Vichy's treatment of Jews. While many Catholic intellectuals were critical of Vichy's racist legislation, these same Catholic thinkers had held borderline anti-Semitic views in the 1920s and 1930s. These intellectuals had a profound influence on Vichy's youth instructors, above all at Uriage and at Jeune France, who made decisions that directly impacted on Jewish youth. To understand the mindset of their disciples at Vichy vis-à-vis the Jewish Question, there is a need to consider the nature of the relationship between Catholic intellectuals and anti-Semitism in the interwar years.

Jacques Maritain best illustrates intellectual Catholicism's ambivalent relationship with the Jews. An avid opponent of Nazi anti-Semitism, Maritain wrote a number of essays that aimed to create dialogue between Christians and Jews. His contribution to *Nostra Aetate*, the document passed by Vatican II which sought reconciliation between Christians and Jews was philosophically indispensable.²⁹¹ Nevertheless, Maritain's opinions on Judaism on a purely theological level have led some scholars to consider him as a 'metaphysical anti-Semite'.²⁹² Although Maritain's relationship with the Jewish Question can be broadly divided into three phases of his life, this should not suggest that during any one of these times, Maritain was completely rooted in either the anti-Semite or philo-Semite camp. Rather, Maritain embodies intellectual

²⁹⁰ Jackson, *France, The Dark Years*, p. 270.

²⁹¹ M. Novak, 'Maritain and the Jews' in R. Royal, (ed.), *Jacques Maritain and the Jews* (Notre Dame, IN, 1994), p. 129.

²⁹² L. Klenicki, 'Jacques Maritain's Vision of Judaism and anti-Semitism', in Royal, (ed.), *Jacques Maritain*, p. 73.

Catholicism's complicated relationship with the Jewish Question by at once holding anti-Semitic and philo-Semitic views.

Evidence exists of Maritain's philo-Semitism during his early Dreyfusard years, thanks largely to the influence of his wife, Raïssa, a Russian-Jewish émigré who had converted to Catholicism with Maritain in 1906. Further, it was through his friendship with Péguy at this time that Maritain gained a sense of justice for the Jew.²⁹³ However, his closeness at the same time with the leading anti-Semite Léon Bloy, whose anti-Semitic diatribe *Le Salut par les Juifs* had made a profound impact on Maritain, complicates his early philo-Semitism.²⁹⁴ A second phase began in the early 1920s when Maritain was involved with the Action Française. At this time he had written that it was, in some cases, morally justifiable that a numerus clausus be imposed on Jews.²⁹⁵ He also noted that Jews should be made to choose between an allegiance to the nation state and an allegiance to Palestine. In the event that they chose Palestine, Jews should have their citizenship revoked.²⁹⁶ Although in 1921 Maritain had claimed that government had the right to take measures against the Jews, he had never set out what such measures would entail. Further, despite his calls for Catholic writers to alert the public of a Jewish problem, he nonetheless advocated doing this in a way that would not fuel hatred.²⁹⁷

A third and final phase emerged after 1926, by which point Maritain had left Action Française and spent much of the 1930s attacking anti-Semitism, culminating in his

²⁹³ B. Doering, 'The Origin and Development of Maritain's Idea of the Chosen People', in Royal, (ed.), *Jacques Maritain*, pp. 18–19.

²⁹⁴ Hellman, 'The Jews in the "New Middle Ages": Jacques Maritain's Anti-Semitism in Its Times', in Royal, (ed.), *Jacques Maritain*, pp. 90–94.

²⁹⁵ B. Doering, *Jacques Maritain and the French Catholic Intellectuals* (Notre Dame, 1983), p. 142.

²⁹⁶ Doering, 'The Origin and Development of Maritain's Idea of the Chosen People', p. 28.

²⁹⁷ Doering, *Jacques Maritain*, p. 143.

1937 publication *L'Impossible antisémitisme*.²⁹⁸ However, to maintain that Maritain passed from being an anti-Semite to a defender of Jews would be misleading. Despite Maritain's vehement defence of the Jews from the mid-1930s, he never fully rejected the existence of a Jewish problem. As Crane argues, 'a fidelity to basic theological presuppositions shackled his philosemitism in fundamentally anti-Judaic stereotypes'.²⁹⁹ On this point, John Hellman has gone even further. Hellman maintains that although large numbers of liberal and democratic Catholics denounced 'racist' anti-Semitism, their Christianity always took precedent over any other tenets. The ideal society was to be more Christian than liberal.³⁰⁰ As Hellman argues, 'many of the more open-minded Catholics were prepared to *tolerate* [his emphasis] the Jews as a community [...] if not to accept them completely as equals'.³⁰¹ Finally, Jacques and Raïssa Maritain were stalwarts of a supersessionist theology, which considered Christianity to have 'superseded' or to have fulfilled the covenant with the Children of Israel.³⁰² Thus, for the Maritains, Judaism would only reach completion after its people's conversion to the Church, which according to them had become the 'New Israel'.

The racial construction of the Jew that had been transmitted by the Nazis and latched onto by Vichy was the antithesis of Maritain's interpretation of Christian thinking. He loathed Vichy's racial laws and condemned them from exile in New York. Writing in 1941, he argued that 'to persecute the house of Israel is to persecute Christ'.³⁰³

²⁹⁸ J. Maritain, 'L'Impossible antisémitisme', in P. Claudel, (ed.), *Les Juifs* (Paris, 1937), pp. 44–71.

²⁹⁹ R.F. Crane, 'Surviving Maurras: Jacques Maritain's Jewish Question', in *Patterns of Prejudice*, Vol. 42, No 4, (2008), p. 411.

³⁰⁰ Hellman, 'The Jews in the "New Middle Ages"', p. 99.

³⁰¹ Hellman, 'The Jews in the "New Middle Ages"', p. 99.

³⁰² For more see M. Marrus, 'The Ambassador and the Pope: Pius XII, Jacques Maritain and the Jews', *Commonweal*, vol. 131, no. 18, (2004), p. 19. I am grateful to Joe Dunlop for bringing this argument to my attention.

³⁰³ J. Maritain, 'On Anti-Semitism' in *Pour la Justice*, p. 52.

Maritain and Vallat's solutions on how to solve the Jewish Question were thus fundamentally irreconcilable. Race played no part in the construction of Maritain's ideal Christian society which he hoped would result in the Jews' conversion to Christianity. Vallat, on the other hand refused to acknowledge Jewish converts to Christianity who he argued would always remain Jews and were thus subject to the racial laws. As Marrus and Paxton have argued, 'for Vallat, heredity was stronger than holy water'.³⁰⁴

Like Maritain, Emmanuel Mounier also provided a philosophical and moral basis to a number of Vichy's youth initiatives.³⁰⁵ Despite the debate over Mounier's association with fascism, there is a general consensus amongst scholars that he nevertheless remained entirely opposed to anti-Semitism.³⁰⁶ However, some historians argue that although hostile to a racist variety of anti-Semitism, Mounier held ambiguous views on the Jews.³⁰⁷ The evidence for this is to be found in an article that he wrote in 1939, as a response to a special edition of *Je suis partout* that had been entitled 'Les Juifs et la France'.³⁰⁸ In his article, which appeared in *Le Voltigeur*, Mounier at once condemned the racist foundation of *Je suis partout's* anti-Semitic discourse and recognised the existence of a Jewish problem, 'dans la mesure où des juifs, ici où là,

³⁰⁴ Marrus and Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews*, p. 92.

³⁰⁵ For a more detailed analysis on Mounier and *Esprit* under Vichy, see M. Winock, «*Esprit*»: *Des Intellectuels dans la Cité, 1930–1950* (Paris, 1996); J. Hellman, *Emmanuel Mounier and the New Catholic Left* (Toronto, 1981) and Kedward, *Resistance in Vichy France*, pp. 196–205.

³⁰⁶ See P. Birnbaum, *Un Mythe Politique: La « République Juive »* (Paris, 1988), p. 244 and P. Laborie, *Les Français des Années Troubles* (Paris, 2001), pp. 138–139. For more on Mounier's 'indulgence with fascism', see Sternhell, *Neither Right nor Left*, pp. 273–290. Sternhell does not go as far as Bernard-Henri Lévy's critique of Mounier. See B-H. Lévy, *L'Idéologie Française* (Paris, 1981), p. 32.

³⁰⁷ Hellman, 'The Jews in the "New Middle Ages"', p. 100 and Birnbaum, *Un Mythe Politique*, pp. 247–251.

³⁰⁸ 'Les Juifs et la France', G.I., *Je suis partout*, 17 February 1939, no 430, Special edition edited by Lucien Rebatet.

ont tendance à s'agglomérer et, sinon à faire sécession, à former induration sans la communauté nationale'.³⁰⁹

As a response to a vitriolic anti-Semitic article, Mounier intended his reply to force reconsiderations on the illogical nature of anti-Semitism. This he did by comparing the Jewish presence in certain sectors to those traditionally occupied by Auvergnats and Corsicans. It is here that the ambiguity over Mounier's position on the Jewish Question arises, for not only did he admit the existence of a Jewish problem, but when describing the Jews, he did not modify his language from that used by self-proclaimed anti-Semites. In his response, Mounier described the problem of an abundant Jewish presence in cinema, higher education and politics and he questioned Léon Blum's decision to have 'multiplié imprudemment dans son entourage' so many Jewish socialists.³¹⁰

However, from the founding of *Esprit* in 1932, the personalist and communitarian society longed for by Mounier was never intended to be exclusive or exclusionary. Mounier's 1936 Personalist Manifesto had even encouraged Catholics to partake in communitarian ventures with non-religious groups.³¹¹ Moreover, a series of Jewish writers that included Alexandre Marc, Georges Zérapha, Wladimir Rabinovitch (Rabi), Emmanuel Levinas and Jean Wahl were contributors to *Esprit* during the 1930s.³¹² Mounier adopted the same line under the Occupation. After its re-launch in

³⁰⁹ E. Mounier, 'L'antisémitisme qui n'ose pas dire son nom', in *Le Voltigeur*, 1 March 1939, quoted in Birnbaum, *Un Mythe Politique*, p. 249.

³¹⁰ Ibid.

³¹¹ Mounier to Mme Guittet, 15 August 1936, in his *Œuvres*, IV, Paris, 1963, quoted in J. Hellman, 'Communitarians, Non-conformists, and the Search for a 'New Man' in Vichy France', in Fishman et al. (eds.), *France at War*, p. 93.

³¹² Marc, a Russian-born Jew, had converted to Catholicism in 1933. See J. Hellman, *The Communitarian Third Way: Alexandre Marc's Ordre Nouveau, 1930–2000* (Montréal, 2002).

November 1940, Mounier used *Esprit* to protest against the regime's anti-Semitism. In a February 1941 edition he invoked Péguy's warnings against anti-Semitism and in June of the same year, an article appeared that condemned the showing of the film *Le Juif Süß* in Lyon, which defended the students who had protested against it.³¹³

For their disciples at Vichy, the position of Maritain and Mounier on the Jewish Question was difficult to define. Jews were associated with Marxism, capitalism and liberal democracy, the very things that *Esprit* and Vichy sought to combat. Maritain and Mounier abhorred and spoke out against anti-Semitism on racial grounds, but in their writings they had both expressed concern over a Jewish problem that they wanted to see resolved. The tension and ambiguity which has been explored throughout this chapter was to play out under Vichy in Jeune France and at Uriage, where both organisations adopted an ambivalent relationship with Jewish youth.

³¹³ *Esprit*, no. 97, February 1941 and no. 101, quoted in Winock, «*Esprit*», p. 239 and Kedward, *Resistance in Vichy France*, pp. 201–202.

Chapter 2. Jewish Youth's Responses to Vichy

Jewish youth movements reacted in multiple ways to the fall of France and the creation of the Vichy regime. An investigation of these diverse responses offers a valuable lens through which to analyse the broader relationship between Vichy and the Jews in the first phase of the New Order. Some movements such as the EIF sought to work with Vichy, seeing in it the possibility to implement its pre-war plans for a *retour à la terre* and the creation of the 'New Jew'. The EIF's efforts to coexist were welcomed by the SGJ, which did not discriminate against the movement and instead included it in series of projects designed to rebuild France's youth. Other Jewish youth organisations refrained from making inroads with Vichy. The Yechouroun sought to implement a spiritual Jewish existence at a time of disorder and upheaval. Zionist youth groups however, believed that fighting Vichy would prepare youths for their future combat that was needed to create a Jewish state in Palestine. Yet Jews' participation in youth schemes was not limited to exclusively Jewish movements. A second focus in this chapter will investigate Jewish youth's participation in a series of Vichy programmes for regeneration.

Jewish Youth Movements

The EIF

The EIF was the biggest and the most important Jewish youth movement that existed under the Occupation. Drawing on a large number of youth leaders, the organisation benefitted from a series of important connections within Jewish circles locally and nationally. For the first year of the regime, no other youth movement came close to matching the EIF's infrastructure which, equipped with a specific project, was backed by numerous sectors from within the New Order. An examination into elements of the EIF's project will explain the seemingly curious circumstances that allowed for Vichy and the EIF to cooperate and accommodate each other during the period 1940–42.

The *Exode* of May–June 1940 and the German law that forbade Jews from crossing the demarcation line back to the Occupied Zone led to a rapid increase of Jewish inhabitants in the south of France. The south, which had hitherto been home to only a fraction of the country's 330,000 Jews, suddenly found itself inundated with Jewish refugees, including a large proportion of the EIF's *chefs* and children. However, the EIF did not find itself in south-west France as a consequence of the chaos and confusion that swept the country in 1940. Rather, in the summer of 1939, the movement had developed a plan to relocate Jewish children to the south west. While government preparations had been put in place to evacuate French children from Paris in the event of enemy attack, foreign children were excluded from these arrangements.³¹⁴ In early 1939, the EIF with the help of OSE, sent delegates across

³¹⁴ P. Fayol, *Les Deux France: 1936–1945* (Paris, 1994), p. 200.

France to find evacuation centres that could house the optimum number of Jewish children.³¹⁵ With young Jewish men called up to undergo military service, this responsibility fell to the EIF's female leaders.

Having an overwhelmingly French leadership proved instrumental for the EIF and the movement drew on a range of existing networks in its search for suitable locations in *la France profonde*. Such opportunities were not readily available to other Jewish youth organisations. Although the EIF's search for houses began in Normandy, it was with the help of an unlikely personality, the député of the Lot, Anatole de Monzie, that the movement eventually settled in the south west.³¹⁶ Monzie provided the EIF with a letter of recommendation to the prefect of the Lot who aided them in their search.³¹⁷ Similarly, EIF leader Shatta Simon was able to get in touch with the prefect of the Tarn-et-Garonne with the help of Baron Robert de Rothschild.³¹⁸ By the beginning of 1940, the EIF was firmly established in the south west where it housed between 300 and 350 Jewish children in its six evacuation centres.³¹⁹ Led by Shatta Simon, Moissac (Tarn-et-Garonne) was the largest of these centres and straight away it became a rallying point for the entire EIF movement. On 7 June 1940, at the height of the débâcle, the EIF's director Simon Lévitte decided to relocate the movement's entire secrétariat from Paris to Moissac. The defeat and the armistice only strengthened Moissac's position as the new centre of the movement. Following their

³¹⁵ M. Pulver, 'Les EI aux Premières Mois de la Guerre', in 'Les Eclaireurs Israélites de France dans la Guerre', p. 42. OSE is a Jewish humanitarian organisation that was founded in St Petersburg in 1912.

³¹⁶ Via a contact, Denise Gamzon was able to rely on the support of De Monzie, who along with being the godfather to Darquier de Pellepoix, was also closely associated with other notable anti-Semites that included Marcel Déat. See CDJC, DLXI-96, Transcript of interview with Shatta Simon, p. 3, Memoirs of Denise Gamzon, p. 57. For Monzie, see P. Burrin, *France under the Germans*, p. 379.

³¹⁷ Memoirs of Denise Gamzon, p. 57.

³¹⁸ Hammel, *Souviens-toi d'Amalek*, 1982, p. 147.

³¹⁹ CDJC, CMXLIV 2°, Undated report (likely to be late 1941) p. 1. Centres were located at La Ruffie and Saint-Céré (Lot), Villefranche-de-Rouergue and Saint-Affrique (Aveyron), Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne (Corrèze) and Moissac (Tarn-et-Garonne).

discharge from the army, the majority of EIF *chefs* discovered that their families were scattered across the country and disruption to communication rendered it difficult to establish contact with them. Under these circumstances, a large number of EIF *chefs* headed to Moissac. To many EIF members, Moissac offered the prospect of familiarity and comradeship at a time of uncertainty and isolation. In August 1940, the leadership held a meeting of the executive committee in the town. Decisions needed to be taken concerning the direction that EIF activities should take in the context of the defeat.

The entire restructuring of the movement was not, as has been suggested, a response to the possible re-emergence of anti-Semitism in the summer of 1940.³²⁰ The EIF's decision to reorganise the movement at this time stems from the specific social and economic circumstances that pervaded France during the summer of 1940. In August 1940, the EIF was the only Jewish youth organisation that had been able to resume operations in the aftermath of the defeat.³²¹ The other Jewish youth movements had not taken advantage of their female leaders during the period of male conscription and found themselves without any fixed centres of operation. This was only made worse by the large numbers of male leaders held as POWs by the Germans. In this context, the movement drew on its pre-war heritage of assistance. Aware of the perilous situation of the other Jewish youth movements, the EIF decided to take responsibility for all Jewish youths in France. At the meeting of *chefs* on 15 August, decisions were made that would shape the movement for the duration of the Occupation. Above all, it was decided that the movement needed to concentrate on three specific tasks, each designed to continue the EIF's projects of the 1930s, which had sought to return

³²⁰ CDJC, DLXI-81, Transcript of interview with Jacques Pulver.

³²¹ AIU, CC42, Report by Samy Klein on his activities in 1940–1941, 28 November 1941.

Jewish youth to the manual trades and agriculture, while exposing them to Jewish culture. A first was to convert the children's evacuation centres into permanent children's homes for Jewish youth, where vocational subjects would be taught alongside the regular curriculum and Jewish history. A second priority for the *chefs* was to create and develop the EIF in the major towns and cities in the non-Occupied Zone. The third priority was to establish Chantiers Ruraux, agricultural training centres, for Jewish youth.³²²

The appearance of Vichy holding a monolithic position on Jews is fundamentally nuanced when considering its relationship with the EIF in the period 1940 to 1942. Poznanski is quite correct to argue that the EIF was recognised by the regime as its principles 'did not conflict' with the regime's official ideology.³²³ However, Vichy entered into a relationship with the EIF that went far beyond a passive recognition of the scouts. Vichy not only wanted to engage with the EIF, but saw within it the possibility for deeper cooperation on a number of levels. Here, Kedward is more accurate and has spoken of the movement's 'clear acceptability' to Vichy's programme, while Marrus and Paxton have commented on the regime's 'flexibility' on the EIF.³²⁴

³²² Robert Gamzon's carnet entry on 15 August 1940, in Gamzon, *Les Eaux Claires*, pp. 16–17. The purpose of this investigation is to evaluate the nature of the relationship between French Jewish youth and the Vichy regime. To this end, a study of the children's homes which sheltered predominately foreign Jewish youth, lies beyond the confines of this research project. Their experience has received considerable attention. See G. Israël, *Heureux comme Dieu en France* (Paris, 1975) and Lewertowski, *Les Enfants de Moissac*.

³²³ Poznanski, *Jews in France*, p. 139.

³²⁴ Kedward, *Resistance in Vichy France*, p. 170 and Marrus and Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews*, p. 213.

The principles of the EIF chimed with the ambition of leading figures at the SGJ, whose conception of youth under the New Order was one that encouraged pluralism and diversity. Crucially, the EIF's decision to take responsibility for all the Jewish youth in France at a time of great upheaval was an initiative that was looked upon favourably by Vichy. The SGJ in particular saw in the EIF an organisation that it could work with. To this end, the SGJ lent the EIF its support and encouraged the movement to take a leading role in a variety of schemes that fell under its auspices. In January 1941 the SGJ charged the EIF with the responsibility of organising Jewish youth in North Africa.³²⁵ In February 1941, after so many Jewish civil servants had already been relieved of their positions because of the *Statut des Juifs*, Edouard Simon and Robert Schapiro left for Algiers endowed with an *Ordre de Mission* from the SGJ:

M Simon utilisera pour se déplacer l'avion ou le bateau. Les autorités civiles et militaires sont priées de bien vouloir faciliter dans toute la mesure du possible la mission de M Simon.³²⁶

Another example of the cooperation between the EIF and the SGJ is illustrated through the work performed by the EIF in Vichy's interment camps. Throughout the Occupation tens of thousands of foreign Jewish men, women and children were held in appalling conditions in Vichy's internment camps. Out of 21,794 Jews at Gurs, Vichy's largest camp, only 755 Jews managed to escape, and across France, around

³²⁵ ADTG, 5W26, Letter from the Chef de Service at the SGJ to Moissac, 9 January 1941. See also R. Schapiro, 'Les Eclaireurs et Eclaireuses Israélites de France en Afrique du Nord durant la Guerre', in 'Les Eclaireurs Israélites de France dans la Guerre', p. 27. The history of the EIF in North Africa under Vichy has yet to be written. There is sporadic reference to it in M. Laskier, *North African Jewry in the Twentieth Century: the Jews of Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria*, News York (New York, 1994). Albert Memmi also makes reference to the EIF in Tunis in his semi-autobiographical account of the Occupation. See A. Memmi, *The Pillar of Salt* (Boston, MA, 1955), pp. 192–207.

³²⁶ ADTG, 5W26, Letter from the Chef de Service at the SGJ to Moissac, 9 January 1941.

3000 interned Jews died as a result of food shortages, disease and overcrowding.³²⁷ At the time however, while relief organisations were struggling to cope with demand, few leading figures at Vichy acknowledged the abysmal conditions of the camps which were not reported on in the press. In a letter to the President of the Consistoire in April 1941, Vallat noted:

Les juifs internés dans des camps spéciaux prévus par la loi du 4 octobre 1940 sont traités, m'assure-t-on, avec humanité et dans des conditions hygiéniques satisfaisantes.³²⁸

In fact, during the winter of 1940–1941, the appalling conditions had led to the death of over a thousand Jews at Gurs alone.³²⁹ Senior figures in the SGJ did not adopt the same line as Vallat. Through cooperation with the EIF, Lamirand and Garonne instead supported schemes designed to improve the conditions of interned Jewish children. The SGJ's decision to cooperate with the EIF can be viewed from different angles. One reading may suggest that the ministry was only too keen to entrust the EIF with the task of helping Jewish children. A strategic act devoid of any benevolence towards the Jews, the SGJ may well have been delighted to outsource this responsibility to willing volunteers and would naturally have provided them with the equipment and bureaucracy necessary to complete the task. However, this reading through a lens of persecution, fails to consider the human element of those at the top of the SGJ. As has been shown, Lamirand and Garonne had been involved in the interwar Catholic Action groups and their previous relief work was a major factor in shaping their responses towards interned Jewish youth. First, the two men believed that the EIF

³²⁷ For more on the appalling conditions of these camps, see A. Grynberg, *Les camps de la Honte* (Paris, 1991); Cohen and Malo, (eds.), *Les Camps du Sud-Ouest* and D. Peschanski, *La France des Camps: L'internement 1938–1946* (Paris, 2002).

³²⁸ AIU, CC 49, Letter from Xavier Vallat to Jacques Helbronner, 29 April 1941.

³²⁹ See Kedward, *Resistance in Vichy France*, pp. 166–167.

could continue the work of Garric's Équipes Sociales, an organisation in which both Lamirand and Garonne had been active during the interwar years. In January 1941, Lamirand entrusted the EIF with the responsibility of creating an Équipe Sociale that was permitted to enter Gurs and attend to those in need of assistance.³³⁰ Second, Lamirand and Garonne sought the removal of Jewish children from internment camps and their relocation to EIF centres in the non-Occupied Zone. This is conveyed in a passionate letter by Louis Garonne to the prefect of the Tarn-et-Garonne, which contradicts Vallat's assessment of Gurs:

J'ai l'honneur de vous faire savoir que je donne un avis très favorable au projet soumis à votre approbation par les EI concernant l'accueil dans leur Centre de Moissac de jeunes israélites du Camp de Gurs. Je connais les conditions de vie déplorables des enfants actuellement hébergés à Gurs et je tiens à encourager une initiative qui permettra à une quinzaine d'entre eux d'échapper à un sort si misérable.³³¹

The SGJ's commitment to diversity also explains its willingness to cooperate with the EIF. The EIF's status as a Jewish youth movement was not deemed a relevant factor for those in control of moulding the future generations of French youth. As a movement based on scouting, the EIF had innate qualities such as respect for hierarchy and authority, community work and responsibility that were instantly looked upon favourably by the SGJ. However, the movement also manifested a range of tenets that went beyond their scouting philosophy and which went hand in hand with Lamirand and Garonne's chief concern, namely, to avoid the creation of a *Jeunesse unique*. The EIF did not want its members to be identical and like the SGJ, saw diversity as a useful tool rather than a hindrance. Since the 1930s the EIF had

³³⁰ AIU, CC 43, Letter from Ninon Haït to EIF leaders, 3 January 1941. Ninon Haït's rescue work with Abbé Glasberg has been well documented elsewhere. See Zuccotti, *The Holocaust*, p. 74 and Hammel, *Souviens-toi d'Amalek*, pp. 196–197.

³³¹ ADTG, 5W26, Letter from Louis Garonne to the Prefect of the Tarn-et-Garonne, 10 March 1941.

adopted a plural attitude towards education and religion. To participate in the EIF, a minimum level of education was not required and Jews from all religious backgrounds were welcome. Finally, the movement's zeal for spiritualism, folklore and costume were welcomed by Vichy that had encouraged these ideals and had placed a great emphasis on regional difference.³³²

In the period before the EIF began its clandestine activity, the movement was involved in thorough negotiations with the SGJ over the future of Jewish youth in France and well into 1942, EIF leaders continued to be invited by the SGJ to take part at its 'intermouvements' meetings at Vichy.³³³ From the outset, both parties entered into a process that was reliant upon mutual cooperation. Naturally, the EIF was by far the smaller of the two parties, but this should not detract from the fact that it was, on occasion, the SGJ who approached the EIF to fulfil tasks. In 1940–42, the EIF was looked upon favourably by the SGJ for the role it could play in the reorganisation of Jewish youth and in providing another layer in the battle against a *Jeunesse unique*.

From the summer of 1940, EIF *chefs* responded to the refugee crisis by creating scout troops across the non-Occupied Zone. In June 1940 the movement had only two troops in the south and this number had risen to nineteen by January 1941.³³⁴ In October 1940 the EIF, together with the Catholic, Protestant and secular scouts, became a founding member of Scoutisme Français [hereafter SF]. In July 1941, all

³³² For regionalism and folklore under Vichy see C. Faure, *Le Projet Culturel de Vichy: Folklore et révolution nationale* (Lyon, 1989), pp. 65–89.

³³³ CDJC, CMXLIV (1), EIF Circulaire, 15 March 1942, p. 3.

³³⁴ AIU, CC, 43, EIF Report on the development of the movement since June 1940, January 1941.

four branches of the SF officially fell under the auspices of the SGJ.³³⁵ In the summer of 1940 the responsibility of founding an EIF troop in the town of Vichy fell to Henri Wahl. Only a handful of Jews had lived in Vichy prior to 1940, but in the aftermath of the *Exode* and Pétain's decision to name Vichy the capital of the *État Français*, the population of the town increased, which resulted in a rise in the number of Jewish inhabitants. Wahl, who arrived in Vichy following the *Exode* and worked full-time as an optician, created the town's first EIF troop. Vichy was home to a number of youths with experience of scouting. From the summer of 1940, Wahl had enlisted fellow refugees René and Théo Klein and Liliane Lieber as his local commissioners.³³⁶ In a 2009 interview, Théo Klein explained that regrouping youth came naturally to those with experience in scouting. For Klein, 'c'était normal, pour nous qui avons fait le scoutisme, il y avait des gosses qui étaient là, il y avait une communauté juive, il y avait une synagogue'.³³⁷

Théo Klein does not believe that his decision to help create an EIF troop in Vichy was part of a broader project to combat anti-Semitism. Rather, he saw it as part of a practical solution to a refugee crisis that was being faced by the recently-arrived Jews in Vichy, who lacked a social Jewish space in which to interact. By July 1941, the leadership's efforts had been rewarded and the Vichy troop counted 113 members.³³⁸ As part of its engagement with SF, the EIF joined forces with local scouting associations to undertake community work. This ranged from organising the Christmas tree for the town of Vichy to helping with the Secours National. The troop

³³⁵ For a more thorough analysis of Scoutisme Français' creation, see Guérin, *L'Utopie Scouts de France*, pp. 245–246.

³³⁶ Interview with René Klein, 11 November 2008, Théo Klein, 10 March 2009, Liliane Klein-Lieber, 3 May 2009.

³³⁷ Interview with Théo Klein, 10 March 2009.

³³⁸ CDJC, CMLV-3, Letter from Henri Wahl to the President of Vichy's Israélite Community, 30 July 1941.

was in addition required to participate at official ceremonies. To celebrate the 1st May and the fête de Jeanne d'Arc, the entire local EIF troop was invited to assemble in front of Pétain's residence at the Hôtel du Parc, where it took part in the official celebrations (**Figure 4**).³³⁹



Figure 4. The Vichy troop of the EIF taking part in a ceremony outside of the Hôtel du Parc, Vichy, 1 May 1941.

In the aftermath of the defeat, the EIF executive was particularly anxious about the situation of Jewish youth in locations where there were no local EIF leaders. The training of new *chefs* well versed in Jewish studies thus became of central importance to those at the top of the organisation. To achieve this, the EIF launched a series of training camps for *chefs*, the purpose of which would offer scouting and religious instruction to leaders, many of whom had had little experience of Jewish life. The first *Statut des Juifs* had excluded a large number of teachers and intellectuals from their professions and Gamzon sought to turn the racial legislation to the movement's favour

³³⁹ Ibid. Also interview with René Klein, 11 November 2008. According to Claire Andrieu, the EIF were also invited to take part in the ceremony of 1 May 1942. See C. Andrieu, 'Démographie, famille, jeunesse', in Azéma, J-P & Bédarida, F, *La France des années noires*, Vol. 1, *De la défaite à Vichy*, (Paris, 2000), p. 488.

by recruiting leaders from amongst the *statufiés*.³⁴⁰ Although the EIF had organised training camps before the war, it seems that by the spring of 1941, it had turned to Vichy and in particular to Uriage, for inspiration on how to run its camps. The first training session after the passing of the racial laws was held between 28 April and 12 May 1941 at Beauvallon (Var), and was directly modelled on the system at Uriage.³⁴¹ At this camp, the *statufiés*, many of whom had no knowledge of Jewish life, experienced intense Jewish learning in classes taught by Léo Cohn and Samy Klein. Six *statufiés*, graduates of the Beauvallon camp, were immediately designated their own local scout units, while many others became commissioners and *chefs*.³⁴²

The sympathy manifested towards the EIF by Lamirand and Garonne was, of course, not shared by all of their ministerial colleagues. Xavier Vallat's complicated relationship with the *israélites français* is illustrated through his dealings with the EIF. Although the movement was protected under the banner of SF and the SGJ, the EIF became a target for Vallat in the summer of 1941, who sought to reduce its influence to a bare minimum. In August 1941, Vallat even recommended completely cutting the allowance that the EIF had been entitled to receive under 'la résorption du chômage des jeunes' scheme. Placing his anti-Semitism over Vichy's priority to return youth to work, Vallat maintained that he could not look favourably upon a

³⁴⁰ Hammel, *Souviens-toi d'Amalek*, p. 333. However, as Claude Singer has shown, only a minority of *statufiés* joined Jewish organisations following their expulsion. Further, most of the new recruits had already some connection to the movements dating to the pre-war period. Singer has argued that 70% of 'statufiés' reacted as Frenchmen and did not seek, even temporarily, to recreate their lives as part of a Jewish organisation. Many *statufiés* became private tutors, a position that had not been banned by the racial laws. See Singer, *Vichy, l'Université et les Juifs*, pp. 225–239

³⁴¹ It was intended to be 'l'équivalent, pour la Jeunesse Juive, de l'École Nationale d'Uriage'. CDJC, CMXLV (2), Report by Samy Klein to the Grand Rabbin de France on the EIF training camp at Beauvallon, 20 May 1941.

³⁴² Memoirs of Denise Gamzon, p. 75.

movement with so many Jewish leaders.³⁴³ This should not however suggest that Vallat wanted to ban the EIF at this stage. In August 1941 his recently-appointed delegate in Toulouse, Joseph Lécussan, wrote to Vallat, asking for direct instructions on how to proceed with the EIF.³⁴⁴ Lécussan believed that under article 2 of the *Statuts des Juifs* which prohibited Jews from the teaching profession, the EIF should be disbanded.³⁴⁵ However, Vallat recognised that the EIF's existence did not contravene any of Vichy's recently promulgated laws: 'Je vous informe que les Statuts de l'Association dite « Mouvement des EIF » sont réguliers et que je ne vois pas la possibilité d'interdire cette société'.³⁴⁶ Vallat's short reply to Lécussan confirms that in the summer of 1941, the EIF were still acceptable to him at the most minimal level. In the same period Vallat had other concerns whose importance took precedence over the EIF, such as the census and the first aryanisation measures.

Allowing the EIF to continue should not suggest that Vallat fully accepted the movement or that as a result of its position within SF, that he regarded them differently to their co-religionists. This is illustrated by a second example with Lécussan from the same period. Following an anti-Semitic article that condemned the EIF in *Villeneuvois*, a regional newspaper, André Kisler, the head of the EIF for the

³⁴³ CDJC, XXXI-72, Letter from Vallat to the Director of Youth and Technical Training at the Ministry of Education, 4 August 1941.

³⁴⁴ CDJC, XXXI-73, Letter from Lécussan to Vallat, 16 August 1941. Lécussan was a former cagouard and notorious anti-Semite who wanted the racial laws to be implemented as broadly as possible. In April 1943 he was named head of the Milice for the region of Lyon. Here he was given the opportunity to unleash his anti-Semitic convictions by personally assassinating hundreds of Jews including the prominent Dreyfusard and President of the Ligue des Droits de l'Homme, Victor Basch. See Joly, *Vichy dans la Solution Finale*, pp. 432–439. From his prison cell in Lyon in December 1945, Lécussan wrote to Vallat asking him to testify on his behalf at his forthcoming trial. He asked Vallat to explain that 'mon antisémitisme était rationnel et non passionnel' and that he had 'appliqué les Lois avec humanité et bienveillance'. See AML, Fonds Xavier Vallat, 21 II-7, Letter from Lécussan to Vallat, 30 December 1945.

³⁴⁵ CDJC, XXXI-73, Letter from Lécussan to Vallat, 16 August 1941. Lécussan had been sent the EIF handbook on 14 August from the censor control in Cahors. See AN, AJ38 1089, Letter from the Control des Informations to Lécussan, 14 August 1941.

³⁴⁶ CDJC, XXX-74, Vallat to Lécussan, 4 September 1941.

Lot-et-Garonne, argued that as part of SF, an attack on the EIF equated to a critique of Vichy's regenerationist agenda and he called for the newspapers' editors to apologise in their next issue.³⁴⁷ The newspaper asked Lécussan for advice, who in turn directed the matter to Vallat. Vallat was adamant that the *Villeneuvois* should not retract its article. His reply is noteworthy, insofar as it reveals an important aspect of how he ran his ministerial department:

J'estime qu'en des affaires de ce genre, il est préférable de ne pas donner d'avis écrit aux intéressés. Vous pourrez cependant indiquer verbalement au journal *Le Villeneuvois* qu'il ne nous paraît pas opportun de déférer à la demande de M. Kisler.³⁴⁸

To permit an attack on the EIF, a movement supported by the SGJ, was an indictment of the regime. Although Vallat was secretly content to undermine Vichy's programme for rebirth, he did not want it made public that the CGQJ had been responsible for compromising the integrity of SF. Crucially, through encouraging his administrators to avoid giving anti-Semitic orders in writing, a precedent had been set and we are exposed to another layer of the day-to-day functioning of the CGQJ machine. With such information brought to light, one can only speculate on the range of anti-Semitic directives given by Vallat's delegates in the localities, for which no written evidence would ever have existed.

Vallat did not have to wait long before he found an appropriate way of marginalising the EIF. At the end of 1941 the creation of UGIF had major implications on the future

³⁴⁷ AN, AJ38 1073, Letter from André Kisler to the Editor of *Le Villeneuvois*, 8 August 1941.

³⁴⁸ AN, AJ38 1073, Letter from Vallat to Lécussan, 5 September 1941.

functioning of the EIF. The purpose of UGIF was to group all existing Jewish organisations into a single coordinating agency.³⁴⁹ Other than those purely religious associations, the creation of UGIF was compulsory for all Jewish organisations, who were no longer allowed to belong to any other movement. This decision impacted on the EIF, which found itself forced to relinquish its official status as a member of SF. In reality, the ties were not cut and until the summer of 1942, and the EIF continued to participate in schemes organised by the SF. The personal involvement of General Lafont, head of Vichy's SF, explains why the EIF was allowed to continue. Kedward is correct to single-out the importance of General Lafont, to the EIF's development under Vichy.³⁵⁰ Lafont's resolute support for the EIF led him to personally confront those in control of the regime's anti-Semitic legislation, whom he hoped to persuade to gain exceptions for Jewish youth. Although his reputation was discredited in 1948, following a public show of support for Pétain, the EIF's esteem for Lafont did not wane, owing to the assistance that he had rendered the movement under Vichy. Writing to Lafont following his resignation as Chef Scout, Gamzon affirmed, 'notre affection et notre reconnaissance', while Edouard Simon went even further, listing point by point the help that Lafont had provided the EIF under Vichy.³⁵¹

In December 1941, General Lafont accompanied Gamzon for a meeting with Vallat, where the men protested against the EIF's inclusion in UGIF.³⁵² Here, Lafont outlined the central position of scouting to the National Revolution and explained to Vallat the

³⁴⁹ A debate over whether UGIF helped or hindered the situation of Jews in France has existed for many years. Rajfus considers UGIF to have been an important factor in the Final Solution, while Kaspi disputes this accusation. See M. Rajfus, *Des Juifs dans la Collaboration* (Paris, 1980) and Kaspi, *Les Juifs pendant l'Occupation*. For a more balanced account, see M. Laffitte, *Un Engrenage Fatal: L'UGIF Face aux Réalités de la Shoah, 1941-1944* (Paris, 2003).

³⁵⁰ Kedward, *Resistance in Vichy France*, p. 169.

³⁵¹ Private papers of General Lafont, Letter from Gamzon to Lafont, 4 May 1948 and letter from Edouard Simon to Lafont, 19 May 1950.

³⁵² CDJC, CMXLIV (2), Letter from Robert Gamzon to General Lafont thanking him for his participation at the meeting, 19 December 1941.

need for the EIF to maintain its connection with SF.³⁵³ The extent of Vallat's disdain for the EIF was such that he wanted to sever the movement's connection with the state. He did not want the movement banned and although he did not approve of them, he did not seek to cut its social links with SF. In this instance, Lafont's influence ensured that Vallat placed national regeneration above personal anti-Semitism. Taking heed of Lafont's recommendations, Vallat organised for a special status to be created for the EIF. Vallat decided that the EIF would enter UGIF but would remain under the control of the SGJ and the SF. The movement's agricultural centres would fall under the auspices of the Commissariat au Travail des Jeunes, a branch of the SGJ.³⁵⁴ SF became responsible for the EIF's local troops.³⁵⁵ Gamzon was appointed to UGIF's council for the non-Occupied Zone, where he was responsible for Jewish youth.³⁵⁶

By entering into UGIF on 23 March 1942, the EIF officially lost its independent and judicial status. Its day to day activity was nevertheless only minimally affected by its incorporation.³⁵⁷ In a letter to the other scouting associations, General Lafont reiterated his desire that SF's attitude towards the EIF should not change:

Les groupes d'Éclaireurs Israélites continuèrent à pratiquer le scoutisme. Ils seront contrôlés par le Scoutisme Français en ce qui concerne la régularité de la doctrine et des méthodes [...] Il continuera d'être utile d'inviter les Éclaireurs Israélites à assister aux Collèges du Scoutisme Français.³⁵⁸

³⁵³ AN, 3W 203, Lafont's statement to the Haute Cour for the appearance of Georges Lamirand, 23 June 1947.

³⁵⁴ This will be outlined further in a chapter that follows.

³⁵⁵ CDJC, CMXLIV (2), Letter from Robert Gamzon to General Lafont, 19 December 1941.

³⁵⁶ Gamzon's role at UGIF lies beyond the scope of the present investigation. It has been discussed in great length by Alain Michel amongst others. See Michel, *Les Éclaireurs Israélites de France*, pp. 101–118. Raymond-Raoul Lambert makes some fascinating observations on Gamzon's role. See Lambert, *Diary of a Witness*, pp. 83–95 (entries 28 December 1941 and 8 January 1942). Denise Gamzon defends her husband's decision to participate in UGIF. See *Memoirs of Denise Gamzon*, p. 80.

³⁵⁷ Poznanski, *Jews in France*, p. 134.

³⁵⁸ AIU, CC 43, Note from General Lafont to Scout Leaders on the Situation des EI, 19 March 1942.

The only visible changes were the EIF's absence from Vichy's official ceremonies, which could be rescinded should they be explicitly invited. Second, the movement's headed paper removed SF and had UGIF in its stead.³⁵⁹ Nevertheless, the evidence suggests that cooperation and communal activities continued long into 1942. In March 1942, the EIF invited SF's national leading figures to visit its centre at Moissac. A report undertaken by the local Police aux Questions Juives, reveals the harmony that existed between the movements. The Secretary General of SF, André Basvedant stated publically that the SF was against the racial laws and that the EIF could 'compter sur l'aide la plus totale de tous les mouvements scouts pour leur rendre moins dure leur condition'.³⁶⁰

Similarly, Jean Gambastide, a leading figure in both the Protestant scouts and the Compagnons de France commented that he would not miss the occasion to visit Moissac to defend the EIF and 'de les exalter pour améliorer leur condition'.³⁶¹ The EIF were delighted that the scout leaders had been able to see the work that was being undertaken at the centre and deemed the visit a success.³⁶² Two weeks later, Gamzon attended a meeting in Vichy with Basvedant, Gambastide and other leading commissioners of SF. During the official lunch, Lafont made the ostentatious gesture of asking Gamzon to sit next to him.³⁶³ At this meeting, one of the delegates asked about SF's position on the EIF, to which Lafont, affirming his allegiance to the EIF,

³⁵⁹ Ibid.

³⁶⁰ ADTG, 5W26, Report by the Police aux Questions Juive (Toulouse) on the visit of SF to Moissac, 14 March 1942. André Basvedant was the son of Jules Basvedant, who in May 1941 became one of the few jurists to resign from his position as conseiller juridique, because of his objections to Vichy's policy of collaboration.

³⁶¹ Ibid.

³⁶² CDJC, CMXLIV (1), EIF Circulaire 15 March 1942.

³⁶³ CDJC, CMXLV (2), Compte-Rendu of Gamzon's visit, 9–20 March 1942, p. 4.

responded to a packed room, ‘depuis quand la religion juive est-elle interdite en France?’³⁶⁴

At the local level in the spring and summer of 1942, the EIF continued to participate in a variety of communal activities with the other scouting associations. EIF youth took part in regular camps and even technical training camps for *chefs* that were held across the non-Occupied Zone. Writing about a camp in Vaugneray (Rhône), which was organised jointly with Père Montuclar and the Catholic scouts, Samy Klein made reference to the feelings of fraternity that existed between the two movements:

Une atmosphère de sympathie mutuelle qui a “emballé” tous les participants ; la veille, notamment a été très émouvante et s’est terminée par une promesse faite en commun.³⁶⁵

The EIF responded to this display of camaraderie by seeking to deepen their links with the SF. They sent their leaders to SF training schools where they were treated in the same way as scouts representing the other associations. Reports of the camps de cadres (Cappy and Capi) from the summer of 1942, make constant reference to the fraternal atmosphere between the troupes.³⁶⁶ In a number of instances, the actions of SF towards the EIF reveal that such descriptions were not reduced to empty words or gestures. In November 1941, the EIF’s plaque was vandalised at the Maison des Jeunes in Montpellier. The head of SF for the region responded by urging the délégué régional de la jeunesse to launch an immediate enquiry. He noted that an attack on the

³⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 5.

³⁶⁵ AIU, CC 42, Note from Samy Klein, April 1942. The Père Montuclar in question was the chaplain of the Catholic Scouts. He was the brother of the well-known Dominican and contributor to *Esprit*, Père Maurice Montuclar, who had lived with Mounier before the war. See Winock, *Esprit*, p. n. 357.

³⁶⁶ Archives of Léo Cohn, Letter from Pierre Cadier, Member of the Equipe Nationale of the Protestant Scouts to the EIF, 31 July 1942. In his letter, Cadier gives the grades of five EIF chefs who had participated at a recent camp. To become a Chef de Troupe it was essential to complete a CEPI training camp.

EIF represented an attack on SF, which as a government-backed body was unacceptable.³⁶⁷ Similarly, following the attack on an EIF centre in Nîmes, local divisions of the Protestant scouts displayed their loyalty to the EIF, by offering its support to the movement.³⁶⁸ Even after the EIF's official exclusion from SF, following its incorporation into UGIF, many troops in the non-Occupied Zone could count on the friendship and assistance of their former counterparts until the dissolution of the EIF in January 1943. This encouragement emanated from the base as well as from the top. During the period 1940–1942, the increase in communal activities between the various scouting factions led to a greater understanding of the movement's different customs and traditions. These early links laid the foundations for future cooperation after the summer of 1942 when the EIF launched its programme to hide foreign Jewish children. Until the Liberation, a host of local scouting units provided identification cards and uniforms to the EIF which allowed them to pass into clandestinity.³⁶⁹

Although during the period 1940–42 the EIF was without question the largest and most successful Jewish youth movement, it did not manage to attract all of French Jewish youth to its cause. The chaos of the *Exode* and the defeat and the large number of youth leaders that were POWs momentarily crushed the existence of France's other Jewish youth movements. In 1940, the EIF went to great lengths to draw members of

³⁶⁷ CDJC, CMXLV (2), Commissaire Leclerc to the délégué régional de la jeunesse, 11 November 1941.

³⁶⁸ AIU, CC 29, Letter from Pierre Clavel, Commissaire de District EU to Jean-Jacques Rein, Commissaire de District EIF, 11 May 1942.

³⁶⁹ Interviews with Guy de Rouville 17 November 2008, Liliane Klein-Lieber, 19 May 2009. For more on the help given to the EIF by SF in the period 1942–1944, see Guérin, *L'utopie Scouts de France*, p. n. 514, Hammel, *Souviens-toi D'Amalek*, pp. 198–199.

other Jewish youth movements towards scouting. Nevertheless, the divisions that had plagued interwar French Jewry continued under the Occupation and a large number of young French Jews found themselves unwilling to adapt to the EIF model on ideological grounds. By the spring of 1941 however, a certain degree of stability had returned and the EIF no longer represented the only organised movement. A Jewish infrastructure was gradually put in place through the creation of synagogues and centres of Jewish learning in the non-Occupied Zone and it was in such conditions that Jewish youth movements were able to germinate.

The Yechouroun was the first of these movements to re-adapt in the non-Occupied Zone and like the EIF, it organised a series of camps for displaced Jewish youth.³⁷⁰ Founded in 1926 in Strasbourg, the Yechouroun was an orthodox youth movement that promoted spiritual learning through study sessions. Although before the war it had positioned itself against the EIF, the Yechouroun leadership realised that the most effective way to rebuild Jewish life in the aftermath of the defeat was to join forces and to accept the assistance of the EIF. In the weeks that followed his demobilisation, Marc Breuer, a founder of Yechouroun, became involved with the EIF in Lyon, where he helped to expand both movements simultaneously.³⁷¹ Breuer created a Talmud Thora, a Jewish studies centre, in the major cities of the non-Occupied Zone, that was open to French and foreign youth. At this time, the EIF was also in need of religious

³⁷⁰ Under Vichy, Yechouroun's camps were organised in collaboration with OSE (Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants), See K. Hazan, *Les Orphelins de la Shoah* (Paris, 2000), pp. 111–123. With several hundred members the Yechouroun represented an important youth movement that existed throughout the Occupation. Fleeting reference is sometimes made to Yechouroun in a number of studies of Jewish life under Vichy. Nevertheless, like the history of Orthodox Jewry, a study of Yechouroun under the Occupation has yet to be written. A large proportion of the movement's archives are held by Alex Klein, at the Michlala Centre in Jerusalem.

³⁷¹ M. Breuer, *Ask thy father and he will tell you: A Recounting of Family History* (New York, 1997), p. 75.

instructors and hired Breuer to lecture at its centres, especially the Chantier Rural at Taluyers.³⁷²

Contrary to the EIF, in the period 1940–42, the Yechouroun did not adopt a political position nor did it seek accommodation with the SGJ or Vichy. Its purpose was to maintain and develop a religious and spiritual Judaism for young Jews without access to a formal Jewish environment. To this end, the Yechouroun launched an ambitious scheme to bring Jewish learning to Vichy's localities. First, Marc Breuer wrote a weekly commentary on the weeks' Torah portion, which the Yechouroun distributed to 300 children.³⁷³ Second, from Limoges, Théo Klein and Bô Cohn created an orthodox learning by distance programme, known as the *Cours par Correspondance*.³⁷⁴ By April 1942, ten different classes were distributed each week to more than 350 subscribers, both teachers and children, in all major Jewish youth centres in the non-Occupied Zone.³⁷⁵ In the spirit of fraternal relations, these classes were not destined solely to members of the Yechouroun and were also sent to EIF leaders who used them in their own study sessions.

Limoges was one of the main centres of Orthodox Judaism under Vichy, where it was home to Jewish refugees predominantly from Alsace and Lorraine.³⁷⁶ Here, in the period 1940–42, they were able to lead a vibrant Jewish life. Poznanski has shown that under the Occupation, Vichy did not discriminate against the practicing of the

³⁷² Hammel, *Souviens-toi d'Amalek*, p. 59.

³⁷³ Breuer, *Ask thy father*, p. 77. The Torah (Pentateuch) is divided into 54 portions. Every week, a different one is studied.

³⁷⁴ Interview with Margot Cohn, wife of Bô Cohn, 13 August 2009. Margot Cohn was responsible for typing the *Cours par Correspondance*, almost all of which can be found in the Yad Vashem archives (YV, o.9 126).

³⁷⁵ Poznanski, *Jews in France*, p. 153.

³⁷⁶ L. Landau, 'La Communauté de Strasbourg-Limoges (1939–1944)' in *Almanach KKL-Strasbourg*, 1964–1965 also available at <http://judaisme.sdv.fr/histoire/shh/limoges/commun.htm>.

Jewish religion.³⁷⁷ Synagogues remained open and in those communes without a place of worship, permission was granted to create one.³⁷⁸ Mikvoth (ritual baths) were set-up, kosher butchers were allowed to continue operating and so too did the practice of ritual slaughter, which was not outlawed.³⁷⁹ A large number of Yechouroun's members lived in the city where many were in full-time religious education at the religious school, the Petit Séminaire Israélite de Limoges (PSIL), which remained open throughout the Occupation. Although from 1943 many of its students joined the maquis, they engaged in no such clandestine work during the period 1940–42.³⁸⁰ Their priority at this time was to develop their Jewish knowledge in order to enter the Yeshiva at Chamalières and eventually become community leaders.³⁸¹ Edgard Weill, a former rabbinical student at Chamalières recalled in 1997:

Comme Clermont-Ferrand fait partie à ce moment là de la zone libre, ça se passe normalement, les études se passent normalement [...] On est un peu en vase clos, et on ne sait pas tellement ce qui se passe à l'extérieur.³⁸²

Weill's comments are crucial in revealing how some Orthodox Jewish youth negotiated their relationship with the regime. With their spiritual wellbeing seemingly secured, Vichy did not become an immediate target of disdain for Orthodox Jewish youth, who were able to continue their study and worship in a new setting of the non-Occupied Zone.

³⁷⁷ Poznanski, *Jews in France*, pp. 143–151.

³⁷⁸ ADT, 506W123, Letter from the Commandant Militaire of the Tarn to Salomon Reich in which he gives his permission for Reich to open a synagogue in Castres, 25 January 1941. This file also contains letters from Jews across the Tarn, in which they asked for permission to hold religious services for the High Holy days. Permission was always granted.

³⁷⁹ Poznanski, *Jews in France*, pp. 143–151.

³⁸⁰ Notable maquisards who were members of Yechouroun include: Bernard Picard, Lucien Lazare, Théo Dreyfuss, Max Warshawski (later the Grand Rabbin of the Bas-Rhin) and Jean-Paul Bader.

³⁸¹ After the fall of France, the Seminaire rabbinique de Paris relocated to Chamalières on the outskirts of Clermont-Ferrand.

³⁸² USC Shoah Foundation, interview with Rabbi Edgard Weill, 26 January 1997.

The Yechouroun's passive response to Vichy was not matched by French Jewish youth who were engaged in Zionist youth movements. Claude Strauss, later the renowned poet Claude Vigée, combined his role in the Zionist resistance with contributions to Pierre Seghers' resistance journal *Poésie*. Strauss, whose family had been in France for five generations, was completely integrated into French life. Having never been part of a Jewish organisation Strauss, a refugee in Toulouse, reacted as a Jew rather than as a Frenchman to the first *Statut des Juifs*:

I started looking for my equals in the same fate and I quickly contacted in Toulouse in those months of October, November, December 1940, other Jews; French, with or without the citizenship.³⁸³

In Toulouse, Strauss developed a Jewish identity through his interactions with intellectuals from the Jewish refugee community. It was through his participation at Jewish study circles and his work in the medical unit of the interment camps that Strauss developed a 'crise de conscience' and 'identification with the Jewish fate'.³⁸⁴ Under Vichy, Strauss found himself drawn to committed Zionists, whose political and ideological aspirations revealed a world that he had not known. The government's oppressive measures towards foreign Jews created a space that allowed Zionism to flourish and this was open to French as well as to foreign Jews.

Under Vichy, Toulouse played a central role in the development of the Zionist resistance. Strauss joined the group *La Main forte* in early 1941. French youths with a variety of social and political leanings participated in this group which significantly

³⁸³ AHICJ, The Rescue of Jews via Spain and Portugal, Interview # 49 with Claude Vigée, 1963. See also Vigée's memoirs: Vigée, C, *La Lune d'Hiver*, Paris, 1970.

³⁸⁴ Ibid.

altered their life trajectories. Having not had any religious or Zionist upbringing, Strauss spent forty years in Israel after the war. Elie Rothnemer was another founding member of *La Main forte*. Rothnemer, a native Parisian was a self-declared atheist and anarchist, who was also a member of the left-leaning Zionist organisation, Hashomer Hatzair.³⁸⁵ Rothnemer subsequently became extremely religious and was, at the end of his life, the head rabbi of the Fublaines Yeshiva.

By the end of 1941, the various competing Zionist groups, which ranged from the ultra-right revisionists Betar, to the socialist Zionist Poalé-Zion, had come together to form the Armée Juive, which by 1944 had recruited almost 2000 members.³⁸⁶ However, the Liberation of France was only the first step in the programme of the Armée Juive, which had as its eventual goal the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Before being accepted into the organisation, Strauss and all other recruits were blindfolded and recited the following oath of allegiance:

Je jure fidélité à l'Armée juive et obéissance à ses chefs.
Que revive mon peuple !
Que renaisse Eretz Israël !
La liberté ou la mort !³⁸⁷

From the outset, the Armée Juive prepared its membership for armed resistance with a view to fighting the Nazis and later the British in Palestine. However, the day to day activities varied. Strauss and Arnold Mandel, a poet from Strasbourg, were charged with the task of creating study circles across the region and recruiting youths to the

³⁸⁵ Lewertowski, *Les enfants de Moissac*, p 223 and Vigée, *La Lune d'Hiver*, p. 57.

³⁸⁶ Nicault and Grynberg, 'La résistance sioniste', p. 157. There exist a small number of academic studies on the Zionist Resistance see notably Nicault and Grynberg, 'La résistance sioniste sous l'Occupation', and R. Poznanski, 'La Résistance Juive en France', in *Revue d'histoire de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale*, Vol. 137, (1985), pp. 3–32.

³⁸⁷ Cited in Latour, *La Résistance Juive en France* (Paris, 1970), p. 90.

cause.³⁸⁸ Other members embarked on a programme to bring relief and assistance to Jews interned in camps.

Nevertheless, Strauss knew that his experience in the period 1940–42 was not representative of the majority of French Jewry.³⁸⁹ Most members of l'Armée Juive were not French. Strauss observed that French Jews were slow to recognise the danger in the period 1940–42, especially the EIF, whose commitment to scouting rendered them simply 'an organisation of nice little boys', he further noted, 'don't forget that Éclaireurs business was the opposite of really historical engagement [...] It was nice little games, you see'.³⁹⁰

Despite the overwhelming presence of foreign Jews in the Armée Juive, the organisation had still been able to attract a number of young *israélites français* to its cause in the period 1940–42. This was also the case for Mouvement de Jeunesse Sioniste (MJS), whom the majority of the Armée Juive supported following its creation.³⁹¹ Founded at the Congrès de Montpellier in May 1942, the MJS aimed to unite the disparate Zionist youth organisations in the whole country under a single banner. There was a need to eliminate the political and religious infighting that had plagued the various factions, each of which shared the same goal of eventually

³⁸⁸ AHICJ, The Rescue of Jews via Spain and Portugal, Interview # 49 with Claude Vigée, 1963. See also, J. Brauman, G. Loinger and F. Wattenberg, (eds.), *Organisation Juive de Combat* (Paris, 2002), pp. 90–91.

³⁸⁹ For a short biography of participants in the Armée Juive, see J. Brauman, et al. (eds.), *Organisation Juive de Combat*, pp.42–111. For information on the *israélite français* presence from 1940–41, see the entries of Rodolphe Furth and Raymond Lévy-Seckel.

³⁹⁰ AHICJ, The Rescue of Jews via Spain and Portugal, Interview # 49 with Claude Vigée, 1963.

³⁹¹ T. Hershco, 'Le Mouvement de la Jeunesse Sioniste' in J. Brauman, et al. (eds.), *Organisation Juive de Combat*, p. 119. For a short biography of participants in the MJS, see J. Brauman, et al. (eds.), *Organisation Juive de Combat*, pp. 122–167.

creating a Jewish state in Palestine.³⁹² Immediately following the Congrès, the MJS formed a series of *gdoudim* (battalions) in a dozen of towns in the non-occupied Zone and like the EIF they sought to imbue Jewish youth with elements of Jewish history, tradition and folklore. Naturally, this cultural action was heavily ‘palestino-centrique’, and as Paul Giniewski recalled, ‘on l’a dit: on sauvait des Juifs et on maintenait leur spiritualité, les deux étant inséparables’.³⁹³ From its inception the MJS produced false identification cards and its rescue work drastically increased after the summer of 1942, when it began smuggling Jewish children into Switzerland.

French Jews in the Armée Juive and the MJS did not seek cooperation with Vichy, nor did they aspire to the rebuilding of Jewish life in France. Nothing could be done to repair the feelings of betrayal that these youths felt in the aftermath of the racial laws. In stark contrast to the EIF’s initial project of accommodation and to the passive reactions that came from the majority of French Jewry, these young Jews looked instead towards a collective Jewish existence in Palestine.

In the period 1940–42, the EIF, the Yechouroun and the Armée Juive sought contrasting ways for its youth to lead a Jewish existence under the New Order. The EIF’s pre-war project to transform the ‘pyramide sociologique des Juifs’ coupled with its priority for scouting led the movement to engage positively with Vichy and the National Revolution. Well into 1942, the EIF’s dual commitments to serve France and Judaism and the backing that it received from key figures proved too powerful for

³⁹² Interview with one of the three founders of the MJS, Toto Giniewski, now Eytan Guinat, 3 June 2009.

³⁹³ P. Giniewski, *Une Résistance Juive* (Paris, 2009), p. 18.

Xavier Vallat, who was unable to completely cut the movement off from playing a role in public life. The EIF continued to interact with other scouting associations and took part in official parades at Vichy ceremonies. At the other end of the spectrum, few elements of Vichy's programme for renewal proved attractive for the Yechouroun or the Armée Juive. Unlike the EIF, they did not enter into dialogue with the regime. That said, a certain *attentisme* existed within the Yechouroun, whose aim of creating an orthodox, spiritual existence amongst Jewish youth was not threatened by Vichy. Yeshivas remained open and even Jewish youth refugeed in isolated pockets of the non-Occupied Zone could continue their religious education, thanks to the *Cours par Correspondance*. In contrast, the Armée Juive opposed such passivity. From as early as the autumn of 1940, it saw the fight against Vichy as preparation for a broader struggle in the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine. French Jewish youth in the Armée Juive chastised the EIF's project of regeneration under Vichy and its coexistence with the regime. For the Armée Juive, Zionism offered the only solution to the Jewish Question. However, in the period 1940–42, immigrant Jews made up the majority of those adopting a Zionist response to Vichy.

Attitudes and behaviour inherited from the pre-1940 period allowed Jewish youth to remain active in 1940–42, forging new alliances within and outside of Jewish communal structures. Young Jews' desire for deeper integration into French civic life did not go unanswered. Rather, Vichy also solicited Jewish youths to take part in its regeneration schemes, revealing that the relationship between Jewish youth and the regime was never a one sided affair.

The interface between Vichy and Jewish youth: Jews in state sponsored youth schemes

Vichy's prioritisation for multiple youth schemes led to the creation of a series of loosely organised youth initiatives, each of which had to develop its own position on the Jewish Question. While some, confident of their autonomy, freely admitted Jews, others were more cautious and on occasion sought the advice of the SGJ or the CGQJ before making decisions that specifically related to Jewish youth. The lack of a coherent policy towards Jewish youth amongst these institutions was mirrored by the multiple responses of Jewish youth towards their inclusion. Three main motivations underpinned Jews' participation in Vichy's youth schemes. First, some had little choice and owed their inclusion to being the selected representatives sent by the EIF and other Jewish organisations. Second, full-time participation in a youth movement led to a regular supply of food and accommodation, both of which were sought after commodities in an unstable climate where unemployment and shortages were rife. Third, in some instances, the aims of some of these organisations resonated with the ideological convictions of Jewish youth and allowed them to play out their pre-war ambitions under Vichy.

Uriage

The École des cadres d'Uriage enjoyed an ambivalent relationship with Jewish youth.³⁹⁴ The school, located in the Château Bayard (Isère), was created in the immediate aftermath of the armistice by Captain Pierre Dunoyer de Segonzac. Originally independent of Vichy, the Christian and authoritarian ethos of Uriage was soon looked upon favourably by the new regime, who took it under its wing, financing it and promoting its development.³⁹⁵ De Segonzac's idea was to rebuild France by retraining its most intelligent and able young men to become leaders, and he emphasised their moral, psychological, physical and intellectual characteristics. Further, de Segonzac was a devout Catholic and one of his ambitions for Uriage was for it to offer a religious alternative to the anti-Catholic École Normale Supérieure.³⁹⁶ The influence of *Esprit* and Mounier were central to this training. The *Esprit* contributor Abbé Naurois became the school's chaplain, and Mounier was a frequent visitor to Uriage, giving lectures and leading discussions on personalism.³⁹⁷ Students also received regular lectures from other prominent Catholics thinkers linked with *Esprit*, including Bruno de Solages and Jean Lacroix.³⁹⁸

³⁹⁴ Until now, the few studies that have considered the relationship between Uriage and the Jews have limited their focus to the summer of 1944, when some of the school's former instructors joined the Maquis du Tarn, a resistance cell which contained more than 100 Jewish Maquisards. See J-P. Nathan-Aymon, 'Compagnie Marc Haguenau', in 'Les Eclaireurs Israélites de France dans la Guerre'.

³⁹⁵ There exist two schools of thought over Uriage and its relationship with Vichy. A first, developed by Bernard Comte, considers Uriage to have been non-conformist, acting independently of the New Order and as a breeding ground for the Resistance, see B. Comte, *Une Utopie Combattante*. Conversely, a revisionist approach to Uriage has been adopted by John Hellman, who questions the resistance legacy of the Ecole and considers Uriage to have been inextricably entangled with Pétainist ideology. See Hellman, *The Knight-Monks of Vichy France*. The philosopher Bernard-Henri Lévy has gone even further than Hellman in his critique: 'Uriage est mieux qu'une thébaïde ou une cathédrale du vichysme, il en est le laboratoire'. See Lévy, *L'idéologie française*, p. 53.

³⁹⁶ J. Hellman, 'Maritain, Simon, and Vichy's Elite Schools', in Torre, M.D., *Freedom in the Modern World: Jacques Maritain, Yves R. Simon, Mortimer J. Adler* (Notre Dame, IN, 1989), p. 167.

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 168 and Kedward, *Resistance in Vichy France*, p. 206.

³⁹⁸ Hellman, *The Knight-Monks of Vichy France*, p. 85.

De Segonzac did not display any signs of hostility towards Jewish youth and constantly encouraged their participation at Uriage. Prior to the Occupation, de Segonzac had mixed in the same pre-war circles as Maritain, and his views on Jews appear heavily influenced by the latter's ambivalence on the Jewish Question. Like Maritain and Mounier, de Segonzac condemned racial anti-Semitism and the *Statut des Juifs*.³⁹⁹ However, he was also in favour of some measures being taken against Jews, 'le problème existe, une place est à délimiter dans le pays pour les Juifs'.⁴⁰⁰ Although a Catholic society remained his goal, it appears that, like Maritain, de Segonzac also saw a role for the Jewish people with the coming of Christ. To this end, he did not intend Uriage to be a wholly Catholic institution, and distinctions were not made between the youths according to whether or not they were Catholic.⁴⁰¹ A critical position vis-à-vis the racial variety of anti-Semitism was also adopted by a number of Uriage's leading instructors, many of whom were later to marry Jewish women.⁴⁰² This environment did not go unnoticed by the collaborationist press who, as they did with Lamirand, criticised de Segonzac for not implementing racial criteria when constructing 'le nouvel homme français'.⁴⁰³

As has been shown, the training of the EIF's leaders was modelled on the system used at Uriage. Uriage appealed to the EIF secretariat who intended to glean from it a new pedagogical approach towards training future generations of Jewish youth leaders. In

³⁹⁹ Comte, *Une Utopie Combattante*, p. 380.

⁴⁰⁰ P. Dunoyer de Segonzac, Exposé aux journées de l'ENU, 21 October 1942, quoted in Comte, *Une Utopie Combattant*, p. 495.

⁴⁰¹ Hellman, *The Knight-Monks of Vichy France*, p. 60. Nevertheless, following the closure of Uriage in December 1942, several dozen men and women formed a secret society, The Order, to continue living within the spirit of Uriage. Its provisional constitution forbade Jewish participation. See Hellman, *The Knight-Monks of Vichy France*, p. 197.

⁴⁰² See A. Delestre, *Uriage: Une communauté et une école dans la tourmente 1940–1945* (Nancy, 1989), p. n. 201.

⁴⁰³ M. Augier, 'Les Chevaliers sans armures', in *La Gerbe*, 24 July 1941, reprinted in full in *ibid*, pp. 111–112.

November 1940, the EIF was invited to send a delegation to Uriage to undertake an eighteen-day session in the school's 'promotion Bayard'. Bayard's purpose, as has been noted by Comte, was to prepare participants, all of whom were scouts, for their future roles in public sector schemes, especially those organised by the SGJ.⁴⁰⁴ On 4 November 1940, the EIF leaders Edouard Simon, Robert Schapiro, Henry Moskow, Sylvain Adolphe and Georges Weill arrived at Uriage (**Figure 5**).⁴⁰⁵



Figure 5. EIF chefs at Uriage from left to right, Sylvain Adolphe, Georges Weill, Henri Moskow, Edouard Simon, November 1940.

The testimonies of three of the five men reveal the sense of comradeship and respect that existed between the different scout associations taking part at Uriage.⁴⁰⁶ Georges Weill recalled the 'grand esprit' that he found at the school, 'avec un espace

⁴⁰⁴ Comte, *Une Utopie Combattante*, p. 343.

⁴⁰⁵ Personal papers of Georges Weill and interviews with Georges Weill, 25 May 2009 and 3 June 2009.

⁴⁰⁶ Robert Schapiro, Edouard Simon and Georges Weill. Sylvain Adolphe emigrated to Tahiti in 1946 and became a photographer. The fifth youth, Henry Moskow, was deported to Auschwitz on convoy 58 from where he did not return.

d'humanité que je n'ai jamais connu' (**Figure 6**).⁴⁰⁷ Through the practical activities and communal living, Edouard Simon rediscovered at Uriage the values that had first attracted him to scouting. By the end of the session he had been awarded the right to lead one of the SGJ's écoles régionales.⁴⁰⁸ However, to take on a role with the SGJ was unthinkable for Simon who, together with his wife, had by the end of 1940 established himself as a director of the Maison de Moissac. Robert Schapiro did not have such responsibilities in the autumn of 1940. While his coreligionists were being forced out of public sector roles, Schapiro's skills as a youth leader had been noticed by the direction of Uriage who recommended that he take up a position in the SGJ. For the leadership of Uriage, the racial laws fit into a separate area of Vichy policy-making. Their priority was to form strong leaders to rebuild the nation. The question of whether or not a candidate was a Jew was not a criterion for selection. In theory at least, a space had been created in which Jews who passed through Uriage were entitled to a position in the regime's administration. Upon the successful completion of his training, Schapiro was incorporated into the SGJ, representing Lamirand as Délégué régional adjoint à la Jeunesse for the Languedoc Roussillon.⁴⁰⁹ However, this overlap in policy making could only last so long. Despite the patronage that he received from Uriage and the SGJ's initial willingness to recruit him, in this instance, the regime's anti-Semitism took precedence over its policy of regeneration, and by the spring of 1941 Schapiro had rejoined the EIF.

⁴⁰⁷ Interview with Georges Weill, 25 May 2009.

⁴⁰⁸ Comte, *Une Utopie Combattante*, p. 343.

⁴⁰⁹ Schapiro, R, 'Les Eclaireurs et Eclaireuses Israélites de France en Afrique du Nord durant la Guerre', p. 33.



Figure 6. Lamirand at a visit to Uriage in November 1940. Georges Weill is in the background in between Lamirand and De Segonzac.

Relations between the EIF and Uriage were not confined to 1940 or to the ‘promotion Bayard’. Well into 1941, the EIF continued to send its leaders to training sessions at Uriage. However, its decision to do so was not unilateral and should not be seen as an attempt to pander to the regime. Of the two parties, it was Vichy, more than the EIF, who wanted Jewish youth to take part in Uriage. Evidence of this is found in a letter from Marc Haguenu, the secretary of the EIF, to Frédéric Hammel, the head of the EIF’s Chantier Rural at Taluyers (Rhône). In September 1941, Haguenu urged Hammel to send some of the youth at Taluyers to undertake a training session at Uriage, noting that the SGJ had insisted that EIF leaders be present.⁴¹⁰ To entice Hammel, Haguenu singled out the experiences of Robert Munnich, who like other EIF leaders had undertaken spells at Uriage and had returned ‘enchanté’.⁴¹¹ Munnich was the only representative of the EIF when he attended the ‘promotion Foucauld’ at

⁴¹⁰ CDJC, CMXLV (1), Letter from Marc Haguenu to Frédéric Hammel, 10 September 1941.

⁴¹¹ Ibid.

Uriage in March 1941.⁴¹² By the spring of 1941, Munnich had already experienced the racial laws first hand. After completing his studies at the École Polytechnique in 1936, he became a military engineer, a position from which he was expelled after the passing of the first *Statut des Juifs*. Munnich's early persecution followed by his participation at the Écoles de Cadres, points to the regime's inconsistent relationship with Jewish youth. As a Jew, Munnich could not be admitted into the army, yet by re-inventing himself as a youth leader, even a Jewish one, he became acceptable and was invited to participate at Uriage.

The EIF did not constitute the only Jewish presence at Uriage. It is likely that Jews from the EDF and EU also represented their scouting association at the École. In the same vein, individual Jews who were not linked with a youth movement also took part at Uriage. According to Bernard Comte, there is barely any trace of organised Jewish youth having spent time at Uriage.⁴¹³ Assessing the experiences of Jews at Uriage who did not participate as part of a youth movement is an even more difficult task. However, Jean-Louis Lévy represents one such case. As a grandson of Captain Alfred Dreyfus, Jewish life played an important part in Lévy's upbringing.⁴¹⁴ He was attracted to the spiritualism of Uriage and was drawn to the new conceptions of the person and of man that was being advanced at the school:

⁴¹² Interview with Robert Munnich, 19 April 2009.

⁴¹³ Comte, *Une Utopie Combattante*, p. 340.

⁴¹⁴ Lévy was born in February 1920 to Dr Pierre-Paul Lévy and Jeanne Dreyfus Lévy, daughter of Captain Dreyfus. During the 1930s a number of Lévy's family members, including his grandmother Lucie Dreyfus and his uncle Pierre Dreyfus, had been active in Jewish philanthropic organisations. See M. Burns, *Dreyfus, A Family Affair, 1789–1945* (New York, 1991), pp. 443–446. In 1943, Jean-Louis and his younger brother Etienne both joined the EIF's resistance unit the Sixième. See Brauman et al. (eds.), *Organisation Juive de Combat*, p. 321 and pp. 342–343

Il y avait des maîtres mots: les valeurs, la personne humaine, l'engagement [...] Ce n'était pas du tout un scoutisme dans le sens 'bonne action' un scoutisme du dimanche.⁴¹⁵

De Segonzac's openness towards Jewish participation at Uriage is confirmed by Lévy, who labelled him a 'rassembleur', someone who was capable of forging spiritual relations across religious divides.⁴¹⁶

Unlike Jean-Louis Lévy, Jewish life had only played a marginal role in the upbringing of Simon Nora. From a highly integrated Jewish family, Nora had never been involved in a Jewish youth organisation. Nora's family was very much a part of the 'grande bourgeoisie israélite parisienne'. His father, Dr Gaston Nora, had been a close friend of Xavier Vallat since their days in the trenches during the First World War, and their friendship continued during the interwar years. After the Occupation, Gaston Nora testified in favour of Vallat at his trial, where he maintained that Vallat had always strived to protect the *israélites français*.⁴¹⁷ It was Simon Nora's background in the Auberges de Jeunesse movement, his left-leaning pacifism and his reading of Giono that first attracted him to the community life at Uriage.⁴¹⁸ Nora recalled that a mutual disdain for the Third Republic united the men there.⁴¹⁹ The fraternity and intellectually charged environment, fuelled by his friendship with Gadoffre and Beuve-Méry, allowed Nora to discover a new world and fundamentally altered the

⁴¹⁵ Lévy interview with Pierre Bitoun, in P. Bitoun, *Les Hommes d'Uriage* (Paris, 1988), p. 80.

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

⁴¹⁷ Born in Paris in 1921, Simon Nora spent the Occupation in the Isère. Later, Nora became one of the most respected economists in post-war France. See Nora interview with Pierre Bitoun, in Bitoun, *Les Hommes d'Uriage*, p. 103. More information on Nora's background can be gleaned from accounts of his brother, the historian Pierre Nora. See F. Dosse, *Pierre Nora: Homo Historicus* (Paris, 2011). For more on Gaston Nora's friendship with Vallat, see M. Laffitte, *Juif dans la France Allemande* (Paris, 2006), pp. 54–55 and Joly, *Xavier Vallat*, p. 27 and pp. 380–381.

⁴¹⁸ Nora interview with Pierre Bitoun, in Bitoun, *Les Hommes d'Uriage*, p. 104.

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

course of his life.⁴²⁰ Retreating into a Jewish movement did not seem an attractive option. His father's exemption from the racial laws may have led Nora to believe that he had slightly more room for manoeuvre than had been allowed his co-religionists. Although his political views and his participation with Uriage would have been atypical amongst the majority of French Jewish youth, his engagement with the regime, albeit temporary, propelled him towards greater integration with the institutions of the New Order. To contrast Nora's experience with the route taken by Claude Strauss, another integrated Jew, who as has been shown, joined the Zionist resistance in 1940, reveals two opposite ends of the spectrum. Their cases elucidate the multiple reactions to Vichy that existed amongst young French Jews during the regime's first two years.

Since the leadership of Uriage was not overtly hostile to Jewish participation, Jewish groups and individuals sought to spend time there. Naturally not all Jews were able to attend Uriage. Only those of exceptional ability who would contribute to rebuilding society were eligible to attend. This was, as we have seen, to be built on firmly Catholic foundations. Profoundly inspired by Maritain and Mounier, the leadership held ambivalent views on the Jewish Question. They did not deny the existence of a Jewish problem, but agreed that racial anti-Semitism was not the solution. Uriage, whose aim was to train the most talented youth to become future leaders, perfectly encapsulates the complicated relationship between Vichy and the Jews. Henry Moskow's participation at Uriage and his later deportation to Auschwitz illustrates

⁴²⁰ Upon joining Uriage, Nora had been working on a thesis that examined planning in the USSR. At the Liberation, like so many of Uriage's graduates, he entered ENA and began a career in the public service: 'Nous nous voyions comme une minorité chargée de rénover le sens de l'Etat', Nora interview with Pierre Bitoun, in Bitoun, *Les Hommes d'Uriage*, p. 155. For more on the continuities between Uriage and ENA, see Hellman, *The Knight-Monks of Vichy France*, pp. 233–234 and Nord, *France's New Deal*, p. 205.

that the approval of Jewish youth to contribute to the New Order was dependent upon boundaries that were constantly shifting and being redefined.

Jeune France and the Comédiens Routiers

The range of artistic initiatives supported by the new regime had important consequences for Jewish youth. From the summer of 1940, leading figures in music, dance and theatre attempted to work with Vichy to implement their ideas for a renaissance of French youth culture. Vichy's 'Radio-Jeunesse' was broadcast daily from the beginning of August 1940 and was led by the sound engineer Pierre Schaeffer. To launch this initiative, Schaeffer assembled a team of young technicians, artists and musicians who formed the core of the Jeune France movement.⁴²¹ Before the war, the majority of those in the upper echelons of Jeune France had either been acquainted with Jacques Maritain or Emmanuel Mounier and, like the leaders of Uriage, had mixed views on the Jewish Question. Such ambiguity was to have important repercussions on Jewish youth's attempts to participate with Jeune France.

The background of those at the top of the movement was extremely varied. While some were supporters of the Action Française and other extreme right organisations, others were followers of Mounier's *Esprit*, the Ordre Nouveau and the scouting movements.⁴²² However, despite such political variation, the majority of the leadership of Jeune France was united by a strong non-conformist Catholic ethos. To

⁴²¹ For a more detailed discussion on Jeune France, see Nord, P, 'Pierre Schaeffer and Jeune France: Cultural Politics in the Vichy Years', *French Historical Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 4, Fall (2007), and V. Chabrol, 'Jeune France – Une expérience de recherché et de décentralisation culturelle, novembre 1940–mars 1942', Université de Paris, thèse de doctorat de troisième cycle, 1974.

⁴²² Amongst some of its leading figures, Pierre Schaeffer had been very involved in scouting, Roger Leenhardt with *Esprit* and Jean de Fabrègues with militant circles on the extreme right.

this end, it was the Action Française writer Claude Roy, a former resident of the Pères Maristes, who proposed making the Catholic poet (then a POW), Patrice de la Tour du Pin, president of the movement.⁴²³ Mounier was considered the ‘père spirituel’ of the association and, as Philip Nord has argued, the movement was embedded with a ‘religion-inflected’ philosophy.⁴²⁴ It was through a cultural reawakening that Jeune France intended to transform everyday life. Young people needed to be given the space and the equipment with which to express themselves creatively in order to transform the decadent, bourgeois culture of the 1930s into one worthy of the *Homme Nouveau*.⁴²⁵ Recognised by the SGJ in November 1940, this deeply heterogeneous movement immediately set out to organise theatrical, musical and artistic groups across the non-Occupied Zone. Folklore, regionalism and outdoor entertainment were prioritised; as was the mission to reach a universal public that included workers and peasants, while avoiding entering into mass entertainment.

As the movement was profoundly inspired by social Catholicism, there is a need to discover what role, if any, was made available to Jews.⁴²⁶ Making reference to the German decision to ban Jewish artists at a Jeune France exhibition, Philip Nord asks whether Jeune France would ‘have wanted it otherwise?’⁴²⁷ In some respects the answer is no. A report from summer 1941 shows that as a state institution, Jeune France respected the *Statut des Juifs*, and did not recruit Jews to official positions within the organisation:

⁴²³ Schaeffer, *Les Antennes de Jéricho*, p. 277.

⁴²⁴ M. Robert, *Pierre Schaeffer: Des Transmissions à Orphée, Communication et Musique en France entre 1936 et 1986* (Paris, 1999), p. 46 and Nord, ‘Pierre Schaeffer and Jeune France’, p. 701.

⁴²⁵ Nord, ‘Pierre Schaeffer and Jeune France’, p. 697.

⁴²⁶ Until now, the Jewish Question has not featured in investigations of Jeune France. In her recent book on Jewish rescue, Limore Yagil includes a part entitled ‘Jeune France et les Juifs’. Curiously, this section only goes as far as to describe Jeune France, and Yagil makes no reference at all to Jews or their interaction with the movement. See Yagil, *La France Terre de Refuge et de Désobéissance Civile*, Vol I, pp. 429–431.

⁴²⁷ Nord, ‘Pierre Schaeffer and Jeune France’, p. 695.

Il y eut en véritable scandale François Crémieux [sic] et il fallut l'intervention du Cabinet du Maréchal pour que ce juif, ancien militant communiste au Lycée Janson de Sailly, qui signait des contrats au nom de Jeune France, qui parlait à la Radio au nom de Secrétariat Général à la Jeunesse, fut renvoyé à ses études.⁴²⁸

The leadership of Jeune France agreed to limit the role of Jews in its administration, an issue which – as has been shown – was supported by some Catholic writers who had been opponents of anti-Semitism during the interwar years. However, at least initially, the implementation of the racial laws in Jeune France only affected those at the top of the movement, and it did not discriminate against Jewish performers.⁴²⁹ The creative appeal of Jeune France was such that it proved attractive to large numbers of Jewish youth, who, despite not being able to officially belong to the movement, were still eligible to take part in its recitals and to promote a new French culture on the same terms as other youths. Anti-Semitism in the movement was at this stage limited to a level that had been set by the state, and had not filtered down to the performance level. This is illustrated by a report that confirms the large numbers of Jews that participated in Jeune France schemes:

Les juifs ont toujours trouvé un excellent accueil à Jeune France. On n'osait peu leur trouver de postes administratifs, mais ils étaient extrêmement nombreux dans les tournées organisées par Jeune France.⁴³⁰

⁴²⁸ AN, F1a 3686, Papiers André Chérier, Report entitled: 'De Quelques Juifs à Jeune France', unsigned and undated. Philip Nord believes that this document was written by Jean de Fabrègues. I am grateful to Philip Nord for bringing this to my attention.

⁴²⁹ Only in June 1942 were Jewish performers outlawed; see JO, 11 June 1942: Décret no 1301 du 6 juin 1942 réglementant, en ce qui concerne les Juifs. Les professions d'artiste dramatique, cinématographique ou lyrique.

⁴³⁰ AN, F1a 3686, Papiers André Chérier, Report entitled: 'De Quelques Juifs à Jeune France', unsigned and undated.

Unlike in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse which introduced anti-Semitic measures independent of Vichy, the leadership of Jeune France did not initiate independent measures that would limit the participation of Jewish youth in its movement.⁴³¹

The Comédiens Routiers was one movement that went under the banner of Jeune France. This organisation had been formed by Catholic playwright Léon Chancerel in 1929 with a view to transforming the relationship between the people and culture. Heavily based on scouting and open-air theatre, its aim was to combat the centralised, commercial theatre and to democratise existing culture.⁴³² The main company of the Comédiens Routiers was based at Uriage and was directed by Jean-Pierre Grenier and Olivier Hussenot, leading actors of the popular theatre.⁴³³ In December 1940, the twelve-man troupe advertised for a pair of singers who could play the flute and the guitar. Two young Jewish men, both of whom had recently completed a training period as EIF representatives at Uriage, applied and were immediately taken on. Between December 1940 and July 1941, Georges Weill and Sylvain Adolphe were based at Uriage, where the Comédiens Routiers were given the task of introducing music and amateur dramatics to the nation's future leaders.⁴³⁴ At the same time, the Comédiens Routiers also toured the non-Occupied Zone, where they played to mass

⁴³¹ This offers an explanation as to why Jeune France had such poor relations with the Ministry of the Interior. Pucheu hated Mounier and Jeune France, and the thought of a Jewish presence would have doubled his revulsion. I am grateful to Philip Nord for alerting me to this. See also Nord, 'Pierre Schaeffer and Jeune France', p. 701 and M. Bergès, *Vichy contre Mounier: Les non-conformistes face aux années 40* (Paris, 1997), p. 26. For Pucheu's anti-Semitism, see Pucheu, *Ma Vie*, pp. 268–271.

⁴³² See J. Wardhaugh, *In Pursuit of the People: Political Culture in France, 1934–1939* (Basingstoke, 2009), pp. 154–176.

⁴³³ In addition to Hussenot and Grenier, this small troop contained singers and actors including Marc Chevalier and Madeleine Barbulée who were to enjoy illustrious careers post-war France.

⁴³⁴ For more on the Uriage troop of the Comédiens Routiers see Delestre, *Uriage*, pp. 79–80.

audiences. They routinely performed as part of a warm-up act before Georges Lamirand and other Vichy officials gave speeches (**Figure 7**).⁴³⁵

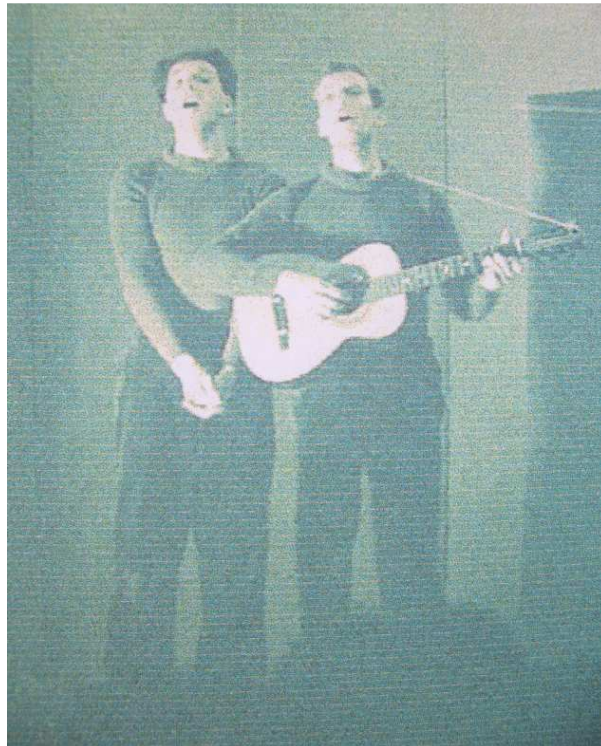


Figure 7. Georges Weill and Sylvain Adolphe performing with the Comédiens Routiers.

Despite being Jewish, Georges Weill and Sylvain Adolphe participated in this Jeune France initiative in exactly the same way as the other performers in their company. Moreover, their Jewishness was not, or as Weill notes, ‘could not’, have been hidden from the other youths:

Moi, Weill, lui Simsovitch [Adolphe was a francisation]. C’était clair comme le jour, mais ils savaient aussi que nous, on n’avait aucun problème ni de nourriture, ni de shabbatot, ni rien de tout.⁴³⁶

⁴³⁵ J-P. Grenier, *En passant par la scène* (Besançon, 1992), pp. 81–85 and interviews with Georges Weill, 25 May 2009 and 3 June 2009.

⁴³⁶ Interview with Georges Weill, 3 June 2009. Shabbatot is the Hebrew plural for the Sabbath. Here, Weill is inferring that neither he nor Adolphe required kosher food and nor did they require dispensation for the Sabbath.

The decision of Weill and Adolphe to join the Comédiens Routiers paints another unfamiliar picture of Jewish youth's engagement with Vichy. Having come to Uriage from the EIF in Moissac, the two young men chose not to return there following their training session at the École de Cadres. Eight months in the Comédiens Routiers was followed by an eight-month spell in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse, which was itself followed by a period in the Compagnons de France. Their choice to turn to Jeune France, rather than to identify themselves with a Jewish organisation such as the EIF, reveals that after the passing of the racial laws, Vichy still remained a viable option of cooperation for some Jews. Such a trajectory runs counter to the official memory that suggests a constantly deteriorating situation for Jews under Vichy. However in 1941, Weill and Adolphe were allowed to continue in their role, because they were not engaged in professions prohibited by the racial laws. As Weill explained, 'ça ne nous concernait pas du tout'.⁴³⁷

Participation in Jeune France represented an opportunity in defeat for Weill and Adolphe. They were provided with a unique space with which to reconstruct their lives in a way unavailable to them under the Third Republic. Before the war Weill had been a student at the École de Commerce in Strasbourg, and it was expected that upon completion he would enter his father's business. The Occupation liberated him from these unwanted responsibilities, and the direction he chose to follow in its place was being vigorously encouraged by Vichy. At a time when so many of his co-religionists were being pushed to the margins of the national community, Weill believed that the new regime offered an opportunity for him to regain his 'liberty', and he used it to

⁴³⁷ Ibid., 25 May 2009.

explore multiple forms of youth culture.⁴³⁸ As part of a privileged group equipped with a secretary to organise the tours, supplies and accommodation, Weill was relieved of the day-to-day uncertainties and responsibilities of other Jewish youth and was able to dedicate more time to improving his musical and theatrical recitals, performing at some of the most prestigious venues of the day.⁴³⁹

Some EIF *chefs* sought to combine their membership of the EIF with participation in Jeune France. A commitment to a Jewish youth organisation under the Occupation should not suggest isolation from the entirety of Vichy's youth projects. The EIF executive made it possible, and even encouraged their leaders to enhance their programme for Jewish youth with skills that could be gleaned from Jeune France. As late as May 1942, Léo Cohn, one of the most senior-ranking members of the EIF leadership, sought to benefit from such opportunities presented by New Order:

Je voudrais aussi avant la transformation de notre Chantier en école, passer un stage à la Compagnie Hussenot à Uriage pour apprendre à me perfectionner dans les occupations et métiers de loisirs.⁴⁴⁰

Throughout his time with the Comédiens Routiers, Weill remained in contact with the EIF. In the spring of 1941, Weill was called upon to transmit what he had learnt from Jeune France to EIF leaders from across the non-Occupied Zone. Released by the Comédiens Routiers, Weill attended the EIF's training camps at Montintin (Haute Vienne) in the spring of 1941. Here, one of Weill's students, Marcel Mangel, was so

⁴³⁸ Ibid., 3 June 2009.

⁴³⁹ Ibid. Weill's newfound zest for life was also noticed by his contemporaries: '[Georges Weill] est continuellement en vadrouille et qui semble de plus en plus emballé de la vie qu'il mène et qui lui convient à merveille'. In YV, o.9, 137, letter from Henri and Denise Lévy to Frédéric Hammel, 30 April 1941.

⁴⁴⁰ Letter from Léo Cohn to Frédéric Hammel, 20 May 1942, quoted in Hammel, *Souviens-toi d'Amalek*, p. 301.

inspired that he also took part in a Jeune France initiative in the non-Occupied Zone. After the war Mangel changed his name to Marcel Marceau and joined the Comédiens Routiers, eventually becoming France's greatest post-war mime artist.⁴⁴¹ Weill is adamant that Montintin was a 'paranthèse'. It did not entice him to give up his dream of being a full-time artist, despite being surrounded by contemporaries who were resolved to dedicating their time to working for Jewish causes. After the week he rejoined the Comédiens Routiers and continued touring the non-Occupied Zone until he and Adolphe were called-up to the Chantiers de la Jeunesse in July 1941.⁴⁴²

Many leading figures in Jeune France passionately rejected Vichy's anti-Semitism. Like Mounier, some participants of the movement were active in their support for the Jews. This included the renowned future actor and director Jean-Marie Serreau. Before the war, Serreau had played a central role in Sangnier's Auberges de Jeunesse movement. A friend of Mounier, Serreau became involved with Jeune France, *Esprit* and later the clandestine Christian resistance journal; *Cahiers du témoignage chrétien*.⁴⁴³ From 1942, Serreau took part in smuggling foreign Jewish children to the Protestant village of Dieulefit (Drôme).⁴⁴⁴ The head of Jeune France, Pierre Schaeffer, later recalled how Jean-Marie Serreau together with another young colleague, Jean-Marie Soutou, prioritised Jewish rescue above their work for Jeune France. For Schaeffer, the two men were 'beaucoup plus préoccupés du sauvetage des enfants

⁴⁴¹ The son of a Polish-Jewish butcher, Marcel Mangel was born in Strasbourg in 1923 and before joining the Resistance worked with German-Jewish refugees as a monitor at the Chateau de Montintin. For Marceau's participation with Jeune France under Etienne Decroux, see Schaeffer, *Les Antennes de Jéricho*, p. 274 and Nord, 'Pierre Schaeffer and Jeune France', p. 698.

⁴⁴² By the time of their release from the Chantiers de la Jeunesse, Jeune France had been dissolved and the Comédiens Routiers refused to readmit Weill and Adolphe. The racial laws were cited as their explanation. Interview with Georges Weill, 3 June 2009.

⁴⁴³ Bergès, *Vichy contre Mounier*, pp. 87 and Bédarida, *Les Armes de l'Esprit*, pp. 127–136.

⁴⁴⁴ J. Sauvageon, 'La Drôme, refuge des intellectuels', *Annales de la Société des amis de Louis Aragon et Elsa Triolet*, no 6 (2004), p. 29.

juifs que des cantilènes de l’Auvergne’.⁴⁴⁵ Before the Occupation, Jean-Marie Soutou had also been heavily involved with *Esprit*, where he had been a member of the editorial staff. In 1940, Mounier introduced Soutou to Jeune France and he joined the central secretariat in Lyon. However, from the spring of 1941, Soutou combined his membership of Jeune France with active involvement in Amitié Chrétienne, and from November 1941 he became one of the earliest contributors to *Cahiers du témoignage chrétien*.⁴⁴⁶ As the threat of Jewish deportations escalated, Soutou dedicated more energy to his rescue work and in the summer of 1942 he was able to save Jewish children from deportation by placing them in some of Jeune France’s facilities.⁴⁴⁷

Jeune France’s acceptance of Jews into the organisation reveals that to have supported some aspects of the National Revolution does not imply acceptance of the totality of Vichy’s ideological agenda. Referring specifically to the case of Jeune France, Jackson has noted that ‘Vichy’s official values were susceptible to various interpretations’.⁴⁴⁸ United in their non-conformism but politically fragmented, the leadership of Jeune France did not adopt a fixed position on the Jewish Question. Combating anti-Semitism was more important to Mounier and Soutou than their commitment to Jeune France. Other members, such as de Fabrègues, based their hostility towards Jews on the Catholic arguments espoused by Maritain in the early 1920s, and sought Jews’ removal from the administrative sectors of Jeune France. Such mixed reactions did not impact on Jewish participation at the performing level.

⁴⁴⁵ Schaeffer, *Les Antennes de Jéricho*, p. 275.

⁴⁴⁶ Under the direction of Abbé Glasberg and Father Chaillet, Amitié Chrétienne was a Christian (Catholic and Protestant) relief organisation that was heavily opposed to anti-Semitism. It aided Jews in internment camps and worked directly with Jewish welfare agencies. For the strong links between Jean-Marie Soutou, Amitié Chrétienne and the EIF, see Hammel, *Souviens-toi d’Amalek*, pp. 107–108. Kedward has argued that from November 1941 and throughout 1942, the *Cahiers du témoignage chrétien* were the ‘most potent countercharge to Vichy’s anti-Semitic propaganda. See Kedward, *Resistance in Vichy France*, p. 178.

⁴⁴⁷ See Nord, ‘Pierre Schaeffer and Jeune France’, p. 686 and Poznanski, *Jews in France*, p.283.

⁴⁴⁸ Jackson, *France the Dark Years*, p. 346.

In the summer of 1941, the large number of Jews in Jeune France suggests that anti-Semitism was not a priority for the leadership, who, it appears, did not consider Jewish participation to have been in contradiction with their ultimate aim of bringing about France's cultural reawakening.

Auberges de Jeunesse

During the 1930s, many young Jews had been drawn to Marc Sangnier's Ligue Française pour les Auberges de la Jeunesse movement, and this did not cease under Vichy. Michel Kuna, who had never taken part in a Jewish youth movement, recalled that it was the principle of community living which first attracted him to the Auberges de la Jeunesse.⁴⁴⁹ The purpose of the Auberges de la Jeunesse was to encourage predominantly urban youth to become reacquainted with nature and outdoor living. Youths stayed in an Auberge for several days where they were exposed to communal activities which fostered cultural and intellectual exchanges.⁴⁵⁰ At the beginning of the Occupation, Ernest Moszer, a chemistry student from Mulhouse who was a refugee in Toulouse, abandoned his work with the EIF to take on a greater role with the Auberges de Jeunesse.⁴⁵¹ This case should not, however, suggest that Jewish youth needed to choose between membership of one or the other organisation. Rather, the EIF maintained excellent relations with the Auberges de Jeunesse throughout the Occupation, encouraging its youth to spend time in the Auberges de Jeunesse.⁴⁵²

⁴⁴⁹ USC Shoah Foundation, Interview with Michel Kuna, January 1996.

⁴⁵⁰ See L. Heller-Goldenberg, *Histoire des Auberges de Jeunesse en France, des origines à la Libération (1929–1945)* (Nice, 1985).

⁴⁵¹ Hammel, *Souviens-toi d'Amalek*, p. 458. Moszer rejoined the EIF in 1943 to take part in its resistance work. He was deported to Auschwitz on convoy 77 and although Moszer survived until the liberation of the camp, he died in hospital in June 1945.

⁴⁵² CDJC, CMXLIV 1e, EIF Circulaire 10 July 1942.

Although Jewish youth were not excluded from the Auberges de Jeunesse, discussions existed at the policy-making level over their continued presence. From the spring of 1941, the Germans placed pressure on the Auberges de Jeunesse to expel Jews from the movement.⁴⁵³ However, at a secret meeting of the leadership of the Auberges de Jeunesse in May 1941, it was decided that the movement would refuse to pass an order that would expel Jewish youth.⁴⁵⁴ All of the Auberges de Jeunesse's key figures, including Sangnier, were present at this meeting in the Gard, which the SGJ's representative for the region, Raoul de Lagausie also attended. Over the course of the discussion, de Lagausie suggested that Lamirand was himself opposed to the Jews' expulsion.⁴⁵⁵ It was unanimously decided that, should the Direction be asked to implement measures that would result in the expulsion of the Jews, the entire leadership committee would resign.⁴⁵⁶ Although the Germans pressed Vichy to expel the Jews from participating in the Auberges in the non-Occupied Zone, the SGJ held off from conceding to this demand, despite the efforts of Vallat to force their expulsion.

In September 1941, Vallat wrote to the SGJ recommending the complete elimination of Jews from the Auberges de Jeunesse.⁴⁵⁷ In his reply, Louis Garonne stated that he would study the question of Jewish expulsions.⁴⁵⁸ Yet it seems that this was never undertaken. A report from the Ministry of the Interior in December 1941 suggests that

⁴⁵³ Letter from the President of the Auberge de Jeunesse Dominique Magnant to the Secretary General of the Auberges, Luc Bonnet, 3 May 1941, quoted in Heller-Goldenberg, *Histoire des Auberges de Jeunesse en France*, p. 854.

⁴⁵⁴ ADG, 1W131, Report on the secret meeting of the Direction of the Auberges de Jeunesse at Remoulins, sent from the Commissaire Spécial to the Prefect of the Gard, 17 June 1941.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁷ AN, AJ38 64, Letter from Vallat to Lamirand, 17 September 1941.

⁴⁵⁸ AN, AJ38 64, Letter from Garonne to Vallat, 6 October 1941.

Garonne had deliberately ignored Vallat's request.⁴⁵⁹ A year later, Jews continued to be present in the Auberges of the non-Occupied Zone, despite various attempts by the CGQJ to have them removed.⁴⁶⁰ After the summer of 1942, Georges Pelorson, Lamirand's newly appointed deputy at the SGJ became the biggest threat to Jewish participation in the Auberges de Jeunesse. At this time, Pelorson offered financial incentives in return for the expulsion of Jews from the movement.⁴⁶¹ The leadership, however, rebuked Pelorson's advances and did not expel its Jewish members.

Compagnons de France

While some young Jews were attracted to the cultural project of Jeune France, others found in the Compagnons de France the opportunity to live out a full-time scouting existence. The Compagnons was the first movement created after the Armistice. In the aftermath of the chaos that had characterised the *Exode* and the defeat, the Compagnons aimed to equip unemployed youth with basic skills and provide them with an immediate vocation. In the non-Occupied Zone during the summer of 1940, the Compagnons launched a programme to bring aid to refugees and prisoners of war and to shelter displaced children. Art and amateur dramatics were also promoted. For some Jewish youth who had taken part in the Exode and who found themselves in the unfamiliar surroundings of the non-Occupied Zone, their voluntary participation in the Compagnons in the summer of 1940 was an opportunity to do something positive

⁴⁵⁹ AN, F1a 3687, Note on the situation of youth in the Occupied Zone, 20 December 1941.

⁴⁶⁰ Renée Poznanski is incorrect when suggesting that Jews were removed from the Auberges de Jeunesse in the non-Occupied Zone in September 1941. See Poznanski, *Jews in France*, pp. 80 and n. 506.

⁴⁶¹ Report of the 13th Meeting of the Comité Directeur, 29 August 1942, quoted in Heller-Goldenberg, *Histoire des Auberges de Jeunesse*, p. 860.

in an otherwise uncertain situation. Their reaction underlines the multiple motivations amongst individual Jews to partake in national ventures beyond the structures of French Jewry. This was particularly the case for those youths who had been involved in the various pre-war scouting associations. While members of the EIF were encouraged to head to Moissac, this was not a first point of call for Jews who had hitherto been members of the EDF or the EU.

For Pierre Cahen, the Compagnons appeared a logical continuation of his pre-war activities. Cahen, who in the 1930s had been active in the EDF's programme to aide German refugees, found himself a refugee in the Hautes-Pyrénées in the summer of 1940. The experience of the *Exode* drove him to take part in the reconstruction of the nation, 'il fallait que je fasse quelque chose'.⁴⁶² The Compagnons' similarity to scouting made it instantly attractive to Cahen, who between September 1940 and April 1941 was in charge of a centre that regrouped 120 displaced children.⁴⁶³ The paucity of evidence related to individual participants in the Compagnons makes it impossible to know how many Jews took part in the organisation. According to a local historian of the Compagnons in the Hérault, Jews were 'relativement nombreux' in the movement prior to their eventual expulsion in May 1942.⁴⁶⁴ Nevertheless, with Jewish youth's expulsion from the Compagnons coming in May 1942, Yagil is incorrect to suggest that Jewish participation in the Compagnons violated the racial laws.⁴⁶⁵ Like in other state-led programmes, the anti-Semitic legislation prevented Jews from holding positions of responsibility within the Compagnons. But this was as

⁴⁶² USC Shoah Foundation, Interview with Pierre Cahen, July 1997.

⁴⁶³ Ibid. Cahen left the Compagnons in April 1941 following his call-up to the Chantiers de la Jeunesse.

⁴⁶⁴ For this information, I am grateful to Christian Pioch, historian of the Château de Cambous, for granting me access to a draft of his forthcoming article: 'Cambous aux heures sombres des années 1940: De l'armée belge aux Compagnons de France' in *Études héraultaises*.

⁴⁶⁵ Yagil, *L'Homme Nouveau*, p. 71.

far as they went and even the CGQJ's jurist, Robert Reffet, did not seek their complete expulsion when ordering the Jews' removal from positions of responsibility in October 1941.⁴⁶⁶ Well into 1942, Jews continued to contribute to the Compagnons' schemes and on occasion, were even maintained in positions of leadership that were barred to them.⁴⁶⁷ As a case study of the Chantiers de la Jeunesse shall shortly demonstrate, situations often arose when Vichy's racial laws were deliberately overlooked and Jews were maintained in high-ranking positions.

The very ethos of the Compagnons, its priority on outdoor living and community work, explains why it proved so attractive to Jewish youth that had been involved in the pre-war scouting movements. Kedward has spoken of the Compagnon's code of solidarity while Halls remarks that its main purpose was to take part in socially useful tasks.⁴⁶⁸ Jewish youth did not necessarily see a contradiction between their participation and their Jewishness. As it has been demonstrated, the racial laws were implemented gradually across the regime's youth movements. At the time it was not clear that Jewish exclusion from one organisation would ultimately lead to their exclusion from another. After being refused to rejoin the Comédiens Routiers in March 1942, Georges Weill and Sylvain Adolphe were invited to join a local branch of the Compagnons de France. As in the Comédiens Routiers, they were happy to be undertaking theatrical work for which they received a wage.⁴⁶⁹ Despite the law of May 1942 that banned Jewish participation in the Compagnons and the law of June

⁴⁶⁶ AN, AJ38 64, Note from Reffet to the Regional Director of Aryanisation Economique for Lyon, 24 October 1941. For more on Reffet, see Joly, *Vichy dans la Solution Finale*, pp. 165 and 221.

⁴⁶⁷ In February 1942, Edouard Lévy's son was still a chef in the Compagnons at Pau and in March 1942 Jean X, a chef at Le Grand-Lemps (Isère), was also still in position. See CDJC, CMXLV, Letter from Lévy to Gamzon, 13 February 1942 and Letter from Jean X to Gamzon, 4 March 1942.

⁴⁶⁸ Kedward, *La Vie en Bleu*, p. 256 and Halls, *The Youth of Vichy France*, p. 268.

⁴⁶⁹ Halls notes that in 1940 the men received 20–25F a day. See Halls, *The Youth of Vichy France*, p. 269.

1942 that banned Jews from the acting and musical professions, Weill and Adolphe continued to perform with the Compagnons until September 1942. The two young men were part of a group of twenty youths that travelled across the Alps, taking part in public rallies to inaugurate the opening of the region's Auberges de Jeunesse.⁴⁷⁰

As has been shown to have been the case with so many other organs of the regime, from the summer of 1940 the Compagnons' aim of service to the nation regularly took priority over Vichy's racial laws. Following the expulsion of the Jews of Alsace and Lorraine to the non-Occupied Zone, the Compagnons de France were first at the scene to aid the Jewish refugees and to help relocate them to their temporary homes in the Jura.⁴⁷¹ Representatives from the EIF were invited to take part at training camps organised by the Compagnons. An EIF report from one such camp highlights the pluralist and tolerant attitude of the Compagnons towards minorities.⁴⁷² One Compagnon *chef*, the future educationist Jean-Marie Despinette, was singled out for particular praise by Jewish youth.⁴⁷³ It seems that Despinette adopted a similar position on the Jewish Question to the one that Barrès had formulated during the First World War:

Le Chef Despinette [...] a précisé que le mouvement des Compagnons se proposait de servir l'idéal politique et social du Maréchal, tant en restant fidèle à la mystique d'une France forte mais humaine. Cette mystique n'excluant

⁴⁷⁰ Interview with Georges Weill, 3 June 2009.

⁴⁷¹ Hammel, *Souviens-Toi d'Amalek*, p. 33. For more on the expulsion of Jews in the summer of 1940, see Marrus and Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews*, pp. 7–10.

⁴⁷² CC, B.CC-17, Assistance et Oeuvres 1940–1941 (A), Report from an EIF chef on a Camp Ecole organised by the Compagnons de France at the Château de Cambous (Hérault), undated and unsigned, but reference to Juif Süß means that it is likely to be from the spring of 1941.

⁴⁷³ Under Vichy Despinette found himself drawn to the National Revolution. The pedagogical values that Despinette experienced in the Compagnons had a profound affect on his life and those of his disciples. After the war, Despinette became a leading educationist, publishing a number of seminal works and editing the *Revue Educateurs*. For this information, I am grateful to Christian Pioch.

aucune des grandes familles spirituelles et religieuses ne serve sa place dans une jeunesse pluraliste et non pas totalitaire.⁴⁷⁴

These sentiments were echoed by a Jewish chef Compagnon in March 1942, who in summing up the Compagnons' position on the Jewish Question remarked that 'en ce qui concerne la doctrine, le mouvement considère que les Juifs Français font partie de la communauté française au même titre que tous les Français'.⁴⁷⁵

Despinette's tolerance towards the Jews is further shown through his support of those Compagnons that had tried to prevent the showing of the film *Le Juif Süß* in Lyon.⁴⁷⁶

The defence of the Jews was not limited to isolated cases in the localities. On 11 October 1941, several days after a series of attacks on seven synagogues in Paris, the leading editorial in the Compagnons' newspaper was entitled 'Tolerance' and had been copied from an article in the *Journal des Débats* and dedicated to religious tolerance.⁴⁷⁷ Explicitly condemning the attacks on the synagogues, it reported that:

Parmi les « grandes vérités de la morale chrétienne » que le Maréchal veut remettre en honneur, une des plus nobles et des plus enracinées dans l'âme de notre peuple est le principe de la tolérance religieuse.⁴⁷⁸

Naturally, these examples should not suggest that the Compagnons were free of anti-Semitic episodes.⁴⁷⁹ The movement contained figures whose anti-Semitism would

⁴⁷⁴ CC, B.CC-17, Assistance et Oeuvres 1940–1941 (A), Report from an EIF chef on a Camp Ecole organised by the Compagnons de France at the Château de Cambous (Hérault), undated and unsigned, but reference to *Juif Süß* means that it is likely to be from the spring of 1941. The Château de Cambous was rented by the Compagnons throughout the period 1940–1942. During the 1950s, it was rented as a Jewish children's home by several Zionists organisations.

⁴⁷⁵ CDJC, CMXLV, Letter from Jean X to Gamzon, 4 March 1942.

⁴⁷⁶ CC, B.CC-17 Assistance et Oeuvres 1940–1941 (A), Report from an EIF chef on a Camp Ecole organised by the Compagnons de France, undated and unsigned, but likely to be from the spring/summer of 1941.

⁴⁷⁷ For further information on the attacks on seven synagogues in Paris on 3–4 October 1941, see Poznanski, *Jews in France* pp. 212–213.

⁴⁷⁸ AIU, CC, 6, 'Tolérance', Editorial in *Compagnons*, 11 October 1941.

later be explicitly revealed.⁴⁸⁰ It was even reported that some Compagnons, who were supporters of Doriot, were responsible for blowing up the synagogue in Vichy in August 1941.⁴⁸¹ Still, anti-Semitism never became a priority for the Compagnons. Its leadership had other messages that it wanted to transmit to French youth and, as Halls has argued, propaganda against the Jews did not exist within the Compagnons.⁴⁸² As was the case with the Chantiers de la Jeunesse, Jewish youth participating in the Compagnons responded to the National Revolution's calls of duty and community work. This gave them the right to contribute to the task of rebuilding the nation, which was looked upon favourably by Lamirand and Garonne. During this time, their participation in the movement did not become a target for the CGQJ who permitted Jewish involvement in the purely manual tasks of the movement.

The points of intersection between Vichy and Jewish youth, characterised by the latter's participation in a range of state sponsored programmes, has illustrated the contradictions of the regime's anti-Semitic project. Jews were not expelled simultaneously from the entirety of Vichy's youth initiatives. Even though the movements sometimes gave in to certain anti-Semitic measures as time progressed, this was not always made obvious to Jewish youth, whose voluntary participation and contribution to these projects often continued unabated. Even if they were removed,

⁴⁷⁹ Even in the article defending religious tolerance, the author does not disagree with the racial laws, claiming them to be a necessity in limiting: 'l'influence et l'activité envahissante de la race internationale juive'.

⁴⁸⁰ Having previously been a member of the PPF, Pierre Poujade was a Commissioner of the Compagnons in Figeac (Lot). Joseph Antignac was a Compagnon Commissioner for the Provence region until his appointment as head of Police for Jewish Affairs in Limoges in the summer of 1941. Antignac replaced Charles du Paty de Clam as head of the CGQJ in June 1944.

⁴⁸¹ Halls, *The Youth of Vichy France*, p.277.

⁴⁸² *Ibid.*, p.275.

Jewish youth's rejection from one organisation did not, in their eyes, prohibit them from seeking to participate in another. Neither Jewish youth, nor anybody else at the time, knew the direction that the regime's anti-Semitic path would follow. When making decisions on the Jewish Question, the leaders of these movements, inspired by Maritain and Mounier, reflected the ambivalence of their teachers and held inconsistent positions over the role of Jews in their organisations. While they did not seek their expulsion, some privately expressed concerns over Jewish integration. Indeed, their continued participation gave Jews such as Georges Weill and Sylvain Adolphe reason to believe that they had not been excluded from taking part in regeneration from below.

Chapter 3. Lautrec: The EIF's Return to the Land Project

Notre idéal n'était pas de refaire une société comme avant; on ne voulait pas tous être commerçants ou professeurs. L'idée c'était de créer un type d'humanité nouvelle.⁴⁸³

Having outlined the central themes in the relationship between Vichy and Jewish youth, this study now seeks to consolidate its findings through a case study of a specific EIF project that was put into place under the Occupation. Indeed, Vichy provided an opportunity for the EIF to implement two of its pre-war plans, both of which aimed to rejuvenate Jewish youth. From the summer of 1940 the EIF was successful in establishing a series of technical houses that aimed to direct Jewish youth towards the manual professions. A second project sought to 'return' Jewish youth to the land. It was envisaged that Jewish youths would live in Chantiers Ruraux, agricultural training centres, where they would become self-sufficient producers. By 1943, the movement had eight farms under its control, which were administered solely by Jews. The three largest farms were at Lautrec (Tarn), Charry (Tarn-et-Garonne) and Taluyers (Rhône).

The current investigation will perform a micro-study of the Chantier Rural at Lautrec for three reasons. First, during the Occupation, Lautrec was the largest of the Chantiers Ruraux, which constantly held on average 60 *défricheurs*.⁴⁸⁴ It is estimated that throughout the war, more than two hundred youths lived at Lautrec for sustained periods. Second, the fact that Lautrec housed so many of the movement's leading figures, namely Robert and Denise Gamzon and Léo Cohn, made it an EIF focal point and regularly attracted local and national attention. Third, there is little surviving

⁴⁸³ Interview with Jacques Weill, 6 April 2007.

⁴⁸⁴ Youth engaged in a return to the land at Lautrec were referred to by other EIF troops as the *défricheurs de Lautrec*.

evidence which pertains to Charry and Taluyers, whereas numerous archives across France and Israel contain documentation relating to the EIF's presence at Lautrec.

This chapter will be separated into three parts. The first will consider the planning and establishment of Lautrec from the summer of 1940 until the spring of 1941. It will consider the EIF's *retour à la terre* project, which became a priority of the movement at the same time that it was being adopted and installed as a driving force of Vichy propaganda. This section also will explore how the EIF and the local Vichy authorities negotiated the creation of Lautrec. The second will examine the functioning of Lautrec. It will ask how far the EIF's agricultural project was loyal to its pre-war ideals or rather, to what extent it was a response to and shaped by Vichy's calls for a *retour à la terre*. This section will explore the impact that the teaching of Zionism and Jewish history had on the youth and will end by considering how individual youths reacted to the EIF's broader return to the land project. A final section will consider the EIF's interactions that extended beyond the confines of the Chantier. The EIF's relations with Jewish organisations and with local villagers will be used to shed light on the Chantier's motivation to overcome its geographic isolation and to engage with external realities.

The EIF seized the opportunity to implement many of its pre-war ideals under Vichy. At a meeting of EIF *chefs* in Moissac on 15 August 1940, the creation of the Chantiers Ruraux became a priority for the movement.⁴⁸⁵ Vichy's influence behind

⁴⁸⁵ Robert Gamzon's carnet entry on 15 August 1940, in Gamzon, *Les Eaux Claires*, pp. 16–17.

this decision was paramount. From June 1940, the perilous state of French agriculture had been placed at the centre of the regime's project for renewal. As Pearson has noted, 'it was imperative to maximise available natural resources and cultivate as much of its territory as possible'.⁴⁸⁶ This was to be achieved by a law of 27 July 1940, which offered financial incentives to those willing to work on land that had been abandoned for over two years.⁴⁸⁷ In the summer of 1940 Jews and non-Jews in the non-Occupied Zone were at once confronted with a drive for a return to the land and fresh waves of anti-Semitic outpourings, which the repeal of the Marchandreau decree had rendered legal in the press. A major local newspaper in the Toulouse region, *La Garonne*, captured this dual agenda, with one edition's front cover dominated by two stories, 'La Révision des Naturalisations' and 'Le Rapatriement des Agriculteurs'.⁴⁸⁸ Nevertheless, the EIF's decision to restructure the entire movement around a 'return to the land' had its origins in the 1930s and it was not, as some historians have suggested, a survival strategy developed in response to the regime's first anti-Semitic measures.⁴⁸⁹ In the summer of 1940, the direction that Vichy's anti-Semitic legislation would take was not inevitable. On the contrary, in 1940–42, Lautrec was not in a continuous battle with the authorities. This Chantier Rural was composed of French Jews with a real desire to 'return to the land', who by engaging with Vichy intended to implement its pre-war ideals on creating the 'New Jew'. Lautrec endured a turbulent relationship with the Vichy authorities throughout the three years of the Chantier's existence; sometimes painfully hostile but at other times highly amicable.

⁴⁸⁶ Pearson, *Scarred Landscapes*, p. 23. See also Gordon, 'The Countryside and the City', p. 149.

⁴⁸⁷ Gordon, 'The Countryside and the City', p. 149.

⁴⁸⁸ *La Garonne*, 24 July 1940, p. 1.

⁴⁸⁹ V. Ermosilla-Pietravalle, 'La Résistance Juive dans le Tarn', in Fijalkow, *Vichy, Les Juifs et Les Justes*, p. 183.

In the aftermath of the meeting of 15 August 1940, the movement quickly implemented its plan for a *retour à la terre* and rented land close to Moissac at Viarose (Tarn-et-Garonne). By the middle of September 1940 Gamzon had shared the details of his project with a number of senior figures at Vichy. The Director for Youth at the SGJ responded favourably to Gamzon's plan. He replied that the details:

Ont particulièrement retenu mon attention. En effet, tout ce qui concerne la réadaptation à la vie rurale nous est particulièrement cher et nous ne serions trop vous encourager à poursuivre votre action dans cette voie.⁴⁹⁰

The Ministers of Agriculture and Work and the Secours National also assured Gamzon of their moral and financial support for his plan.⁴⁹¹ The Vichy-created Service de la Formation Professionnelle de la Jeunesse, a division of the Ministry of Agriculture, went particularly far in its approval of the EIF's plan:

Ces projets soigneusement étudiés et qui sont déjà dans la voie des réalisations, ne peuvent que rencontrer notre approbation et je ne manquerai pas de les signaler comme ils le méritent aux Directions des Services Agricoles des départements intéressés en les priant de vous assister dans vos efforts pour l'application d'une formule qui me semble réellement digne d'attention.⁴⁹²

With not enough land to cultivate, Viarose was only ever intended to be a temporary Chantier, before a larger property could be purchased in the Midi.⁴⁹³ Once this had been achieved, Gamzon envisaged relocating the entire Chantier and immediately recruiting an additional seventy youths.⁴⁹⁴ Even before a functioning Chantier Rural had been created, Gamzon was clear that the optimum number of *israélites français*

⁴⁹⁰ ADTG, 5W26, Letter from the Director of Youth to Gamzon, 17 September 1940.

⁴⁹¹ CZA, C3, 1, Report on the state of the movement's agricultural project, 17 September 1940.

⁴⁹² CDJC, CMXLIV, 2e, Letter from Bonnet, Chargé de Mission at the Service de la Formation de la Jeunesse to Gamzon, Vichy, 11 November 1940.

⁴⁹³ CDJC, CMXLV (1), Letter from Gamzon to Hammel, 19 September 1940.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid., 9 October 1940.

should form its core.⁴⁹⁵ In mid-October 1940 the EIF's secretary, Marc Haguenu, discovered a suitable property situated next to the village of Lautrec, and after consultation with the owner a meeting was arranged with the prefect. In the aftermath of this meeting, Marc Haguenu wrote to Jean Chaigneau, the prefect of the Tarn, reaffirming the movement's ambition to contribute towards 'l'œuvre nationale de retour à la terre' that would see 80–100 Jewish youths working the land within a year.⁴⁹⁶ On 11 November 1940, the day that the contract was signed, half the group from Viarose descended upon Lautrec where they initially settled at the farm of La Grasse which had been rented by Gamzon for a period of six years.⁴⁹⁷



Figure 8. Château des Ormes

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁶ ADT, 506W171, Letter from Marc Haguenu to the Prefect of the Tarn, 26 October 1940.

⁴⁹⁷ ADT, 506W171, Local police report on Lautrec, 9 April 1941. One can only speculate over Gamzon's motivation in renting the land for six years. It is possible that Gamzon was bracing the movement for a long war, or that he believed six years a sufficient period to train the maximum number of future leaders. Alternatively, the landlord may have only agreed to rent his land for a minimum of six years.

The Chantier Rural of Lautrec was located in the grounds of the imposing Château des Ormes (**Figure 8**). Jewish youth lived and worked on the farms adjacent to the château but had no access to it. La Grasse belonged to M. Lugan who agreed to rent his land to the EIF on the condition that the EIF purchase half the livestock with the resulting products being divided equally.⁴⁹⁸ La Grasse made up 27 hectares of ‘first rate’ land.⁴⁹⁹ There were approximately 12 Jewish pioneers at La Grasse over the winter of 1940–41, almost all of whom were French citizens.⁵⁰⁰ The first task was to make Lautrec habitable for other youths who were soon to arrive and to begin working the land.⁵⁰¹ The land had to be cleared for cultivation to produce food and dormitories, a carpentry workshop had to be constructed in the existing farm buildings, and livestock had to be purchased.⁵⁰² The first steps towards constructing the Chantier were taken in appalling conditions. From when records began in 1900, only the winters of 1928–1929 and 1933–1934 had been colder than the winter of 1940–1941.⁵⁰³ The freezing climate coupled with underprepared and hungry youths exposed the difficulties of communal living. Gamzon noted that at this time, the boys were constantly exhausted and the girls could not get along with each other.⁵⁰⁴ Moreover, ‘toute la journée on travaille dehors, au froid, pour faire des fagots; ce n’est pas drôle la vie paysanne dans ce pays âpre et dur qu’est le Tarn’.⁵⁰⁵

⁴⁹⁸ Gamzon, *Les Eaux Claires*, p. 24.

⁴⁹⁹ CDJC, CMXLIV 2e, Undated report on Lautrec, likely to be from January 1941.

⁵⁰⁰ ADT, 506W171, Individual forms on each inhabitant of the Chantier Rural, February 1942. A police report from February 1942 reveals that of the original dozen, all had French citizenship and that only one, Annette Hertanu, had been naturalised. Born in Romania in 1921, Hertanu immigrated to Paris with her family in 1926 where she attended French school and eventually began to train as a lawyer. Interview with Annette Porat, née Hertanu, 24 September 2010.

⁵⁰¹ Interview with Pierre Kauffmann, 11 April 2007.

⁵⁰² CDJC, CMXLIV 2e, Report on the exploitation of Lautrec, May 1941.

⁵⁰³ Météo France, Températures en France en hiver depuis 1900.

<http://france.meteofrance.com/content/2009/2/20432-43.gif>, accessed 27 January 2011.

⁵⁰⁴ Gamzon, *Les Eaux Claires*, p. 27.

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid.

A second phase in the development of Lautrec began in January 1941 following the arrival of new members and the Chantier's physical expansion. Both of these factors transformed the Chantier from a mere experiment into a working reality. On 10 January 1941, the Chantier expanded to take in a further 34 hectares at Les Ormes, situated less than 100 metres away from the Château des Ormes, where particular attention would be paid to dairy production and growing vegetables.⁵⁰⁶ A report from January 1941 shows the land to be in a good state.⁵⁰⁷ Further, the new property contained several buildings to be converted into workshops, dormitories and stables. Les Ormes also contained the maison d'Estampes, a house inhabited by the leaders and their families.

By the beginning of March 1941 Viarose no longer existed. Half the group had formed Charry — another Chantier Rural — that opened on 11 March 1941 and that was located 7 km away from Moissac.⁵⁰⁸ The remaining half relocated to Lautrec which was in the midst of expansion. From February 1941 a major recruitment drive had been launched for Lautrec which sought to recruit an additional 30 youths aged between 17 and 25.⁵⁰⁹ In April 1941 Denise Gamzon returned to France from Portugal, where she had fled during the *Exode*, and immediately became the head of the Chantier. By this time, Lautrec had begun to produce tangible results. As Marc Haguenu observed, 'Lautrec n'est plus un projet mais une école sérieuse de travail agricole intense et enthousiaste'.⁵¹⁰

⁵⁰⁶ CDJC, CMXLIV 2e, Undated report on Lautrec, likely to be from January 1941.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁸ For more information on Charry, see: Pougatch, I, *Charry*, 1946, p. 12.

⁵⁰⁹ AIU, CC 43, Circular from Marc Haguenu to EIF leaders in the non-Occupied Zone and North Africa, Lyon, 25 February 1941.

⁵¹⁰ Ibid.



Figure 9. Carpentry workshop at Lautrec

The youth's dedication in bringing about this progress was facilitated by the granting of machinery and horses by the SGJ.⁵¹¹ Two instructors were also hired to teach youth how to work the land effectively. One was Lugan (the landlord) and the other was Raymond Hirsch, a non-Jewish refugee from Lorraine, who was appointed head gardener at Lautrec.⁵¹² The youth spent eight hours a day undertaking manual tasks at the Chantier and on top of which they also completed 45 minutes of physical education.⁵¹³ In addition, they spent a further six hours each week following courses

⁵¹¹ CDJC, CMXLIV 2e, Report on the exploitation of Lautrec, May 1941.

⁵¹² Gamzon, *Les Eaux Claires*, p. 32 and ADT, 506W171, Individual forms on each inhabitant of the Chantier Rural, February 1942.

⁵¹³ AIU, CC 43, Circular from Marc Haguenu to EIF leaders in the non-Occupied Zone and North Africa, Lyon, 25 February 1941.

on agricultural training.⁵¹⁴ However, what marked Lautrec out from Vichy's other Chantiers Ruraux was its ambition to create the 'New Jew', which would derive from the study of Hebrew and Jewish Studies. Jewish learning at Lautrec went hand in hand with the youths' agricultural retraining. It was organised by the EIF leader Léo Cohn, who intended to instil in Jewish youth a love for the land, Zionism and Jewish spirituality.



Figure 10. Les défricheurs de Lautrec

The functioning of Lautrec was largely characterised by the teaching of Judaism alongside a return to the land, where the combination of both was promoted as the ultimate expression of a living Jewish existence. As a result of this, Jewish youth, far away from their pre-war lives and living in an isolated community, became immersed

⁵¹⁴ Ibid.

in a new way of life where Judaism played a constant and decisive role. Nicault and Grynberg have described the EIF's Chantiers Ruraux as 'foyers de ferveur juive'.⁵¹⁵ For Jewish scouts across the non-Occupied Zone, Lautrec symbolised the continuation of Judaism during the Occupation. However, the Chantier went further than representing a mere example. In fact, via a number of initiatives, it was able to extend Jewish life beyond Lautrec. Leaders from local groups came to Lautrec for training in Jewish studies. The Chantier offered material assistance to groups seeking to create a religious environment elsewhere. Jewish youth across the non-Occupied Zone could rely on the work being undertaken at Lautrec to fulfil their personal religious obligations. In the build-up to Sukkoth in 1942, the Chantier encouraged youths across France to build a Sukkah, claiming that they could rely on Lautrec to equip it 'de superbes épis de maïs, des concombres géants ou d'autres décorations terriennes seront offerts par Lautrec'.⁵¹⁶ To understand the evolving attitudes of Jewish youth towards their religion, it is necessary to identify the factors that launched Jewish life at Lautrec. To this end, the role of Lautrec's chaplain Léo Cohn was decisive.

Léo Cohn has been described as 'the soul' of Lautrec.⁵¹⁷ As Isaac Pougatch wrote, 'c'était un jeune Juif allemand nouveau style. Très pieux, artiste dans tout ce qu'il entreprenait, il se révéla un Hassid de la plus belle eau'.⁵¹⁸ Born in Hamburg in 1913, Cohn came from a devoutly orthodox family; both of his grandfathers were rabbis. His mother had been born into the well-known Carlebach rabbinical family; her father

⁵¹⁵ Nicault and Grynberg, 'La résistance sioniste', p. 158.

⁵¹⁶ CDJC, CMXLIV 1e, Communiqué from Lautrec that appeared in the EIF's newsletter, 10 July 1942. A Sukkah is a temporary house constructed to celebrate the festival of Sukkoth. Its roof must be made from something that once grew, such as branches, and it is decorated by hanging fruits and vegetables.

⁵¹⁷ Interview with Erwin Fleischer, 1 September 2009.

⁵¹⁸ I. Pougatch, *Un Bâtitseur: Robert Gamzon* (Paris, 1971), p. 40.

and five of her brothers were rabbis.⁵¹⁹ Coupled with his knowledge of Judaism was his musical prowess which he constantly displayed by singing and playing the flute and piano. Cohn arrived in France in 1933 and quickly became a leading educator in the EIF. After two years in Paris, he settled in Strasbourg where, through music, he sought to instil a sense of Jewish culture amongst the local youth. Conscripted to the Légion Etrangère for the 1939/1940 campaign, Cohn arrived at Lautrec on 22 January 1941.⁵²⁰

Upon his arrival at Lautrec, Léo Cohn assumed responsibility for teaching and imbuing the youths with Judaism. Cohn's aim at Lautrec was to turn the Chantier into a community with religion firmly at its heart. Alongside instructing Jewish studies, Cohn organised all of the religious services, led the choir and edited Lautrec's internal newsletter, *Sois Chic*. At the Chantier, Cohn continued to emphasise the importance of adopting a plural conception of Judaism, a central tenet of the EIF in the 1930s. Jewish youth arrived with varying degrees of religiosity and those that were less religious were not reproached or forced to practise their faith differently. That said, certain religious activities which were dependent upon communal participation, such as the Friday night service, were compulsory for all members. As Pierre Kauffmann recalled, 'la célébration du vendredi soir faisait partie de la vie commune, et tout le monde y participait'.⁵²¹ The communal aspect of Shabbat, coupled with the fact that youth did not undertake their regular manual tasks, distinguished Friday nights from the rest of the week:

⁵¹⁹ Interview with Aviva Geva, daughter of Léo Cohn, 14 August 2009.

⁵²⁰ ADT, 506W171, Individual forms on each inhabitant of the Chantier Rural, February 1942.

⁵²¹ CDJC, DLXI-46, Transcript of interview with Pierre Kauffmann.

Léo organisait avec brio l'office du vendredi soir qu'on faisait près de la grande table aux nappes blanches et ornées de fleurs, et il chantait des duos avec Rachel.⁵²²

The notion of a 'minimum commun', which instilled a minimum level of religious observance, existed at Lautrec. Jacques Weill recalled that cigarettes were prohibited on the Sabbath but bicycles were not.⁵²³

All Jewish festivals were celebrated at Lautrec, including those which the EIF had not hitherto given great significance and Cohn went to great lengths to ensure that they would be properly observed. From as early as 4 February 1941, importance was placed on obtaining Matzah in order to celebrate Passover that fell on 11 April 1941 (**Figure 11**).⁵²⁴ For the Passover Seder of 1941 and with his library in Strasbourg, Léo Cohn crafted a fully illustrated Hagaddah for the youths (**Figure 12**).⁵²⁵ Léo Cohn's personal papers shed considerable light on what he hoped to achieve during his time at Lautrec. Alongside the letters that he received and draft copies of replies, one finds numerous handwritten files on the various Jewish festivals and how they were to be observed at Lautrec. Ceremonies were organised to the smallest detail and the programme of events for each Shabbat was consistently rotated to allow maximum participation. For instance, a plan of a Friday-night service from 1941 is laid out in sixteen steps and each step has a sub-section (**Figure 13**). For step four, the singing of Lecha Dodi, each verse was sung by a different youth whose name was indicated alongside the appropriate couplet.⁵²⁶ A close reading of Cohn's class material reveals

⁵²² Memoirs of Denise Gamzon, pp. 78–78. Rachel Cohn was Léo Cohn's wife.

⁵²³ Interview with Jacques Weill, 6 April 2007. Both smoking and cycling is prohibited on the Sabbath.

⁵²⁴ CDJC, CMLV-13, Letter from the Consistoire Central to the Comité d'Assistance aux Réfugiés in Albi, 4 February 1941. Matzah is unleavened bread eaten by Jews during Passover.

⁵²⁵ Archives of Léo Cohn. A Hagaddah is a religious text that charts the Israelites exodus from Egypt and is read at the Seder, the communal ceremony to mark the beginning of Passover.

⁵²⁶ Archives of Léo Cohn, plan d'office 1941.

the messages that he hoped to transmit to Jewish youth at Lautrec. As he had previously done in Strasbourg, Cohn's lessons contained references to the weekly torah portion, midrash, Jewish history and Zionism.



Figure 11. The Matza oven at Lautrec



Figure 12. Léo Cohn's Hagaddah

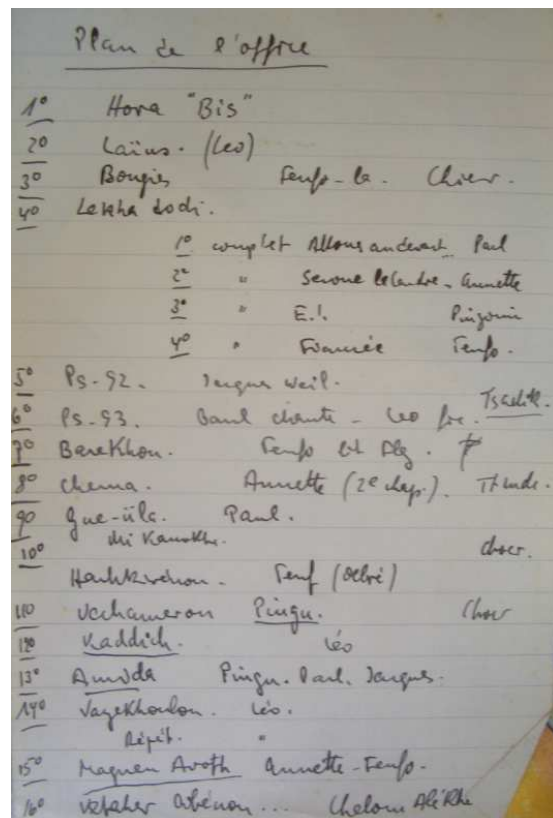


Figure 13. Plan d'office for Shabbat, c, 1941

These classes were not simply repetitions of his pre-war notes: some of the themes were temporally specific. As the anti-Semitic legislation that affected their families and co-religionists intensified into 1942, Cohn increasingly drew on historic cases of Jewish resilience to bring Jewish youth back to Judaism. For Cohn, Jewish youth had to reinvent themselves spiritually. He argued that only by returning to religious values would they be best equipped to confront their enemies. Lessons needed to be learnt from Rabbi Akiva, medieval pogroms and the expulsion of the Jews from Spain.⁵²⁷ Nevertheless, Cohn noted that the contemporary problems had the potential to be far worse as a result of the secularisation of the modern Jew:

Maintenant, nous souffrons de nouveau, mais nous manquons pour la plupart, du réconfort dans la Foi à laquelle les vieux fidèles juifs d'autrefois restaient solidement attachés.⁵²⁸

Later, some former participants considered the return to Judaism as a means of resistance. For Maurice Bernsohn, Jewish life at Lautrec was carried out in the 'esprit de Yavné'.⁵²⁹ But though a large number of youths from Lautrec did eventually join the Resistance, it may be overhasty to see a teleological link between references to Jewish history and the youths' later resistance activity. How far Cohn believed that Vichy anti-Semitism would impact on Lautrec in 1940–42 is questionable. Privately, at least until the summer of 1942, Cohn continued to regard Lautrec as a haven and not a training group for resistance activity. His letters at this time do not speak of the dangers affecting the Chantier. Writing to his parents in February 1942, he outlined the support that the Chantier received from the authorities, suggesting Lautrec's

⁵²⁷ Archives of Léo Cohn, Cohn, L, 'Omer' in *Sois Chic*, May 1942. Rabbi Akiva, one of the most important Jewish sages, had supported the Jewish insurrection against the Romans in AD 132. After the rebellion was crushed, Rabbi Akiva was tortured to death.

⁵²⁸ Ibid.

⁵²⁹ CDJC, DLXI-6, Transcript of interview with Maurice Bernsohn. After the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 AD, the Sanhedrin relocated from Jerusalem to Yavneh.

possible exception from any future anti-Semitic measures; ‘nous travaillons en marge des évènements qui bouleversent le monde’.⁵³⁰ Cohn’s desire to return Jewish youth to a spiritual Judaism did not emerge as a reaction to Vichy. In pre-war Strasbourg a reinvigorated Judaism had always been his goal and the racial laws merely provided an opportunity with which to implement his conception of Jewish spirituality amongst the youth.

The philosopher and leading proponent of spiritual Zionism, Martin Buber was one of Cohn’s greatest inspirations and Cohn was to use Buber’s neo-Hasidism as the driving force behind the Jewish renaissance at Lautrec. Prior to Buber, Hasidism had been considered a backward system of Eastern European Jewish beliefs steeped in superstition and marked by an almost cult-like following of prominent rabbis.⁵³¹ Neo-Hasidism, a prominent theme in the writings of Buber and other German intellectuals in the early twentieth century, sought to revive interest in Hasidism amongst non-orthodox Jews by promoting its model of personal spirituality, displaying ‘simcha’ (joy) in the performance of ritual commands and cultivating community life. As a product of this German-Jewish background, Cohn had been inspired early on by neo-Hasidism and sought to introduce a living Judaism to Lautrec. Youths were taught Jewish music and Hasidic songs and by February 1942 Cohn had produced a handbook with 150 songs.⁵³² In an article in *Sois Chic*, Cohn laid out his vision for a spiritual Jewish life. This would be achieved through the introduction of, ‘un élément de joie et d’entrain dans les offices en particulier et dans la vie juive en général’.⁵³³

⁵³⁰ Archives of Léo Cohn, Letter from Léo Cohn to his parents, 13 February 1942.

⁵³¹ M. Friedman, *Martin Buber’s Life and Work* (Detroit, 1983), pp. 94–123.

⁵³² Archives of Léo Cohn, Letter from Léo Cohn to his parents, 13 February 1942.

⁵³³ Archives of Léo Cohn, Cohn, L, ‘Néo-Hassidisme’, in *Sois Chic*, undated.

Ultimately, however, spiritual Judaism could only be achieved if it went hand in hand with the fulfilment of religious obligations:

Je cherche des Néo-hassidim, des nouveaux-pieux. Non pas des flemmards qui sous prétexte de manque de joie dans notre rituel ne font pas de prière du tout.⁵³⁴

Cohn brought religious spirituality to Lautrec and instilled in Jewish youth a culture that had hitherto been absent.⁵³⁵ Cohn and neo-Hasidism were so intertwined that his method of a living Judaism became known as Léo-Hassidisme amongst EIF circles.⁵³⁶ Although Cohn seldom made direct reference to any contemporary Jewish thinkers, it is clear from his writings that Buber, more so than any other writer, influenced Cohn and eventually led him towards Zionism. However, Cohn's attempts to introduce Zionism to Lautrec deviated significantly from the model put forth by Buber.

Unlike the Chantiers Ruraux at Blémont (Haute-Vienne) and Fretteserpes (Haute-Garonne), Lautrec was not supposed to be an official Hachshara and official documents and reports never referred to it as one.⁵³⁷ This absence could explain why Zionism at Lautrec has not aroused interest amongst historians. Nevertheless, with so many of Lautrec's participants who had hitherto shown little interest in Zionism making their Aliyah after the war, there is a need to consider to what elements of the Zionist project the youth was exposed and how this affected their relationship with France in the context of the Occupation. This investigation suggests that Léo Cohn

⁵³⁴ Ibid.

⁵³⁵ Memoirs of Denise Gamzon, p. 39.

⁵³⁶ See Pougatch, *Un Bâtitteur*, p. 41 and Memoirs of Denise Gamzon, p. 39.

⁵³⁷ A Hachshara is a Zionist agricultural training school. There have been no studies to date on the Zionist Chantiers Ruraux at Blémont or Fretteserpes. Reference to both can be found in Hammel, *Souviens-toi d'Amalek*, pp. 117–119 and in Lazare, *Rescue as Resistance*, p. 65.

was instrumental in introducing Zionism to Lautrec and adapting it to meet the needs of Jewish youth.

Cohn's parents and siblings had emigrated to Palestine from Germany in 1936. Since his youth, Zionism had been extremely important to Cohn, who had almost made his Aliyah in the late 1930s, but decided to remain in France to continue his work with Jewish youth, which he considered of greater importance at the time.⁵³⁸ From early on, Cohn believed that Lautrec should play a formative role in a broader Zionist context. He was adamant that his teachings should serve as an inspiration to prepare Jewish youth's imminent departure for Eretz Yisrael and his descriptions of Lautrec were embedded with Zionist terminology. In a letter to his parents, Cohn referred to Lautrec as both a Hachshara and a Kibbutz, where the work being undertaken was preparing the youth for its post-war Aliyah.⁵³⁹

Cohn's articles in *Sois Chic* were laden with explicit references to Zionism. When explaining a purely religious obligation unrelated to Zionism, Cohn often described how such requirements should be carried out in the Holy Land. Reading *Sois Chic*, the youth was aware of Cohn's desire for them to eventually to fulfil their religious practices in Palestine:

Le grand Concours Agricole annuel qui se pratiquait pour l'OMER d'après le Talmud, en Eretz Israël, est un chapitre oublié de la Vie Juive, et il appartient à la jeune Palestine – (à nous, quand nous y serons !) – de le faire revivre.⁵⁴⁰

⁵³⁸ Interview with Aviva Geva, daughter of Léo Cohn, 14 August 2009.

⁵³⁹ Archives of Léo Cohn, Letter from Léo Cohn to his parents, 13 February 1942.

⁵⁴⁰ Archives of Léo Cohn, Cohn, L, 'Omer' in *Sois Chic*, May 1942. The Omer is the period of forty-nine days between the festivals of Passover and Shavout.

Moreover, Cohn did not hold back in criticising the interpretation of Zionism that had been so widespread in France before the war. French Jewry, as has been explained, supported Palestine as a home for East European Jews, but did not entertain the possibility of ever settling there themselves:

Notre « Sionisme sans Sion » n'est qu'un lâche héritage des anciennes conceptions que nous-mêmes n'avons pas eu le courage et la force d'abandonner, malgré tout ce qui nous est arrivé.⁵⁴¹

Cohn was adamant in his desire to quell French Jewry's reticence over the Zionist project. Drawing on the writings of Zionist thinkers, Cohn and the EIF leadership attempted to create a 'New Jew' at the same time that Vichy was promoting its own *Homme Nouveau*. As was explained in chapter one, there was widespread agreement amongst leading Zionist thinkers that Jews needed to abandon their 'degenerate' state in society in order to transform their lives and their bodies to become producers and men of action. However, the Zionists did not agree over the roles that spirituality, Jewish culture and the teaching of Jewish history would play for the regenerated Jew. Even before Vichy had come into existence, the creation of the Chantier Rural at Saumur had placed the main tenets of Max Nordau's theory of degeneration and A.D. Gordon's return to the land project at the centre of the movement. Cohn argued that the 'New Jew' needed to rediscover his natural state and that this was to be found in a return to the land, which he argued, was authentic to Jewish origins.⁵⁴² An emphasis on improving the body and on physical exercise coupled with a return to the land and manual trades was aimed to rejuvenate Jewish youth. As George Mosse has written:

⁵⁴¹ Cohn, L, 'Alors, pourquoi ce Sionisme SANS SION?', in *Sois Chic*, August 1942, quoted in Hammel, *Souviens-toi d'Amalek*, p. 304.

⁵⁴² Archives of Léo Cohn, Letter from Léo Cohn to Lucien Lazare, 25 October 1942.

Nordau was interested in the creation of a new Jew through the regeneration of his body and will-power, rather than by way of a revival of Jewish culture in the Holy Land.⁵⁴³

Cohn did not follow Nordau's ideology to the letter. Revealing Buber's influence, Cohn adapted this 'cult of the body' attitude to include Jewish culture and Jewish spirituality. In doing so, Cohn revealed the possibility of combining what are generally considered to be mutually exclusive paths towards Zionism. Reminiscing in 2007, Jacques Weill commented that Lautrec's 'New Jewish Man' was marked by two features, 'd'une part plus près de la nature, d'autre part qui gardait sa culture littéraire et philosophique et musicale'.⁵⁴⁴ However, these acquisitions were, for Cohn, to be put into use only temporarily in the diaspora. Cohn was not the only Zionist at the Chantier. In 1941 amongst the leading personalities at Lautrec there were several with unambiguous Zionist convictions. As has been shown, Denise Gamzon had played important roles in various Zionist circles in the 1930s. In the same way, Ben and Rose Lifschitz had been active in the Mizrachi movement.⁵⁴⁵ Further, Robert Seror had spent two years in Palestine while Pierre Kauffmann and Maurice Bernsohn had made clear their ambition eventually to settle there.⁵⁴⁶ With such solid support at its foundations, Zionism was quickly able to permeate every aspect of day to day living at Lautrec. As early as February 1941 the two heifers at the Chantier had been named Degania and Hanita.⁵⁴⁷ Such ideologically charged names were far from accidental. Degania was the first Kibbutz formed by Zionists in Palestine in 1910. Hanita was a Kibbutz crucial to the Zionist imagination that had

⁵⁴³ Mosse, 'Max Nordau, Liberalism and the New Jew', p. 572.

⁵⁴⁴ Interview with Jacques Weill, 6 April 2007.

⁵⁴⁵ The Mizrachi were the religious Zionists

⁵⁴⁶ Gamzon, *Les Eaux Claires*, pp. 21–22. Kauffman and Bernsohn's pre-war Zionism was further outlined to the author in an interview with Pierre Kauffmann, 11 April 2007.

⁵⁴⁷ AIU, CC43, Circular from Marc Haguenu to EIF leaders in the non-Occupied Zone and North Africa, Lyon, 25 February 1941.

been created in 1938 during a period in which the British prohibited Jews from building new settlements.⁵⁴⁸

Culture, in the form of Jewish music and theatre was another method through which Cohn intended to transmit Zionism at the Chantier, an approach which went hand in hand with his emphasis on neo-Hasidism. A file headed 'Sionisme' contained a large amount of Zionist tracts and poems which Cohn promoted at Lautrec. Bialik was discussed almost daily and articles on Herzl and even on Abraham Kalisker, a Rebbe from the first Hassidic Aliyah in the eighteenth century, appeared in *Sois Chic*.⁵⁴⁹ Another writer was Albert Cohen who by the Second World War had become one of the leading Zionists amongst French-speaking intellectual circles. During the *drôle de guerre*, Cohen's work for the Jewish Agency attracted widespread attention.⁵⁵⁰

At the Chantier, Cohn created an amateur dramatics workshop and his notes reveal the range of performances that were put on for the rest of the youth at Lautrec. Alongside a number of popular Jewish and non-Jewish productions that included An-Ski's *The Dybbuk* and the Russian folk story, *Antipka and his bad-tempered wife*, Cohn wrote a selection of short plays that were performed at the Chantier.⁵⁵¹ Some of these plays were based on contemporary events affecting Jews. As he had done with the teaching of Jewish history, Cohn on occasion used theatre as a means to prompt reflections amongst Jewish youth on their own lives. In his play 'Le Juif des Ormes', Cohn made up a story that was set centuries ago at Lautrec, in which following a previous *Statut*

⁵⁴⁸ W. Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, 3rd edn (London, 2003), p. 330.

⁵⁴⁹ For Bialik see Fabrice, 'La Vie de Chez Nous', in *Sois Chic*, ed. 1, December 1941. For Kalisker see 'Ha'Hcharah' in *Sois Chic*, 30 October 1942. In the possession of Alain Michel.

⁵⁵⁰ For a detailed study of Cohen's Zionism see C. Nicault, 'Albert Cohen et les Sionistes', in A. Schaffner, and P. Zard, (eds.), *Albert Cohen dans son siècle* (Paris, 2005), pp. 99–118.

⁵⁵¹ Archives of Léo Cohn.

des Juifs, a Jewish family was killed by the lord of the manor. Even at their death the family continued to pray and chant Hebrew songs.⁵⁵²

Lautrec's choir best illustrates the tension between the EIF's desire to remain loyal to France and the movement's Zionist ambitions. The choir was mixed and youths were divided into the four sections of soprano, alto, tenor and bass voices. Many youths were attracted to the choir which performed twice a week in front of the entire Chantier.⁵⁵³ Notes from January 1942 show that there were seventeen members of the choir and that by March 1943, their number had risen to thirty four.⁵⁵⁴ As was the case for the religious ceremonies, there was never any improvisation. On the contrary, a detailed programme was mapped out by Cohn. In January 1942, the choir went on a two-week tour of the non-Occupied Zone. For their public performances, the act was divided into a series of sections that included 'Chants Synagogaux, Chants Populaires Français, Chants Palestiniens and Chants Populaires Juifs'.⁵⁵⁵ A selection of the songs reveals the eclectic nature of the programme. Amongst one of the opening songs one finds 'Hashivenu' – 'Cause us to Return' - a traditional Jewish song whose explicit message seeks to return Jews to God. There followed a series of non-Jewish classical pieces including Beethoven and Mozart, amongst which Handel's *Judas Maccabaeus*, a piece which tells a story of Jewish resilience in the struggle to maintain their religion. Popular French songs also had their place in the programme, as did regional Breton and Provençal melodies. Just as there is a Breton and Provençal tradition, the

⁵⁵² Archives of Léo Cohn, L. Cohn, *Les Juifs des Ormes*.

⁵⁵³ CDJC, CMXLIV 2e, Report on Lautrec, 11 November 1941.

⁵⁵⁴ Archives of Léo Cohn.

⁵⁵⁵ Archives of Léo Cohn, Performance of the Chantier Rural de Lautrec in Toulouse, 15 January 1942.

Jewish tradition is also a part of France's rich tapestry and the concert ended with a series of popular Palestinian and Jewish songs.



Figure 14. Programme of the choir.

The choir did not sing to solely Jewish audiences and invitations were sent to local youth groups.⁵⁵⁶ The audiences would not have been surprised to hear Zionist songs, for the invitation made it clear that the music would be, ‘une grande variété de chansons et danses populaires françaises et palestiniennes’.⁵⁵⁷ On the evening of the performance, programmes which included a list of songs and a description of the Chantier de Lautrec were distributed.⁵⁵⁸ A section headed ‘Toi qui veux être défricheur’ laid out the motivation for Jewish youth to return to the land and was

⁵⁵⁶ CDJC, CMXLIV 1e, Invitation to local scout groups in Toulouse, 8 January 1942.

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁸ Archives of Léo Cohn, Programme d’Audition des Chanteurs du Chantier Rural des EIF, Sunday 18 January 1942, Marseille.

reminiscent of Vichy propaganda. The language, tone and imagery reflected the same discourse used by the regime to implement its National Revolution.

Tu viens à nous parce que [...] Tu veux choisir une orientation nouvelle pour ta vie, et non adopter une ‘solution d’attente’.
Tu veux laisser à d’autres les solutions faciles, et préfères mener une vie active et utile bien que pleine d’efforts et de luttes.⁵⁵⁹

On only one occasion did a reference to Judaism appear:

Tu veux vivre le judaïsme autrement que par des mots en trouvant pour toi et tes frères une solution profonde du problème juif.⁵⁶⁰

As Max Nordau had done in the 1890s, the youth at Lautrec internalised the image of the Jew that was used by those seeking to marginalise Jews from the rest of society. In so doing, they openly conveyed their willingness to transform this image to one which would contribute – on the same terms as everybody else – to rebuilding France.

The tour of January 1942 was a roaring success and the Chantier made an unexpected profit of 3000 Francs.⁵⁶¹ The choir decided communally that this profit should be donated.⁵⁶² Cohn’s notes carefully trace how the youths decided to distribute the money. A large donation was made to improve the situation of Jewish children at the internment camp at Rivesaltes and two smaller donations were made to the EIF and the KKL.⁵⁶³ The donation to the EIF reveals the inextricable link between Lautrec and the EIF movement. As Cohn commented:

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁶¹ Archives of Léo Cohn, Letter from Léo Cohn to Marc Haguenu, 9 February 1942.

⁵⁶² Archives of Léo Cohn, Letter from Léo Cohn to Joseph Fisher, 9 February 1942.

⁵⁶³ Archives of Léo Cohn, Document entitled Comptes Tournée.

Le mandat de 500 Frs que tu recevras comme suite à cette lettre n'est pas considéré par nos chanteurs comme un dû mais comme une manifestation d'attachement du mouvement.⁵⁶⁴

However, a donation of 500 Frs to the KKL reveals the extent to which by February 1942, the influence of Zionism had entered Lautrec. As Cohn commented in a letter to Joseph Fisher, head of the KKL in France:

Les Chanteurs du Chantier ont tenu à manifester leur attachement à l'œuvre de reconstruction nationale en Eretz Israel. [...] Nous sommes fiers de pouvoir nous dire qu'avec nos chants nous avons pu contribuer à la fertilisation de notre pays.⁵⁶⁵

The concerts were the first public Jewish demonstrations since the Armistice.⁵⁶⁶ In interviews more than sixty years after the tour, Jacques Weill and Annette Porat had only fond memories of the choir's performances, which they say did not encounter any hostility from local people.⁵⁶⁷ Moreover, evidence suggests that non-Jewish youth groups were favourably impressed by the choir. A congratulatory letter was sent by the head of the local YWCA to Léo Cohn shortly after their performance in Toulouse. In this letter, the director also asked for the musical score sheets of some of the classical songs, including *Judas Maccabaeus*.⁵⁶⁸

Lautrec represented a laboratory which generated different and often competing forms of Zionism. The debates that had plagued Jewish intellectuals in the early twentieth century over the benefits and then the nature of Zionism were not considered central

⁵⁶⁴ Archives of Léo Cohn, Letter from Léo Cohn to Marc Haguenau, 9 February 1942.

⁵⁶⁵ Archives of Léo Cohn, Letter from Léo Cohn to Joseph Fisher, 9 February 1942.

⁵⁶⁶ CDJC, CMXLIV 1e, News on recent EIF activity in a report by Marc Haguenau, 15 March 1942.

⁵⁶⁷ Interview with Jacques Weill, 6 April 2007 and interview with Annette Porat, née Hertanu, 24 September 2010.

⁵⁶⁸ Archives of Léo Cohn, Letter from the head of the Foyer Feminin YWCA Toulouse, 7 February 1942.

to Lautrec. While the regeneration of the New Jew was fundamental to the Chantier's development, it had to be accompanied by Jewish culture and history, which were of no importance for Nordau. At Lautrec, the political tendencies of these Jewish writers and poets were of little importance. An-Ski's plays celebrating Jewish culture were performed despite the author's membership of the Bund.⁵⁶⁹ Finally, physical and spiritual regeneration was to be achieved by living in a religious Jewish environment. Here the influence of the Zionist rabbi, Abraham Kook was crucial for Cohn. Cohn's uncle and two brothers had been students of Rav Kook in Palestine. While the religious Zionism of many thinkers deemed a return to the land incompatible with their brand of Zionism, this was not the case for Kook.⁵⁷⁰ Although a religious Zionist, it is known that Kook sought to forge links with secular Zionists and the Halutzim. For Kook and later for Cohn, the goal was to return the Jewish people to Eretz Yisrael and any attempt to do so must be looked upon favourably.

During the Occupation, Cohn created a Jewish space at Lautrec where a promotion of the 'New Jew' was virtually indistinguishable from a Halutzic in Palestine. But how did Jewish youth at Lautrec react to the ideas of those in charge? A post-war image of Lautrec has been constructed around Jewish youth's dedication to their leaders' messages, which first promoted a Jewish return to the land and later Resistance activity. How youth responded to ordinary events unrelated to Judaism, work or the racial laws has never been put into question. Addressing such issues is important in nuancing the traditional narrative of how Jews experienced daily life in Vichy France.

⁵⁶⁹ The Bund was a secular socialist Jewish workers party active in the Russian Empire at the beginning of the twentieth century. It was against the Zionist project and the revival of the Hebrew language. An-Ski dedicated poems to the Bund and wrote its anthem.

⁵⁷⁰ Hammel, *Souviens-toi d'Amalek*, pp. 278–282.

The present study has thus far addressed how Lautrec developed according to the aims and ambitions of those in positions of responsibility. Public reports and internal circulars constantly evoked the success of the Chantier, which described Lautrec as a fully-functioning agricultural commune with a thriving Jewish community. However, it is the task of the historian to probe deeper and to assess how Jewish youth themselves took to their new lives. It would be implausible to suggest that the Jewish youth at Lautrec were unaware of the anti-Semitic legislation that had been enacted in France since the summer of 1940. Nevertheless, the extent to which this impacted on them directly and how far they felt threatened remains open to interpretation.

Lautrec was not impervious to outside influences. Youths came and went from the Chantier bringing with them news and opinions from across the non-Occupied Zone. The fact that all youths at Lautrec were included in the Jewish census in July 1941, and that many had relatives who were suffering as a direct result of the racial laws, further indicates the extent to which Vichy's anti-Semitic agenda was able to permeate everyday life at Lautrec. Nevertheless, the emergence of anti-Semitism from the summer of 1940 did not encourage a backlash against the regime by the Jewish youth at Lautrec. Many French Jews considered that the reawakening of anti-Semitism was a consequence of the Armistice and the government's policy of collaboration with Germany. Moreover, to the youth at Lautrec, Judeophobia in France was nothing new; anti-Semitic articles had been widespread both at the time of the Dreyfus Affair and more recently in the extreme-right press of the 1930s.

Crucially, the regime's anti-Semitic drive did not have the same impact on Jewish youth at Lautrec as it may have had on youths in other parts of the non-Occupied Zone. Jewish youth were given reason to believe that the creation of their Chantier Rural had somehow granted them an exemption from the entirety of the racial laws. Lautrec serves as a case in point to illustrate that not every avenue had been closed to French Jewish youth under Vichy. That said, considerable variation existed among the attitudes of youth at Lautrec both towards Vichy and towards the Jewish instruction that they were receiving. This diversity can be explained by exploring the initial motivations that led youth to join Lautrec.

As has been shown, the EIF developed a policy to recruit Jews affected by the *Statut des Juifs*, to act as *chefs* for the movement. A number of these *statufiés* eventually settled at Lautrec. Gilbert Bloch came to Lautrec in 1942 without having had any previous affiliation with the EIF. He was a student at the École Polytechnique, but the defeat had put an end to Bloch's hopes to lead a military career.⁵⁷¹ Incorporated into the Chantiers de la Jeunesse at *Groupement 7*, Rumilly (Haute-Savoie), Bloch was quickly promoted to the position of Assistant, a position from which Jews had been excluded in the first *Statut des Juifs*.⁵⁷² Bloch originated from an extremely integrated family and it was at Lautrec that he first came into contact with Jewish life. Hammel observed that Bloch's intelligence and his ability to adapt allowed him to integrate into 'une ambiance étrangère'.⁵⁷³ Nevertheless, his bourgeois Parisian origins and his military background made him stand out, at least at first, from the other youths.

⁵⁷¹ For more on Jewish students at the Ecole Polytechnique under Vichy, see V. Guigueno, 'Les Élèves Juifs et l'École Polytechnique (1940–1943): La Reconquête d'une Identité', *Vingtième Siècle*, No 57, Janvier–Mars (1998), pp. 76–88.

⁵⁷² YV, o.89-2, Gilbert Bloch's file in the Jewish Underground Fighters in France Collection. A discussion on Jews in positions of authority in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse can be found in Chapter 5.

⁵⁷³ Hammel, *Souviens-toi d'Amalek*, p. 271.

Denise Gamzon observed that Bloch was ‘très français, assez autoritaire, possédant un esprit aigu d’analyse, mais aussi un style d’officier parfois un peu agaçant’.⁵⁷⁴ This sentiment was confirmed by Annette Porat in a 2010 interview, where she further recalled that Bloch was the only person at Lautrec to ‘vousvoie’ the other youths.⁵⁷⁵ Denise Gamzon noted the profound influence that Léo Cohn had on Bloch. Cohn took Bloch under his wing, introducing him to a living Judaism in which he went further than other youths in his independent learning of Hebrew and Jewish prayers.⁵⁷⁶ As Hammel recalls:

Sa conception du Judaïsme deviendra réellement traditionnelle, enrichie par un mysticisme profond. Pendant le Chabbath, il ira seul, dans les bois de Lautrec, lire les Psaumes. Il envisagera, après la guerre, de rester en France et de contribuer, comme ingénieur juif, à la reconstruction de la France et du Judaïsme français.⁵⁷⁷

Some youths across the non-Occupied Zone were familiar with life at Lautrec but still sought to obtain as much information as possible before they committed to joining the Chantier. Lucien Lazare was in regular correspondence with Léo Cohn, while studying at the PSIL Yeshiva in Limoges.⁵⁷⁸ Lazare’s letters probe Cohn about life at Lautrec, the ambition of the project and the engagement of youths with a return to the

⁵⁷⁴ YV, o.89-2, Denise Gamzon’s description of Gilbert Bloch in Gilbert Bloch’s file in the Jewish Underground Fighters in France Collection.

⁵⁷⁵ Interview with Annette Porat, née Hertanu, 24 September 2010.

⁵⁷⁶ YV, o.89-2, Denise Gamzon’s description of Gilbert Bloch in Gilbert Bloch’s file in the Jewish Underground Fighters in France Collection.

⁵⁷⁷ Hammel, *Souviens-toi d’Amalek*, p. 271.

⁵⁷⁸ Archives of Léo Cohn, Correspondence between Léo Cohn and Lucien Lazare 1942–1943 and interviews with Lucien Lazare, 30 October 2008 and 3 August 2009.

land.⁵⁷⁹ He openly questioned the morality of some of the members, warning Cohn of the flirtatious behaviour of some of the girls, which he viewed as ‘dangerous’.⁵⁸⁰

Ideological commitments did not always motivate decisions to join the Chantier. The war had interrupted these lives and made them available for Lautrec. Jews did not have the right to cross the Demarcation Line and were not allowed to re-enter annexed Alsace and Lorraine. Their refugee status in the non-Occupied Zone was coupled with the need to seek employment or to begin studies, both of which were rendered all the more difficult because of the racial laws. Lautrec offered an attractive alternative to Jews’ uncertainty. In regular circumstances, the Chantier Rural may not have aroused as much interest. Contrary to the EIF’s ideological motivations it is highly likely that a number of youths came to Lautrec devoid of any beliefs, simply because they had nowhere else to go:

Je voudrais, dans l’année qui vient, faire une expérience et voir si je serais capable d’être agriculteur : Auriez-vous encore une place à Lautrec [...] Je dois vous avouer que je n’ai aucune expérience du travail agricole ni même plus généralement d’un travail manuel, mais si vous m’acceptez, je suis décidé à m’y mettre de tout mon cœur et sans arrière pensée.⁵⁸¹

Youths with a desire to go to Lautrec had first to convince their parents before being accepted. This was not always easy. Colette X spent several months persuading her

⁵⁷⁹ Archives of Léo Cohn, Letter from Léo Cohn to Lucien Lazare responding to his four questions on Lautrec, 25 October 1942.

⁵⁸⁰ Archives of Léo Cohn, Letter from Léo Cohn to Lucien Lazare in which he quotes a letter sent from Lazare at the end of December 1942, 18 January 1943.

⁵⁸¹ CDJC, CMXLV 1^e, Letter from Georges Snyders to Robert Gamzon, 5 September 1941. It is not known whether or not Snyders ever came to Lautrec. This former student of the ENS was deported to Auschwitz on convoy 76 and later returned to France.

parents before they eventually conceded in September 1941.⁵⁸² Unable to find work in Limoges, Colette observed that her parents had eventually come round to the idea of her being a ‘paysanne’.⁵⁸³ It is possible that the deteriorating situation for Jews in the period that followed the second *Statut des Juifs* and the census, prompted Colette’s parents to give way on their original reluctance to allow her to leave for Lautrec. A productive existence at Lautrec appeared in stark contrast to the uncertainty of life in Limoges. Sometimes the roles were reversed and parents sought places at Lautrec for their children. As one father wrote, ‘j’ai un fils âgé de 17 ans. Nullement épris d’études, il va cette année être sans direction ni emploi. D’excellente santé il semble adroit manuellement’.⁵⁸⁴ These parents took little convincing to send their children away to undertake manual labour and saw in Lautrec the possibility for their children to create new lives for themselves in the New Order.

Post-war interpretations of Lautrec have considered the Chantier to have been a bastion of morality.⁵⁸⁵ Jewish youth are portrayed as entirely committed to a *retour à la terre* and other important exercises from which they could not be distracted or dissuaded.⁵⁸⁶ As Jacques Weill recalled:

Pour nous, on avait une qualité morale assez forte. Il y avait la loi du scout – qui imposait une certaine morale. Comme on avait une attache juive on avait aussi un certain sens moral.⁵⁸⁷

⁵⁸² CDJC, CMXLV 1^e, Letter from Colette X to Robert and Denise Gamzon, 25 September 1941.

⁵⁸³ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁴ CC, B.C.C – 17 : 1940–1943, Letter from M. Gil-Schwab to the Secrétaire Général adjoint du Consistoire, 16 August 1941.

⁵⁸⁵ See Michel, *Les Eclaireurs Israélites de France*, p. 90.

⁵⁸⁶ See Maynadier, ‘Le Chantier Rural des Ormes (1940–1944): Premier période’, p. 643.

⁵⁸⁷ Interview with Jacques Weill, 6 April 2007.

Adopting the same line of reasoning, Denise Gamzon noted that while there were brief romances between some of the youths at the Chantier, there was ‘rien de dramatique’.⁵⁸⁸ Moreover, she added that the local neighbours began to have respect for Jewish youth, ‘parce que nos filles ne tombaient pas enceintes’.⁵⁸⁹ However, the passing of time has distorted the reality of daily life at Lautrec. In keeping with the resistance narrative, former participants have elevated the physical work and Jewish life at the Chantier in their accounts of the period 1940–42. This comes at the expense of the social interactions which have been ignored and considered to be of little importance. To consider events at the Chantier solely through Jewish youth’s engagement with a return to the land and to Judaism is limited and thus does not allow for a thorough reassessment of the multiple social experiences that shaped their time at Lautrec. Indeed, the evidence suggests that on occasion, youth at Lautrec behaved in much the same way as ordinary youths, in which their responsibilities at the Chantier played second fiddle to their youthful aspirations.

Several cases illustrate this. The reported behaviour of Pierre Bauer, in the aftermath of his love affair with Colette Borach, reveals that a return to land and traditional values was not necessarily a priority for certain youths. A letter from Lautrec in August 1942 describes Bauer’s behaviour as follows:

[Pierre] n’a aucune envie de se marier pour l’instant, préfère s’amuser, a fait ‘marcher’ Colette et maintenant la laisse tomber [...] Dans toute cette affaire, Pierre s’est conduit comme un petit salaud, ou du moins, comme un parfait V.P.⁵⁹⁰

⁵⁸⁸ Memoirs of Denise Gamzon, p. 77.

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 78.

⁵⁹⁰ CDJC, CMXLV 1e, Letter to Hugues Hammel sent from unknown at Lautrec, 3 August 1942. Despite asking former members of the Chantier, I have not been able to decipher the meaning of VP.

Another example can be found in the behaviour of Paul Strauss. Born in Lorraine in 1919 and a law student before the war, Paul Strauss joined Lautrec in August 1941 after a spell in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse in the Var.⁵⁹¹ He later met Berthe, a German girl recently liberated from an internment camp who did not speak any French.⁵⁹² A short time later, Berthe became pregnant with Strauss' child. At this point, Strauss needed to be coerced into marrying Berthe: 'Il s'est d'abord défendu, il ne voulait pas prendre la responsabilité d'une famille'.⁵⁹³

Factors that were unrelated to contemporary political circumstances continued to play decisive roles in shaping the lives and the choices of Jewish youth. At Lautrec, Robert Gamzon and Léo Cohn received hundreds of letters from youths across both zones, asking for advice on all aspects of their daily lives. In January 1942, Pierre Khantine, agrégé in mathematics from the École polytechnique and a teacher at the École navale before the war, wrote to Gamzon seeking his advice on how to pursue a relationship with a young woman.⁵⁹⁴

Je crois que je suis en train de devenir amoureux et tu es le seul que je puisse prendre pour confident. [...] C'est là justement que j'ai besoin de tes conseils. Je me demande en effet dans quelle mesure je ne suis pas suggestionné par le désir d'être comme tout le monde et de connaître ce dédoublement que j'ai toujours ignoré. [...] Rien ne m'autorise à penser que je puisse attirer l'attention de quelqu'un. Je ne suis ni beau ni cultivé quand on me sort de mes mathématiques.⁵⁹⁵

⁵⁹¹ ADT, 506W171, Individual forms on each inhabitant of the Chantier Rural, February 1942.

⁵⁹² CDJC, DLXI-38, Transcript of interview with Frédéric Hammel. Details of this affair do not appear in Hammel's published account of Paul and Berthe Strauss, in Hammel, *Souviens-toi d'Amalek*, 113–114.

⁵⁹³ Ibid. Strauss was later deported to Auschwitz by convoy 76. Hammel notes that he committed suicide there by throwing himself on the electric fence.

⁵⁹⁴ CDJC, CMXLV 1^e, Letter from Pierre Khantine to Robert Gamzon, 9 January 1942. Khantine, born in 1915 in Paris, was a former student of mathematics at the ENS and Polytechnique. A teacher at the naval academy before the war, he lost this position following the *Statut des Juifs* and becomes a teacher at the EIF centre in Moissac. In March 1944 he was killed by the Germans in a reprisal act.

⁵⁹⁵ Ibid.

Jewish youths were thus not reluctant to making deep emotional commitments during Vichy, with some eventually becoming engaged. Although Pierre Khantine's professional life had been taken from him by Vichy, he nevertheless envisaged remaining in France as a married man. In this respect he was far from alone. Several weddings took place at Lautrec throughout its duration.⁵⁹⁶ Maurice Bernsohn and Annette Hertanu, who had been at Lautrec since its creation, announced their engagement in July 1942.⁵⁹⁷ The couple were able to spend a year preparing for their wedding and they were married in a traditional Jewish ceremony at the Chantier that brought more than three hundred people to Lautrec (**Figure 15**).⁵⁹⁸ After their wedding, Maurice and Annette Bernsohn decided to stay at Lautrec and to continue the EIF project that they had been involved with since the end of 1940.

⁵⁹⁶ Towards the end of the Occupation, the Section d'Études et de Contrôle (SEC), which in July 1942 had replaced the Police aux Questions Juives, proposed carrying out roundups at Lautrec on the days that weddings were supposed to take place. See AN, AJ38 301, Report from Inspector Fadeuilhe, 25 May 1944.

⁵⁹⁷ CDJC, CMXLIV 1^e, EIF Newsletter 10 July 1942.

⁵⁹⁸ YV, o.3, 3473, Transcript of interview with Maurice Bernsohn and Interview with Annette Porat, née Hertanu, 24 September 2010.

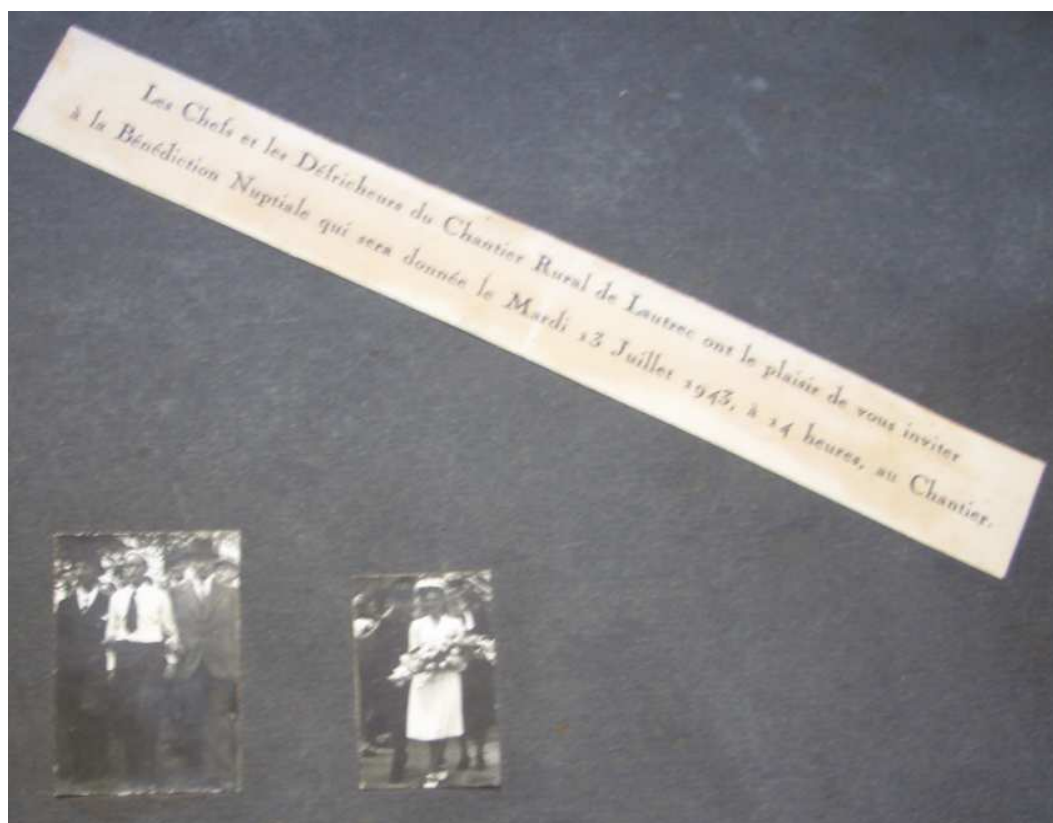


Figure 15. Wedding album of Annette and Maurice Bernsohn

The urges and youthful desires of some members of Lautrec were also expressed in less conventional ways. Herbert Scheffer, a Romanian doctor who had had his French nationality taken away in November 1941, acted as a psychoanalyst and counsellor to youths at the Chantier.⁵⁹⁹ Jacques Weill recalled that the young women at Lautrec sought Scheffer's guidance and recounted their dreams to him in the hope that he could provide meaning.⁶⁰⁰ However, it is clear that Gamzon did not approve of Scheffer's role and influence at Lautrec that distracted youths from their purpose of being there:

Mais je me méfie un peu de Scheffer, excellent docteur, psychiatre même, mais qui a une tendance un peu trop marquée à considérer le chantier comme un 'lieu d'expériences', et non pas comme un centre éducatif.⁶⁰¹

⁵⁹⁹ Gamzon, *Les Eaux Claires*, pp. 50–51, and interview with Jacques Weill 6 April 2007.

⁶⁰⁰ Interview with Jacques Weill 6 April 2007.

⁶⁰¹ Gamzon, *Les Eaux Claires*, p. 50.

Contrary to Gamzon's assertions and as has been suggested, it is through treating Lautrec as a 'lieu d'expériences', that the richness of Jewish social experiences under Vichy is brought into focus. Examination into individual experiences can reveal cracks in Gamzon's promotion of Jewish collective living, which because of official reports written at the time and post-war memoirs – often distorted by the events of 1942–44 – has until now has been considered a great success. 'Il règne dans tout le Chantier une atmosphère joyeuse et de travail intense et une camaraderie saine et fraternelle'.⁶⁰² Underneath this veneer, the Chantier constantly faced problems that threatened this image of a tranquil existence. In August 1941, having recently left Lautrec for the Chantier at Charry, Rosette Hertanu sent a letter to Robert Gamzon in which she outlined the frustration that she had endured while working at Lautrec.

Chacun a envie de se forger, comme il peut une petite vie agréable et le travail ne fait pas partie intégrante de notre vie [...] Je ne sais pas si le quart des gens est venu là avec l'intention de créer une vie belle et une collectivité harmonieuse. Je ne crois pas que le Chantier tel qu'il est à présent ne peut former des responsables même au bout de 3 ou 4 ans.⁶⁰³

Hertanu aspired to leading a rural communal life in a Kibbutz. She was severely disappointed by her spell at Lautrec and chastised the other youths whom she saw as not being serious enough for the task at hand. Evidence of Jewish youth's reluctance to engage in manual labour is found throughout their personal correspondence. This runs counter to the dominant memory of Lautrec which stresses the gruelling hours working the land. As Pierre Kauffmann recalled in 2007, 'il fallait travailler, on ne

⁶⁰² CDJC, CMXLIV 2^e, Moral Report on Lautrec, 11 November 1941.

⁶⁰³ CDJC, CMXLV 1^e, Letter from Rosette Hertanu to Robert Gamzon, 9 August 1941.

pouvait pas venir comme dans un hôtel. Bien sûr les gens qui venaient savaient pourquoi ils venaient'.⁶⁰⁴ However the image of a hotel is precisely what comes to mind when reading about Pierre Bauer and Erwin Bloch's spell at Lautrec in the summer of 1942:

Erwin et Pierre sont revenus au Chantier, l'un le 5 juillet, l'autre 10 jours plus tard, avec l'intention de rester là jusqu'au 15 août. Or, [...] ils se conduisaient comme des invités, se levant tard, ne travaillant pas ou presque.⁶⁰⁵

The zeal of youths to undertake work at Lautrec was not always commensurate with their community work during their pre-war lives. It would be false to suggest that a person involved in EIF activities during the 1930s would be more likely to respond to the movement's back to the land scheme. Erwin Bloch, born in 1916, had been an active EIF member in Colmar and was later a student at Yeshivas in Paris and in Neudorf. By the late 1930s he was a Hazan at a synagogue in the Moselle.⁶⁰⁶ Bloch arrived at Lautrec as a refugee from Lorraine in February 1941 and as has been shown, appeared to rebel against communal living.⁶⁰⁷ Bloch's example complicates our understanding of a collective experience of Lautrec. It shows that individual Jewish youths reacted differently to the EIF's multiple physical and spiritual agendas, wanting to take an active part in some – in Bloch's case the religious aspects – and to eschew others.

This ambivalent relationship with a harmonious project is further expressed in Léo Cohn's Zionist ambitions. The Zionist project, so important to many of the leaders,

⁶⁰⁴ Interview with Pierre Kauffmann, 11 April 2007.

⁶⁰⁵ CDJC, CMXLV 1e, Letter to Hugues Hammel sent from unknown at Lautrec, 3 August 1942.

⁶⁰⁶ Information on Bloch can be found in his online obituary. See <http://judaisme.sdv.fr/histoire/rabbins/hazanim/erwabloch.htm>. Accessed 17 February 2011. A Hazan is an official in a synagogue who conducts the liturgical part of the service.

⁶⁰⁷ ADT, 506W171, Individual forms on each inhabitant of the Chantier Rural, February 1942.

did not receive collective support from the youths at Lautrec. As the experience of the choir has demonstrated, there was a great deal of sympathy for Zionist ideas amongst the youth at Lautrec. In the immediate aftermath of the war, a large number of Lautrec's youths left France to settle in Palestine.⁶⁰⁸ However, some youths at Lautrec remained uninfluenced by Zionism. One young man, who had announced his intention to get married, stated that the EIF's emphasis on Zionism was a fantasy, deeming it to be 'des enfantillages et que si l'on songeait à prendre force et bâtir une 'situation' il ne fallait plus penser à ces choses là'.⁶⁰⁹

In the eyes of Maurice X, the EIF project was one that was appropriate for single youths who had not yet grown up. Jérôme Lindon, later described by Maurice Bernsohn as a 'violent anti-Zionist' also had his reservations about the links between Judaism and Zionism.⁶¹⁰ Like his friend Gilbert Bloch, it was at Lautrec that Lindon first discovered a Jewish identity and became attracted to the Hebrew language, a pursuit that he kept up well into the 1950s.⁶¹¹ However, unlike Léo Cohn and for the cultural Zionists, for Lindon, a return to Judaism did not lead to a love for the Zionist cause. On the contrary, he went to great lengths to separate the connections between Judaism and Zionism. In a letter to his brother who had become attracted to Zionism, he wrote:

Tâche d'abord de savoir ce que c'est le judaïsme. Je te prie de croire que si je ne suis pas sioniste, ce n'est pas par paresse, au contraire [...] Le sionisme est la seule voie pour beaucoup de juifs. Ce n'est pas la voie du judaïsme.⁶¹²

⁶⁰⁸ For a list of youths from Lautrec that settled in Palestine, see Gamzon, *Les Eaux Claires*, pp. 162–164.

⁶⁰⁹ Archives of Léo Cohn, Letter from Léo Cohn to Maurice (last name unknown), undated.

⁶¹⁰ YV, o.3 3473, Transcript of 1969 interview with Maurice Bernsohn, p. 10.

⁶¹¹ A. Simonin, *Les Editions de Minuit*, 2nd edn (Paris, 2008), p. 231.

⁶¹² Jérôme Lindon to his brother Denis Lindon, 1 February 1945, quoted in *ibid.*

This lack of ideological cohesion expressed itself in other ways. The youth of Lautrec was not always convinced by the direction that the programme was taking and some members believed that the project was advancing too quickly.⁶¹³ Moreover, not all youths supported the return to the land scheme, with some even questioning its utility:

Le retour à la terre est pour nous un combat perpétuel dans tous les domaines de notre être : physique, moral ou intellectuel. Et tôt ou tard on en vient à se demander si au fond, cette peine est utile, si elle nous approche plus que toute autre d'une vérité supérieure.⁶¹⁴

Youth at Lautrec reacted in multiple ways to the entire return to the land project. While some were enthusiastic and sought to use the experience as a first step towards their eventual Aliyah, others found themselves at Lautrec without any ideological commitment to the EIF's programme. The Occupation and the racial laws did not, in the period 1940–42, turn Jewish youth at Lautrec into a homogenous bloc.

At Lautrec there existed multiple interactions between the EIF, Jewish communal bodies and local villagers. The ORT was another Jewish organisation that sought to promote manual and agricultural trades to unemployed Jews.⁶¹⁵ The ORT ran its own centres and did not usually offer assistance to other organisations. As Hammel observed, 'l'ORT se méfie de ces amateurs qui demandent de l'argent et prétendent

⁶¹³ CDJC, CMXLV 1^e, Letter from an unknown author who had recently arrived at Charry from Lautrec to Robert Gamzon, 13 September 1941.

⁶¹⁴ CDJC, CCXX-56, Letter from Jacques Weill to Chameau, undated.

⁶¹⁵ ORT, the Obshchestvo Remeslenofo zemledelcheskofo Truda (Society for Trades and Agricultural Labour), was an international Jewish organisation created in Russia in 1880 to help train Jews in the manual trades and agriculture. In the 1930s and under Vichy, the ORT created training schools and agricultural colonies for Jewish refugees. See Caron, *Uneasy Asylum*, pp. 158–159.

fournir eux-mêmes les cadres'.⁶¹⁶ Evidence revealing financial support sent from ORT to Lautrec appears somewhat surprising. At the end of 1941, the ORT paid the EIF a sum of 125,000 that was to be put towards Lautrec. In January 1942, the ORT sent a delegation to Lautrec to see what the money was going towards. The report which resulted from this visit described favourably the project being undertaken at the Chantier.⁶¹⁷ After praising the work ethic of the youths and their leaders, the report confirmed the success of the EIF's plan to create a living Judaism at the Chantier. It was particularly pleased to see that Lautrec was overwhelmingly composed of French youths:

J'ajoute qu'il y en a d'autant plus de mérite que la jeunesse de Lautrec est recrutée, dans son énorme majorité, parmi les éléments juifs français qui, jusqu'à présent, étaient réfractaires et toute inspiration et idéologie juive.⁶¹⁸

Not all Jewish organisations praised the EIF's return to the land. Jules 'Dika' Jefroykin, one of the leading figures of the Armée Juive, was in constant contact with the EIF throughout the Occupation.⁶¹⁹ As the assistant to Herbert Katzki, the Director of the Joint (France), Jefroykin administered the relief organisations' funding to Lautrec and the EIF's other Chantier Ruraux.⁶²⁰ In an interview recorded in 1963, Jefroykin spoke of a meeting in Lyon in March 1941 in which the Armée Juive signalled its mistrust of the EIF specifically because of its return to the land project, 'ils [the EIF] étaient très pétainiste en 1940'.⁶²¹

⁶¹⁶ Hammel, *Souviens-toi d'Amalek*, p. 64.

⁶¹⁷ CDJC, CCXIII-83, ORT report on visit to Lautrec, 8 January 1942.

⁶¹⁸ Ibid.

⁶¹⁹ Jefroykin was a founder of Résistance Juive and later the Armée Juive. From May 1942 he was the President of the Mouvement de Jeunesse Sioniste.

⁶²⁰ JDC, AR 1933/1944, 594, In the summer of 1940, the JOINT parid Gamzon \$60,000 to go towards the EIF's *retour à la terre project*.

⁶²¹ AHICJ, The Rescue of Jews via Spain and Portugal, Interview #61 with Dika Jefroykin, 1 July 1963.

The Consistoire Central also had an ambivalent relationship with the *retour à la terre*. Given that the EIF was the only youth movement with which the Consistoire communicated directly and to which it gave funding, one would have good reason to believe that the custodian of religious French Jewry supported the central aspect of the scout's ideology.⁶²² At a meeting of the Consistoire in October 1940, Gamzon outlined his vision for Jews to return to manual and agricultural trades, 'il faut des professionnels, ils doivent vivre; c'est une question vitale pour le Judaïsme français'.⁶²³ The committee voted unanimously to support the project. On the surface at least, there were very good relations, which are personified by the character of Rabbi Samy Klein who the Consistoire appointed the official chaplain of the EIF in September 1940.⁶²⁴ Further, the appointment of Robert Gamzon and Frédéric Hammel as official delegates of the Consistoire, suggests that the particular circumstances that were facing French Jewry, had led it to move away from its pre-war insistence on promoting solely religious causes.⁶²⁵ Nevertheless, such gestures should not suggest unreserved endorsement of the return to the land project. When dealing with questions of Jewish youth, the financing of Lautrec was of secondary importance to the Consistoire. Money was to be channelled towards the Consistoire's priority, which had always been to support 'instruction religieuse'.⁶²⁶ In the Consistoire's séance of May 1941, Lautrec was the only item on the agenda not to receive financial backing and the decision was put off until the next meeting.⁶²⁷

⁶²² For more on the Consistoire's relationship with the Jewish youth movements, see L. Lazare, 'Le Consistoire Central et les Mouvements de Jeunesse', in *Revue de la Shoah*, no 169, May–August (2000), pp. 125–132.

⁶²³ AIU, CC 39, 3^{ème} Séance Plénière, Gamzon's address to the committee, 31 October 1940.

⁶²⁴ AIU, CC 39, Report of Samy Klein to the Consistoire, 12 June 1941.

⁶²⁵ Hammel, *Souviens-toi d'Amalek*, p.103.

⁶²⁶ AIU, CC 42, Séance du Consistoire Central, 25 May 1941. At this meeting it was decided that EIF troops in cities would receive 5000 frs a month and that the Entraide Française Israélite (EFI) would obtain 20,000 frs. Both of these fell under Instruction Religieuse.

⁶²⁷ Ibid.

The EIF's return to the land project was in many respects dependent on the financial and moral support that it received from other Jewish organisations. Despite its physical isolation in the Tarn, the leadership of Lautrec was compelled to maintain positive relations with other Jewish bodies. As has been shown however, the EIF's project encouraged mixed reactions from these Jewish organisms. Seeking to forge relations beyond the Chantier was not however, limited to Jewish organisations. From its inception, the Chantier sought to develop ties with the local villagers with whom they intended to coexist.

The ways in which former participants of Lautrec recall their relations with their neighbours has been profoundly shaped by the period 1942–44 in which the survival of the Chantier was constantly in doubt. From 1943, uncertain about its future and threatened with imminent closure, the Chantier looked to develop contacts with a series of personalities in the village, upon whose future assistance they intended to call on in the event of a future raid by the authorities. At this time, a visible German presence in the Tarn had caused support towards Vichy to wane and people across the region turned towards the Resistance. As the Occupation drew to an end, a host of leading figures in the village offered their assistance to the Chantier. One of the most notable was Fernand Farssac, head of the local gendarmerie, who contacted the Chantier as soon as he discovered news of an imminent raid. Farssac was later recognised as a *Juste*.⁶²⁸ Pierre Kauffmann maintained that a series of local figures also offered their assistance, most notably the secretary of the mairie, the mechanic and the greengrocer.⁶²⁹ On the occasion of his wedding in March 1944 the secretary

⁶²⁸ YV, Fernand Farssac's *Justes* Dossier, number 100004.

⁶²⁹ Interview with Pierre Kauffmann 11 April 2007.

of the mairie had sent Kauffmann and his new wife a 'faux livret de famille' as a gift.⁶³⁰

Accounts of the period 1940–1942 generally describe a period of initial hostility towards the EIF that rapidly diminished once the youths had proved their competence at working the land. Alain Michel has argued that the hostility that arose towards the Chantier had nothing to do with its Jewish nature. Rather, it was because youths were, 'des parisiens et non des paysans'.⁶³¹ The youth's Jewishness is not remembered as being a significant factor in local people's early unease. Rather, it is their urban background and their unfamiliarity with manual labour which was seen to provoke the discomfort. As Denise Gamzon commented:

Les paysans du Tarn regardaient avec méfiance ces citadins venus de Paris, qui parlaient 'pointu' – très différent de leur français du Midi, mêlé d'occitan – et puis ils riaient de voir les efforts maladroits de nos garçons pour, par exemple, charger une charrette de foin.⁶³²

Many Jewish youths who had spent time in these rural enclaves of the Tarn later maintained that anti-Semitism was unique to urban areas. They claimed that before 1940, local people had not come into contact with a Jew nor had they any conception of what one was supposed to look like. In a 2008 interview, Henri Steiner who as a refugee worked on a farm in Cabanelles (Tarn), claimed that his biggest difficulty at the time was not speaking the patois.⁶³³ Charlotte, then his girlfriend and today his wife, lived on a neighbouring farm and had only begun to learn to speak French at school aged six. When Henri was eventually rounded up for being a Jew in August

⁶³⁰ CDJC, DLXI-46, Transcript of interview with Pierre Kauffmann.

⁶³¹ Michel, *Les Eclaireurs Israélites de France*, p. 90.

⁶³² Memoirs of Denise Gamzon, p 78.

⁶³³ Interview with Henri Steiner, 22 December 2008.

1942, Charlotte recalled her words to him as being, 'qu'est-ce c'est un juif? On ne m'en avait jamais parlé'.⁶³⁴ For some Jews who seek to make sense of their wartime experiences, locals' ignorance of Jews offers a comforting explanation for the absence of anti-Semitism.

Interpreting personal histories in this way helps explain to some Jews why they were able to live alongside their neighbours for such a long time and participate in rural life. While it may be possible that the vast majority of locals had never previously met a Jew it seems unlikely that before 1940 they had not come across the word. As Ruth Harris has shown, the Dreyfus Affair was played out in public and 'overshadowed all other national business'.⁶³⁵ This was particularly the case for the Tarn, given that at the time of the Affair the député for Carmaux was the prominent Dreyfusard Jean Jaurès. Similarly, in the election that brought the Popular Front to power, Castres elected the SFIO's Salomon Grumbach. Through his activism for the cause of the German-Jewish refugees, Grumbach made no secret of his own Jewish identity.⁶³⁶

From the Jews' point of view, their swift adaptation to the land and the support that they received from Vichy fundamentally altered how they were perceived by their neighbours. The Chantier gradually began to play a role in the commune, exchanging goods with locals and sending youths to work on adjacent properties. Jacques Weill recalls that it was above all the youths' 'esprit scouté' that encouraged them to help local farmers gather their harvest and fell their trees.⁶³⁷ Maurice Bernsohn considered the Lautrécois to have been entirely 'sympathisante' and the Chantier did not hold

⁶³⁴ Interview with Charlotte Steiner, 22 December 2008.

⁶³⁵ Harris, *The Man on Devil's Island*, p. 2.

⁶³⁶ Grumbach's work with German Jewish refugees in the 1930s is presently being explored for the first time in Meredith Scott's (University of Delaware) doctoral dissertation.

⁶³⁷ Interview with Jacques Weill, 6 April 2007.

back from impregnating itself in the community.⁶³⁸ Robert and Denise Gamzon sent their two young children to the village school and youths from Lautrec took part in official local celebrations. For instance, the youth of Lautrec formed part of the procession at the municipal stadium in Albi to commemorate 1 May 1942.⁶³⁹

In the same vein, the Chantier received locals from the village and from surrounding farms. In autumn 1941, the 15th Artillery Regiment stationed at Castres sent a detachment to the Chantier for the raising of the flag ceremony. This was carried out in the presence of the Mayor and leading notables of Lautrec.⁶⁴⁰ In July 1942, to celebrate the ‘journée de batteuse’, Denise Gamzon organised a lunch for the whole commune:

On amenait une batteuse, mue par une locomobile pour une journée. Il fallait être nombreux avec beaucoup de bras d’hommes pour l’alimenter. Tous les voisins sont venus nous aider une journée entière.⁶⁴¹

Long after the regime’s aryansisation and spoliation measures had been enacted, Jewish youth at Lautrec continued to play a weekly game of Sunday afternoon football against their Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne (JOC) counterparts from the village.⁶⁴² Far from keeping themselves isolated, Jewish youth sought to integrate into the daily routine of the town and attempted to foster links and exchanges with their neighbours. In a 2007 interview, Jacques Weill recalled that ‘on avait de bons rapports avec tout le monde’.⁶⁴³ Nevertheless, relying on Jewish sources can only

⁶³⁸ CDJC, DLXI-6, Transcript of interview with Maurice Bernsohn.

⁶³⁹ USC Shoah Foundation Interview with Jean Weill, March 1997 and Interview with Annette Porat, née Hertanu, 24 September 2010.

⁶⁴⁰ CDJC, CMXLIV 2^e, Moral Report on Lautrec, 11 November 1941.

⁶⁴¹ Memoirs of Denise Gamzon, p 80.

⁶⁴² CDJC, CMXLIV 2^e, Moral Report on Lautrec, 11 November 1941.

⁶⁴³ Interview with Jacques Weill, 6 April 2007.

reveal one side of what was a reciprocal relationship, between the Chantier and their neighbours. This was aptly summed up by Léo Cohn in a letter from autumn 1941:

Bien qu'on ne puisse jamais savoir avec ces officiels ce qu'ils pensent vraiment, nous croyons que le Chantier a fait bonne impression aux délégués des ministères qui sont venus enquêter l'autre jour.⁶⁴⁴

As it turns out, Cohn was far from correct when stating that the Chantier had made a favourable impression. In fact, as we are set to see, the Chantier had been duped into thinking that it could forge relations with its neighbours. Behind the Lautrécois' smiles and neighbourly gestures, there existed personal feelings of uncertainty towards the Jewish youth. These apprehensions were not made obvious to the Chantier and were instead vigorously manifested in a variety of other forms.

⁶⁴⁴ Archives of Léo Cohn, Letter from Léo Cohn to his parents

Chapter 4. Lautrec and the Administration

Analysing the Chantier within the particular context of the Tarn by introducing the locality's specific debates, hierarchies and personalities is important to move this investigation beyond a general study of Jews under Vichy. To this end, the relations between the Chantier and local officials will serve as a microcosm within which to investigate the overlap between two of Vichy's central priorities: a return to the land and anti-Semitism. While at the level of policy-making the apparent overlap in these priorities may not have been obvious, a study of their implementation in the localities illustrates the confusion that surrounded these dual instruments of regeneration. Assessing the interface of these priorities through the locus of the Chantier reveals multiple reactions amongst local administrators over the Jewish Question. Some officials were rigid in their belief that Jews should not contribute to the National Revolution. In a personal crusade against Lautrec, certain delegates went beyond what was required of their particular local assignments to discriminate against the Chantier, in the hope that it would lead to the expulsion of Jews from the commune. However, amongst the local officials with responsibilities for Lautrec, these views remained a minority. Unlike the locals who lived in the commune, ministerial delegates did not generally distinguish the Jewishness of the Chantier from other local cases that fell under their jurisdiction and in-so-doing placed greater emphasis on rebuilding their locality than on the regime's anti-Semitism. A focus on multiple case studies reveals the circumstances that divided the local administration over Lautrec. It conveys the shifting personal and ideological factors that, on the occasion when regeneration was directly confronted with anti-Semitism, allowed one of the sides to triumph.

Until now, historians have not interrogated local reactions to the Chantier, believing like the youths that any expressions of hostility towards the EIF were motivated by a fear of urbanism that had nothing to do with the fact that the youths were Jewish.⁶⁴⁵ Alain Michel, the authority on the EIF under Vichy, has argued that Lautrec's relations with its neighbours were generally good: 'les relations de voisinage, ou celles établies avec les services officiels locaux, se passent somme toute assez bien'.⁶⁴⁶ However, Alain Michel did not employ any local administrative evidence when pursuing his enquiry. His conclusion is the result of hypotheses founded on Paris-based Jewish sources and have never until now been questioned. Yet, an analysis of letters and reports held in local archives suggest that it was precisely the EIF's Jewish identity and not their Parisian origins, that fuelled hostility from their neighbours.

The first letter of complaint about the Chantier was sent before the first Jewish youth had set foot at Lautrec. On 6 November 1940, a group of local property owners wrote a collective letter to Pétain, describing their concern about the grave consequences that would inevitably be brought to the region should a Jewish Chantier be created.⁶⁴⁷ Signalling their awareness of the first *Statut des Juifs*, they appeared dumbfounded that such an act could possibly take place at a time when Jews were being marginalised from areas, 'moins importants, peut-être que celui de l'Agriculture'.⁶⁴⁸ The men finished their letter by asking Pétain what attitude they should take towards the Chantier, not wishing to be, 'en contradiction, avec les raisons profondes qui

⁶⁴⁵ Michel, *Les Eclaireurs Israélites de France*, p. 90. See also Poznanski, *Jews in France*, pp. 137–138 and Lazare, *Rescue as Resistance*, pp. 59–60.

⁶⁴⁶ Michel, *Les Eclaireurs Israélites de France*, p. 90.

⁶⁴⁷ ADT, 506W171, Letter by Victor Fabre de Massaguel and six others to Pétain, 6 November 1940.

⁶⁴⁸ Ibid.

dictent vos décisions'.⁶⁴⁹ This letter was followed two days later by a report from a local police commissioner where he recommended separating, 'de nos braves paysans, ces éléments indésirables'.⁶⁵⁰ In the eyes of their neighbours, youth at Lautrec were immediately distinguished as Jews rather than as refugees. This nuances the claims of Jewish youth, and later of historians, who have suggested that locals in the Tarn reacted to Jews as Parisians rather than as Jews.

From the perspective of legislation emanating from Vichy, the neighbours' confusion over the presence of Jews in agriculture appears justified. Alongside the *Statuts des Juifs*, a series of laws had also been implemented in the summer and autumn of 1940 that promoted agriculture and encouraged youth to return to the land.⁶⁵¹ Vichy encouraged refugees from the Occupied Zone and from Alsace and Lorraine to participate in its rural programmes. From November 1940, refugees aged between 15 and 25 who took part in a Chantier Rural had the right to receive 12 Frs a day.⁶⁵² Jews were not excluded from this initiative and were entitled to create a Chantier Rural on the same terms as non-Jews. However, the law to encourage people to take over abandoned land included a provision that could have thwarted the EIF's entire project. Before the abandoned land was granted, it was necessary for prefects to ascertain the morality of potential workers. As Pearson has observed, 'not just anyone could take charge of a piece of French soil' as a prefect's decision on the morality of the buyer was necessary for the deal to go ahead.⁶⁵³ In the weeks that followed the passing of

⁶⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁰ ADT, 506W171, Extract of Commissaire Barthas' report to Commissaire de Rostang. 8 November 1940. The positions of both of these men are unknown.

⁶⁵¹ On 20 August 1940 a Mission de Restauration Paysanne was established and the law of 27 August 1940 made it easier for individuals to work on abandoned land.

⁶⁵² ADT, 348W578, Circular from the Minister of the Interior to all Prefects in the non-Occupied Zone, 22 November 1940.

⁶⁵³ Pearson, *Scarred Landscapes*, p. 24.

the first *Statut des Juifs*, Prefect Chaigneau did not notice a contradiction between the racial laws and the return to the land scheme and with no concern about their morals, granted the EIF permission to create a Chantier on abandoned land at Lautrec at the end of October 1940.⁶⁵⁴

The EIF's reports and letters in the years 1940–42, make constant reference not only to the subsidies received from Vichy's various departments, but also to the moral support offered by these ministries. The SGJ, it was reported, followed the EIF's progress with 'énormément d'intérêt et de compréhension'.⁶⁵⁵ Letters from the Ministry of Agriculture, the SGJ and the Mission de la Restauration Paysanne between the autumn of 1940 and the spring of 1941 testify to the financial support and encouragement that they intended to provide the Chantier.⁶⁵⁶ By the summer of 1941, Lautrec had received 20,000 Frs from the Secours National and a refugee allowance which had reached 65,144 Frs.⁶⁵⁷ Most existing studies have not ignored the funding that Lautrec received from Vichy.⁶⁵⁸ In his analysis of Lautrec, Alain Michel quotes a letter from the Mission de la Restauration Paysanne, as an example of how Vichy lent its support to the Jews at Lautrec.⁶⁵⁹ The letter went as follows:

⁶⁵⁴ ADT, 506W171, Reference to Chaigneau's decision is mentioned in a letter from Marc Haguenu to the Prefect of the Tarn, 26 October 1940.

⁶⁵⁵ CDJC, CMXLIV 2°, EIF report, 24 July 1942.

⁶⁵⁶ ADTG, 5W26, Letter from the Director of Youth to Gamzon, 17 September 1940 and CDJC, CMXLIV, 2e, Letter from Bonnet, Chargé de Mission at the Service de la Formation de la Jeunesse to Gamzon, Vichy, 11 November 1940 and CDJC, CMXLIV 2°, Letter from the Mission à la Restauration Paysanne to Gamzon, 6 May 1941.

⁶⁵⁷ ADT, 506W171, Mayor Delga's report to the Secretary General of the Prefecture, 13 August 1941.

⁶⁵⁸ Although Poznanski mentions the EIF's return to the land, she curiously omits reference to the ministerial support it received, suggesting that the project was only ever unilateral. See Poznanski, *Jews in France*, pp. 137–139.

⁶⁵⁹ Michel, *Les Eclaireurs Israélites de France*, p. 85.

Nous sommes d'accord pour vous verser mensuellement, sur production d'un état nominative, la somme de Frs 15 par jour et par jeune de moins de 20 ans, de nationalité française exclusivement [...] Par ailleurs, la Mission pourra vous accorder une subvention maximum de 30.000 Francs nécessaire pour une série d'aménagements.⁶⁶⁰

Until now, historians have accepted the EIF's official version of the state's financial assistance. Assuming that Lautrec received subsidies in much the same way as any other Chantier Rural, existing scholarship has made no attempt to delve deeper into how this support was manifested.⁶⁶¹ Using local administrative sources to probe this relationship paints a far more complicated picture to the one described by the EIF in its official correspondence. In following his example of the *Restauration Paysanne*, Michel is quite correct to state that this ministerial department financed the Jews at Lautrec.⁶⁶² However, the *Restauration Paysanne*'s support was not as far reaching as he has suggested. In fact, the *Mission de Restauration Paysanne* only ever made a single payment to Lautrec, after which point all future instalments were cancelled. This cessation was not, however, based on anti-Semitic motivations. Instead, the *Mission* discovered that Lautrec had breached a key condition by allowing non-French citizens to live at the Chantier.⁶⁶³ The *Mission de Restauration Paysanne* was not alone in terminating its financial and administrative support of Lautrec. While the Chantier enjoyed certain benefits through its connection with the SGJ, this should not imply that that the project was supported wholeheartedly by this ministry. As has been shown, Lamirand, Garonne and others at the top of the SGJ were sympathetic to the EIF's cause and they regularly made exceptions for the organisations. In practice

⁶⁶⁰ CDJC, CMXLIV 2^e, Letter from the *Mission à la Restauration Paysanne* to Gamzon, 6 May 1941, quoted in Michel, *Les Eclaireurs Israélites de France*, p. 85.

⁶⁶¹ Michel, *Les Eclaireurs Israélites de France*, pp. 84–86, Lazare, *Rescue as Resistance*, p. 62.

⁶⁶² Michel, *Les Eclaireurs Israélites de France*, p. 85.

⁶⁶³ ADT, 506W171, Letter from the *Directeur des Services Agricoles* to Prefect Renouard, 15 November 1941.

however, these messages did not always reach the localities where decisions on the EIF were in the hands of local officials. Objecting to the presence of foreigners at Lautrec, in March 1942 the Commissariat départemental au Travail des Jeunes, a subdivision of the SGJ also refused to grant the Chantier any further funding.⁶⁶⁴

However, the choice of the Commissariat départemental au Travail des Jeunes to halt Lautrec's funding did not signal an end to the relationship between this local Vichy organ and the Chantier. On the contrary, at the very moment that Commissariat officials in the localities had cut Lautrec off financially, a decision taken at Vichy ordered greater cooperation between the two bodies. This complete discrepancy between decisions taken at Vichy and in the localities can be explained by the EIF's inclusion into UGIF in March 1942. Upon UGIF's creation, the Chantiers Ruraux did not become a part of its fourth branch, 'youth', along with the rest of the EIF. Rather, a decision was made at the highest level of policy-making to place the Chantiers under the control of the SGJ and the Commissariat du Travail des Jeunes.⁶⁶⁵ Local officials under whose authority the Chantiers were set to fall were not consulted over this move, which would result in further cooperation between Lautrec and the Commissariat. In April 1942 Lamirand appointed a delegate charged with the task of liaising with Robert Gamzon and in May 1942, the SGJ granted the Chantiers access to its regional 'magasins' which provided basic equipment to schemes under its control at no cost.⁶⁶⁶

⁶⁶⁴ The division in question was the Commissariat départemental au Travail des Jeunes. This information appears in ADT 506W171, in a joint report from the departmental delegates for the SGJ, Services Agricoles and the Restauration Paysanne, 9 March 1942.

⁶⁶⁵ CDJC, CMXLIV 1e, Letter from Vallat to Lamirand, 16 March 1942.

⁶⁶⁶ CDJC, CMXLIV 1e, Letter from Lamirand to Vallat, 21 April 1942 and CDJC, CMXLIV 2e, Letter from the Délégué Général at UGIF to Darquier, 2 June 1942.

Lautrec's omission from UGIF and inclusion into the structures of the SGJ and the Commissariat du Travail des Jeunes did not entitle it to any further subsidies. Well into 1942 however, Lautrec exaggerated its early financial support, consistently citing it to suggest it enjoyed the full financial backing of the New Order when this was no longer the case. When writing to a ministerial division for the first time, the Chantier continued to introduce itself by making reference to the help that it received from other ministries, including photocopies of the initial letters of support from autumn 1940.⁶⁶⁷ In reality, Lautrec's dealings with local representatives of Vichy ministries were highly inconsistent and were subject to changes following decisions coming from the top. Rather than wholehearted acceptance, Lautrec enjoyed recognition for certain of its projects by elements in different ministries which were irregular and subject to review.

At least up until the spring of 1941, surveillance of Lautrec was limited to observation by its neighbours and had not become a target for the prefecture. By August 1941 this had changed, with the prefect authorising a thorough report of Lautrec.⁶⁶⁸ Exploring the reasons behind this authorisation sheds light not only on how locals reacted to the Jewish presence, but also how national bodies perceived the Jewish Question in the localities. Surprisingly, the CGQJ and the PQJ, so zealous across the non-Occupied Zone in spreading and enforcing anti-Semitic regulations, were not important players in the debates over the Chantier. In so far as Lautrec was concerned, the CGQJ's role

⁶⁶⁷ AIU, CC 43, This was the idea of Marc Haguenu. See letter from Marc Haguenu to all EIF commissioners in the non-Occupied Zone, 25 November 1941.

⁶⁶⁸ ADT, 506W171, Report on Lautrec from the Commissaire Spéciale du Tarn to the Prefect in which letter makes reference to a request for a report sent on 5 August 1941, 18 August 1941.

was one of an onlooker, constantly on hand and ready to give guidance when called upon. At every level, the local administration proved itself capable of proposing and enacting measures to control Jewish life at Lautrec, rendering the CGQJ's task almost redundant. Naturally, the CGQJ had delegates in the Tarn but their responsibilities were taken up by the more pressing matters such as the Ministry's aryanisation and spoliation initiatives. In its early phases, confusion and overlap plagued this ministry in the regions. In the months that followed the creation of the CGQJ, the Tarn initially fell under the jurisdiction of the CGQJ annexe in Montpellier. However, by September 1941 this had changed and Toulouse became the responsible authority. Such information was not, however, effectively relayed to the CGQJ delegate in Montpellier, who discovered this information while attempting to conduct an enquiry in the Tarn and realised that his job had already been completed by De Ginestel, a CGQJ delegate from Toulouse.⁶⁶⁹ As has been suggested, De Ginestel was able to rely on the efficiency of the local authorities and thus played only a small role at Lautrec, compiling a single report on the Chantier in 1941.⁶⁷⁰

In the absence of the CGQJ, the Légion Française de Combattants took on a leading role in seeking to remove Jews from Lautrec.⁶⁷¹ As the transmitters of the National Revolution, the Legion's purpose was to spread Pétain's messages to the localities. From its inception, Xavier Vallat, the first head of the Legion, had sought to make the

⁶⁶⁹ AN, AJ38, 1074, Letter from the Directeur regional adjoint in Montpellier to Lécussan, 3 October 1941.

⁶⁷⁰ CDJC, XVII, Reference to this report is made in a CGQJ list of Jewish property in Graulhet and the surrounding area. Undated, but likely to be from November/December 1941.

⁶⁷¹ The Légion Française de Combattants was created in the non-Occupied Zone in August 1940 to group together the disparate ex-servicemen's groups that had existed since 1918. Apart from a small chapter by Cointet, scholarship on Vichy and the Jews has not properly considered Jewish participation in the Legion. Such a study would significantly broaden the scope of the present enquiry. See J-P. Cointet, 'La Légion Française de Combattants et la Question Juive' in Wellers, et al. (eds.), *La France et la Question Juive*, pp. 103–111.

organisation 'les yeux et oreilles du Maréchal'.⁶⁷² However, problems were apparent from the start and across the non-Occupied Zone, the Legion attempted to initiate measures and supersede the power of the departmental prefect.⁶⁷³ It was in this context that in July 1941, a number of légionnaires living close to Lautrec, sought to put pressure on the local administration to force the closure of the Chantier Rural. Following a meeting of the Legion in the Lautrec canton, its president wrote a letter to Henri Libmann, the president of the Legion for the Tarn, on the subject of the Chantier Rural, where he outlined his hostility towards the Jews' presence. He noted that, above all, Jews at the Chantier were a source of envy to their neighbours because of their black market activity and their unlimited supply of petrol and cigarettes.⁶⁷⁴ He ended his letter by evoking the growing animosity of the local population towards the Jews, whose presence, 'devient de plus en plus insupportable, et porterait sûrement obstacle à l'œuvre de redressement du Maréchal'.⁶⁷⁵ The confusion that surrounded the first letters of complaint over the position of Jews in the New Order had by this time disappeared. In the view of local légionnaires, it was ideologically inconceivable for Jews, including Jewish labourers, to contribute to its model of the National Revolution.

This letter arrived on the desk of Henri Libmann at a key moment in his career. On 25 July 1941, Libmann wrote to François Valentin, head of the Légion Française de Combattants, offering his resignation as departmental president. His professional responsibilities beyond the Legion were given as the principal reason for his

⁶⁷² Baruch, *Servir l'Etat Français*, p. 208.

⁶⁷³ Kedward, *Resistance in Vichy France*, p. 86.

⁶⁷⁴ ADT, 506W171, Letter from the president of the Legion, canton of Lautrec, to the departmental president of the Legion, 21 July 1941.

⁶⁷⁵ Ibid.

departure.⁶⁷⁶ It is thus unlikely that Libmann devoted the Lautrec letter as much attention as its sender had hoped it would receive. But aside from his resignation, Libmann had another pressing matter which he hoped to resolve at the end of July 1941, one which illuminates his position on the Jewish question. On 2 August 1941, Libmann wrote to the prefect of the Tarn asking him to exempt Joseph Glichenstein from the aryanisation measures:

Je vous demande s'il ne vous serait pas possible de revenir sur votre décision en raison de l'intérêt que je porte à l'intéressé qui est légionnaire, qui a fait la dernière guerre, et qui jouait dans le Castrais et à Mazamet d'une considération très appréciable.⁶⁷⁷

Libmann's use of *votre décision* is noteworthy. It suggests that despite his important local position, Libmann was at this stage unaware of the role of the CGQJ in the department. Such action indicates the failure of the CGQJ to have an immediate impact with other national organisms in the localities.

Following the letter from the president of Lautrec's Legion, Libmann received additional complaints about the Chantier. The decision by ordinary légionnaires in the Tarn to write to Libmann suggests that they respected the hierarchical structure of the Legion and channelled their concerns accordingly. Further, the letters reveal the extent to which by July 1941, légionnaires saw themselves as agents of Vichy's anti-Semitic agenda. Referring to the EIF as 'cette tribu d'Israël', the author of one letter was enraged above all by the 'promiscuité des sexes' at a time where Pétain was advocating the moral rebirth of the nation.⁶⁷⁸ The author of another letter, who at the outset considers himself to hold a 'caractère tolérant', called for Jews to stop

⁶⁷⁶ ADT, 506W233, Letter from Henri Libmann to François Valentin, 25 July 1941.

⁶⁷⁷ ADT, 506W233, Letter from Henri Libmann to the Prefect of the Tarn, 2 August 1941.

⁶⁷⁸ ADT, 506W171, Letter from the secretary of the Legion at Jonquièrre to unknown, 4 August 1941.

receiving state subsidies, and demanded their immediate expulsion from Lautrec. When referring to the ineffectiveness of the Legion's anti-Semitic campaign, he argued that the physical removal of Jews from Lautrec would provide the Legion with, 'cent fois plus propagande, que des milliers d'affiches et de tracts'.⁶⁷⁹ Despite being incorrect when implying that the EIF had purchased their land, a later reference in his letter to Jewish property ownership shows that he was up to date with even the most recent anti-Semitic legislation.⁶⁸⁰ Another letter sent to Libmann came from the president of the Legion in the neighbouring commune of Jonquières. His letter repeats many of the arguments outlined by the previous examples, but goes further in his vilification of the Jews and of their disdain for manual labour and for their neighbours:

Il s'agit de ces sémites de tout métier, de tout crin, et de tous sexes, qui [...] attendent que les ventes aient changé pour vaguer vers les situations plus confortables, et plus lucratives [...] Si vous ajoutez à cela que la question agricole est le dernier de leurs soucis et que la promiscuité scandaleuse dans laquelle vivent garçons et filles, qui composent cette triste bande est un fait des mieux établis, vous aurez un degré de potentiel qu'ils peuvent fournir à notre agriculture, ainsi qu'au développement des forces morales, auxquelles fait appel le Maréchal, pour relever le pays.⁶⁸¹

Rather than writing to the prefect or another local official, Libmann responded to these letters by writing to a scout leader in Castres for clarification on the EIF.⁶⁸² His reaction is perplexing for the head of an organisation which had as its aim the propagation of the National Revolution in the localities. Libmann's dismissive

⁶⁷⁹ ADT, 506W171, Letter from légionnaire in Saint-Genest to Henri Libmann, 1 August 1941.

⁶⁸⁰ ADT, 506W171, Letter from légionnaire member in Saint-Genest to Henri Libmann, 1 August 1941.

⁶⁸¹ ADT, 506W171, Letter of Jonquières's Legion President to Henri Libmann, 1 August 1941.

⁶⁸² ADT, 506W171, His letter is mentioned in a letter from scout leader in Castres to the délégué départemental à la Jeunesse, 28 July 1941.

handling of Lautrec, coupled with his letter on the subject of légionnaire Joseph Glichenstein, suggests that anti-Semitism was not a priority for Libmann and illustrates the confusion of the Legion over the Jewish question. While a number of leading légionnaires in the non-Occupied Zone expressed outrage at exemptions to the racial laws, Libmann, in seeking to orchestrate an exemption, complicates our understanding of the Legion's anti-Semitism.⁶⁸³

Sandra Ott has shown that anti-Semitism was not always a pressing concern for local presidents of the Legion. In the Basses-Pyrénées, communists and not Jews were the focus of President Henri Herbille's attention.⁶⁸⁴ One can only speculate on Libmann's decision not to concentrate the Legion's efforts on anti-Semitism. Henri Libmann was born close to the town of Ribeauvillé near to Colmar (Haut-Rhin) in 1891. During the nineteenth century Ribeauvillé was an important Jewish centre in the Haut-Rhin and was home to a number of Jews with the surname Libmann including the Rabbi of the town, Moyse Libmann. The maiden name of Captain Dreyfus' mother, Jeanette, was also Libmann and she too was born in Ribeauvillé.⁶⁸⁵ It is thus not inconceivable that Libmann's Alsatian roots may explain his clemency towards the Jews.⁶⁸⁶ During his time as president of the Legion for the Tarn, one struggles to find evidence revealing Libmann to be the architect of anti-Semitic initiatives. The encouragement of anti-Semitism in the Legion took hold in the reports that followed Libmann's departure. From October 1941 the letters and reports by the departmental vice-president, Julien

⁶⁸³ On the Legion's protests to the exemptions see Sweets, *Choices in Vichy France*, p. 132.

⁶⁸⁴ S. Ott, 'Denunciations, clemency and conflict resolution in the French Basque Country (1917–1944)', in *Journal of European Studies*, 38, 3, (2008), p. 264.

⁶⁸⁵ Burns, *Dreyfus, A Family Affair*, p. 29.

⁶⁸⁶ Paul Libmann, Libmann's grandson, revealed that his grandfather was born in Rouffach in 1891 and moved to Castres after the First World War. Interview with Paul Libmann 25 February 2011.

Dupuy, made constant reference to the Jewish black market.⁶⁸⁷ Anti-Semitism was also present in the writings of Libmann's successor, Albert Chabbert, who even as late as August 1942 found Vichy's action on the Jews too 'soft'.⁶⁸⁸ The attention to order and hierarchy manifested by ordinary légionnaires when dealing with Lautrec eventually paid off. Although Libmann had dismissed the issue, the dossier eventually landed on the desk of the prefect, in whose hands the future of the Chantier ultimately lay.⁶⁸⁹

The prefect of the Tarn was the most important actor in Lautrec's relationship with the local authorities. Unlike the majority of local administrators whose duties touched on one element of the National Revolution, the prefect was in a unique position of seeing how individual elements of Vichy's programme for renewal came together at the level of policy implementation. Indeed, the elevation of prefectural powers in December 1940 made the entire local administration subservient to the departmental prefect, rendering him a key figure in any study of state organisms in the localities.⁶⁹⁰ In its first year, the new regime undertook a complete overhaul of the prefectural system. Of 87 prefects in place in June 1940, only five remained in office in July 1941.⁶⁹¹ Moreover, as Paxton and Marrus have observed, the role of the prefect was crucial for the life of Jews in France.⁶⁹² Throughout the Occupation, prefects'

⁶⁸⁷ ADT, 506W232, Letters from Dupuy to Chabbert, President of the Legion for the Tarn, 1 October 1941 and 1 December 1941.

⁶⁸⁸ ADT, 506W233, Letter from Chabbert to the regional head of the Legion in Toulouse, 29 August 1941.

⁶⁸⁹ ADT, 506W171, Note from the Commissaire Spécial du Tarn to the Inspecteur de Police Spéciale in Castres, 5 August 1941 and letter from the Prefecture to the Mayor of Lautrec, 2 August 1941.

⁶⁹⁰ Gildea, *Marianne in Chains*, p. 178.

⁶⁹¹ Baruch, *Servir l'Etat Français*, p. 226.

⁶⁹² Marrus and Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews*, p. 146.

reactions to the anti-Semitic legislation took on a range of forms. While some were very zealous in its implementation, others responded with little or no enthusiasm.⁶⁹³

Jean Chaigneau was the first prefect of the Tarn under the Occupation and personally granted the EIF permission to create a Chantier at Lautrec in October 1940. Chaigneau's stance on the Jewish Question illuminates the ambiguity and constantly evolving actions of prefects under Vichy. During the summer and autumn of 1940, while prefect of the Tarn, Chaigneau loyally implemented Vichy's policy to purge the administration of its 'incapables moraux'.⁶⁹⁴ Moreover, in a letter written in October 1941, Chaigneau commented on the reluctance of Jews to engage in manual work, preferring instead to dabble in the black market.⁶⁹⁵ Nevertheless, Chaigneau's later resistance activity with the NAP network and the great lengths he went to in rescuing Jews has received considerable attention.⁶⁹⁶ The extent of his rescue work has even been recognised by Yad Vashem who in 1997 made him one of the *Justes de France*.⁶⁹⁷ Despite his resistance activities and his willingness to help Jews, the fact still remains that Chaigneau not only remained in position but that he also enacted many of the regime's discriminatory measures.

Ultimately, no drastic decisions concerning Lautrec could be taken without the approval of the prefect. In so far as Lautrec is concerned, Pierre Renouard,

⁶⁹³ Ibid., p. 147.

⁶⁹⁴ Baruch, *Servir l'Etat Français*, p. 121. For a list of those civil servants who were removed from their positions in the Tarn in 1940, see ADT, 506W324, Commission d'Épuration des Fonctionnaires, September 1944.

⁶⁹⁵ Chaigneau to the Inspector General of Internment Camps, 22 October 1941, quoted in Gildea, *Marianne in Chains*, p. 239.

⁶⁹⁶ For more on the Noyautage des Administrations Publiques (NAP) and Super-NAP, see Baruch, *Servir l'Etat Français*, pp. 493–501. For Chaigneau and the Jews see Marrus and Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews*, p. 320; J. Kleinmann, 'Les politiques antisémites dans les Alpes-Maritimes de 1938 à 1944' *Cahiers de la Méditerranée*, no 74, (2007), p. 310.

⁶⁹⁷ YV, Jean Chaigneau's *Justes* Dossier, number 7550.

Chaigneau's successor in the autumn of 1940, revealed himself to be a model prefect of the New Order, delegating and encouraging local state organs to participate communally in cross-departmental initiatives that would tackle the perceived problem. Such organisational prowess came naturally to Renouard. Before the war, Renouard had mixed in the upper echelons of the Fédération Républicaine as the party's general secretary, a position which allowed him to develop contacts across the party and even beyond.⁶⁹⁸ Under the new regime a number of senior government ministers were former members of the Fédération Républicaine. Renouard consistently relied upon his connections with these men to advance his position. He owed his first role as prefect of the Tarn in November 1940 to his friendship with Vichy's first Justice Minister and notorious anti-Semite, Raphaël Alibert, and with Marcel Peyrouton, Minister of the Interior.⁶⁹⁹ As prefect, Renouard maintained his pre-war alliances with the most outspoken anti-Semites of the era including Xavier Vallat, Philippe Henriot and Charles Maurras.⁷⁰⁰ He contributed to Vichy's system of patronage, from which he had benefitted and used his connections with Xavier Vallat to find his friends and supporters top positions in the CGQJ.⁷⁰¹

⁶⁹⁸ According to Renouard's son, Jean-Pierre Renouard, his father was close to Pierre Mendès-France. Interview with Jean-Pierre Renouard, 12 March 2011.

⁶⁹⁹ This information was pointed out to the author in an interview with Renouard's son. From 1941 Renouard's two sons were supplying weapons to Belgian and Communist Resistance networks in Albi. After this was eventually discovered, both men were deported to Germany. Interview with Jean-Pierre Renouard, 12 March 2011. See also

http://www.memoresist.org/spip.php?page=oublionspas_detail&id=2177 last accessed 20 March 2011.

⁷⁰⁰ Renouard's pre-war friendship with Vallat was confirmed in an interview with Renouard's son. Interview with Jean-Pierre Renouard, 12 March 2011. See also ADT, 506W169, Letter from Renouard to Xavier Vallat that begins 'Mon Cher Ami', 11 July 1941 and ADT, 506W56, In May 1941, Renouard offered Charles Maurras accommodation at the Prefecture where the pair enjoyed a meal in 'une intimité familiale', Letter from Renouard to Charles Maurras, 5 May 1941. In January 1943, another infamous anti-Semite, Philippe Henriot, telephoned Pierre Laval in an attempt to promote his 'friend' Pierre Renouard. See AN, F1bI-1111 [2], Report of a telephone call from Philippe Henriot to Pierre Laval, 9 January 1943.

⁷⁰¹ ADT, 506W56, Letter from Renouard to General Laure, 26 April 1941.

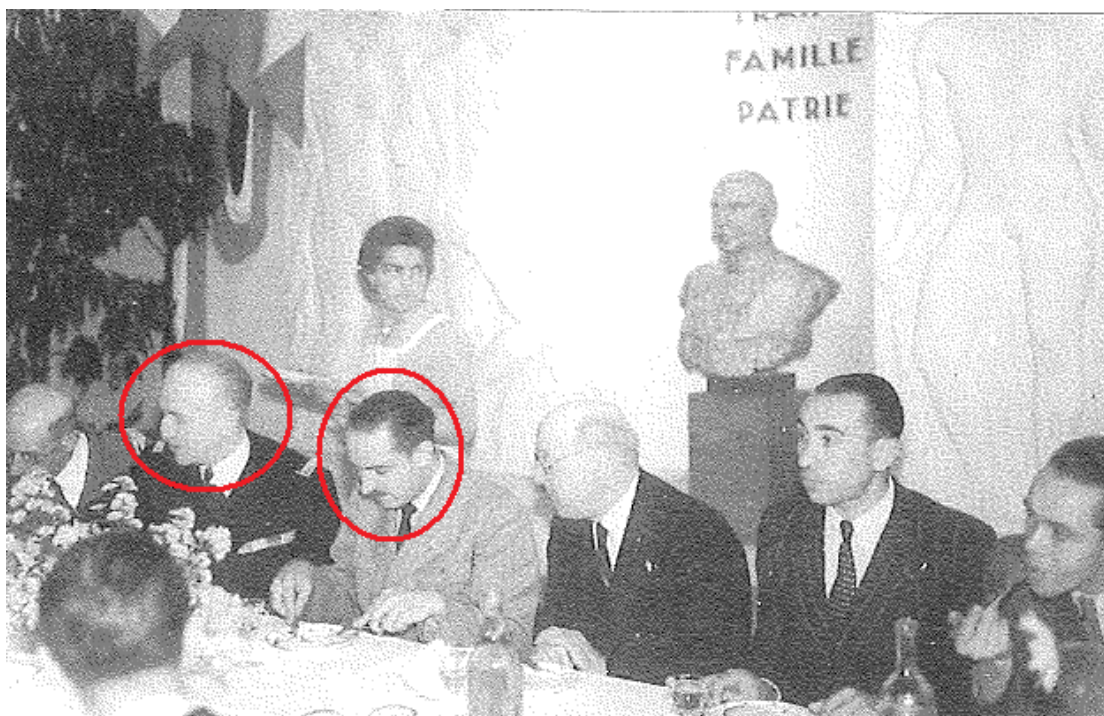


Figure 16. Renouard on the occasion of Lamirand's visit to Albi, June 1941.

Renouard, like Vallat, Alibert and Barthélemy, had each come from the same legal background and shared the belief that the racial decrees needed to be implemented within a framework of order and legality.⁷⁰² Evidence reveals the rigidity with which Renouard enforced the laws to the letter. As is known, exemptions to the racial laws had been extended in the second *Statut des Juifs* to Jews with an exceptional record of service to the nation. Renouard allowed for these Jews to continue in their professions but refused to bend on those that fell short.⁷⁰³ Even on the occasion when an exception was proposed by a Vichy delegate, who advanced the case of a particular Jew whom he believed would be an asset to the local economy, Renouard refused to budge.⁷⁰⁴ For Renouard the law was the law.

⁷⁰² For a more in-depth analysis of the acquiescence of lawyers to the racial laws, see Weisberg, *Vichy Law*, pp. 386–430.

⁷⁰³ Two Jewish fonctionnaires received such exemptions in the Tarn and remained in position. ADT, 506W169, Letter from Renouard to Vallat, 11 November 1941.

⁷⁰⁴ ADT, 506W169, Letter from Renouard to Mussard, Regional SGJ delegate for Toulouse, 19 September 1941. Mussard had tried to find a position for Georges Salomon, who was a refugee in the Tarn.

His commitment to the regime is further revealed by his dealings with the CGQJ. As a result of Renouard's close ties to Vallat, the prefect worked unreservedly with the CGQJ from its inception. Proof of this relationship is found by the large number of cases he referred to Vallat during June and July 1941.⁷⁰⁵ In 1941, the CGQJ was an institution that many prefects saw as nothing more than a nuisance and whose local influence needed to be reduced.⁷⁰⁶ Joly has shown that some prefects even went as far as refusing to open mail sent by the CGQJ.⁷⁰⁷ Renouard on the contrary was prepared to work with the CGQJ even on the occasions when he knew it would restrict his personal powers. Following the census in July 1941, Renouard reluctantly agreed to send the census forms to Vichy, fearing that in doing so, he would reduce his control of Jewish affairs in his the Tarn.⁷⁰⁸ The regional prefect for Marseille however, refused a similar request, although unlike Renouard, did so for more benevolent reasons towards Jews.⁷⁰⁹

Reducing the Jewish influence through legal means was a policy that Renouard adopted concerning the Jews at Lautrec. Renouard did not ignore the Legion's letters of complaint and immediately ordered a thorough investigation of the Chantier.⁷¹⁰ The police reports that Renouard received offer compelling insight into how ordinary inhabitants at Lautrec reacted to the presence of the Jewish Chantier. Their remarks to the police distort the image of a welcoming community, remembered so fondly by

⁷⁰⁵ ADT, 506W48, Lists of prefectural couriers. See for instance 4 June 1941, Affair Julien Joseph à Mazamet. A similar case existed in the Gard, in which the prefect and the delegate for Jewish affairs were old friends. See Joly, *Vichy dans la Solution Finale*, p. 501.

⁷⁰⁶ See Marrus and Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews*, p. 134.

⁷⁰⁷ Joly, *Vichy dans la Solution Finale*, p. 503

⁷⁰⁸ AN, AJ38 1089, Letter from Renouard to the Regional Director of the CGQJ, 11 September 1941.

⁷⁰⁹ Joly, *Vichy dans la Solution Finale*, p. 503.

⁷¹⁰ ADT, 506W171, Note from the Commissaire Spécial du Tarn to the Inspecteur de Police Spéciale in Castres, 5 August 1941 and letter from the Prefecture to the Mayor of Lautrec, 2 August 1941.

Jacques Weill.⁷¹¹ Rather, we are introduced to a community overwhelmed by both curiosity and animosity at the presence of their new neighbours, at a time in which the canton was plagued by material shortages. The Chantier's disproportionate cigarette ration was mentioned by almost all of its neighbours as a particular source of concern.⁷¹² Crucially however, it was the perceived laziness of youth at the Chantier, which frustrated the locals. This, as has been explained, was shared by some Jews at Lautrec who complained about the sluggish attitude of other youths.⁷¹³ The police report explained that it was this aspect, more so than any other factor, which separated the Chantier from its neighbours:

Il paraît que tout le monde ne travaille pas avec ardeur; à part une dizaine de personnes, les autres donnent plutôt l'impression de s'amuser. Composé d'intellectuels et d'étudiants, il est certain que la plus grande partie des membres de ce chantier ne doit pas avoir l'amour de la terre. C'est précisément ce qui existe contre eux la population de Lautrec et surtout les paysans.⁷¹⁴

Given the opportunity, Gaston Delga a local doctor and the Mayor of Lautrec, also prepared a report in which he did not shy away from expressing the local hostilities towards the Chantier. The creation of the Chantiers Ruraux gave mayors additional responsibilities and because of their status in the local community they soon found themselves in a unique position to notice a contradiction in policy-making. Not only did mayors have to draw-up a list of abandoned land in their commune, but the law made clear that the creation of the Chantiers was 'à la charge des collectivités

⁷¹¹ Interview with Jacques Weill, 6 April 2007.

⁷¹² ADT, 506W171, Report from Inspector Couedor to the Commissaire Spéciale du Tarn, 9 August 1941.

⁷¹³ See in Chapter 3 the letter by Rosette Hertenu, which was sent by coincidence the same day as this report.

⁷¹⁴ ADT, 506W171, Report from Inspector Couedor to the Commissaire Spéciale du Tarn, 9 August 1941.

locales'.⁷¹⁵ The commune, in this case Lautrec, thus received supplementary finances from Vichy which it distributed to the Chantier. Delga was hostile to the Jewish presence in his commune. Between 1941–42, he wrote a series of letters and reports to the prefect in which he complained that the Chantier was living off of the state allowance and work was not being undertaken on the land. He also criticised Lautrec for using non-Jewish labour:⁷¹⁶

La population de Lautrec, s'indigne de voir qu'aucun de ces juifs ne travaille la terre et trouve anormal qu'ils puissent employer des domestiques autres que ceux de la race.⁷¹⁷

Delga distinguished the Jews from other refugees at Lautrec, whom he implied were worthier recipients of supplies.⁷¹⁸ The Jews had not made any efforts to integrate and reacted scornfully to the local way of life, 'ils donnent l'impression qu'ils n'ont jamais eu l'intention de travailler la terre, trop basse pour eux'.⁷¹⁹ As mayor Delga was in a privileged position to see how the anti-Jewish legislation was developing and by the summer of 1941, he had come into contact with the regime's racial laws. Mayors in the non-Occupied Zone played an obligatory and important role in the Jewish census of June and July 1941.⁷²⁰ Up to date with Vichy's racial laws, his over-zealous attack on the Jews illustrates the extent to which he was ready to comply with the regime's anti-Semitic drive.

⁷¹⁵ ADT, 506W93, Minutes of the meeting of the Chambre d'Agriculture for the Tarn, 19 November 1940.

⁷¹⁶ ADT, 506W171, Letters and Reports of Delga on 13 August 1941, 10 December 1941, 4 February 1942.

⁷¹⁷ ADT, 506W171, Delga's comments in a report from the Gendarmerie of Lautrec to the Prefect, 4 February 1942.

⁷¹⁸ ADT, 506W171, Letter from Delga to the Secretary General in Albi, 13 August 1941.

⁷¹⁹ Ibid.

⁷²⁰ ADT, 506W43, Circulars from the Ministry of the Interior to Prefects in the non-Occupied Zone, asking them to inform mayors to draw-up secret lists of suspected Jews living in their communes, 13 and 23 June 1941.

However, despite Delga's protests and the opinions of locals collated during the investigation, the conclusion to the report which Renouard had ordered left no room for misinterpretation. The August 1941 report revealed that local complaints drastically exaggerated the Jewish actions, whose behaviour was described as having been entirely 'régulière'.⁷²¹ The commissaire spéciale noted that 'du point de vue police pure les éléments ainsi recueillis sont insuffisants pour me permettre de vous proposer des mesures d'assainissement'.⁷²² Nevertheless, the commissaire spéciale appeared to offer Renouard a loophole which would allow him to take action against the Jews. He explained that although the police were powerless to remove the Jews from Lautrec, should local delegates of government ministries launch their own enquiries and discover evidence that contradict his findings, then, 'il serait sans doute facile d'éliminer la plupart de ces éléments'.⁷²³ As far as the police was concerned the matter was closed; for Renouard, it was not. In a climate of material shortages, when support for the regime was waning, Renouard disregarded the findings of the police report and launched a second, deeper, investigation which would draw on a range of mechanisms that were at his disposal.

The commissaire spéciale was not the only Vichy official to find that work was being successfully undertaken at Lautrec. In early September 1941, Renouard wrote to the departmental delegates for youth, agriculture and the Restauration Paysanne, asking them to visit Lautrec personally and to investigate the functioning of the Chantier. The fact that it then took more than two months for the three representatives to carry out this request strongly implies that unlike for the prefect, Lautrec was not for them a matter of priority. The delegate's findings matched the police report of August 1941.

⁷²¹ ADT, 506W171, Letter from the Commissaire Spéciale du Tarn to Renouard, 18 August 1941.

⁷²² Ibid.

⁷²³ Ibid.

It claimed that the neighbours had exaggerated their complaints and maintained instead that the agricultural work being undertaken by Jewish youth at Lautrec was going in the right direction.⁷²⁴ That said, this should not suggest that the delegates were sympathetic to the Jews at the Chantier. The report also reveals that although they did not seek to extend the anti-Semitic legislation, the administrators were not opposed to the racial laws:

Sur les murs du réfectoire, nous avons vu une sorte de journal du Centre où nous avons regretté de trouver certains passages protestant contre les internements des juifs dans les camps de concentration.⁷²⁵

Pierre Laborie is quite correct to point out the absence of any reaction to the anti-Semitic legislation by the local population during the period 1940–1941.⁷²⁶ Although civil servants on the whole reacted in silence neither speaking for or against these policies, this should not suggest that they did not hold personal opinions on the subject. This example reveals just how far some ordinary civil servants were not passive or indifferent to the fate of Jews in camps, but instead were imbued with the faith that Vichy's internment policies were part of a broader plan in the interests of the nation.

The major reports commissioned by the prefect had shown the Chantier to be fully functioning. Fortunately for Renouard, investigation into Lautrec with a view to closing it, had not met a dead end. In the autumn of 1941, the Chantier aroused the interest of Pierre Bailly, the sub-prefect of Castres who recommended to Renouard that the Jews be expelled. Bailly, represented another important player in Lautrec's

⁷²⁴ ADT, 506W171, Letter from the Directeur des Services Agricoles to Renouard, 15 November 1941.

⁷²⁵ Ibid.

⁷²⁶ Laborie, *L'opinion française sous Vichy*, p. 277.

relationship with the regime. A law graduate of the HEC, Bailly joined the prefectural system in 1923 and after a period in La Flèche (Sarthe) arrived in Castres, ten miles from Lautrec, in September 1940.⁷²⁷

As it had done with the prefects, the New Order also increased the powers of the sub-prefects. The sub-prefect represented the prefect in the communes, dealing directly with the police and the entire local administration. Commenting on the role of the sub-prefect, the Regional Prefect for Toulouse noted that ‘ils tendront en un mot à être plus que jamais des administrateurs avertis et des propagandistes convaincus’.⁷²⁸

While such an increase in personal power was to benefit the Jews in neighbouring Millau (Aveyron), where the sub-prefect had been an acquaintance of the rabbi, the same cannot be said of Pierre Bailly in Castres.⁷²⁹ Bailly’s career in Castres is noteworthy because of its longevity which spanned almost the entire Occupation and several months into the Liberation. Indeed, he was one of the few prefects and sub-prefects to remain in position at the Liberation owing to the services that he had given the Resistance.⁷³⁰ Although Bailly’s resistance activity from 1943 is unquestionable, in the period 1940 to 1943, Bailly went beyond what was required of his position to implement a range of Vichy’s harshest measures. The evidence shows his enthusiasm for purging the administration of its undesirable elements.⁷³¹ One report by a teacher’s union from September 1944 commented:

⁷²⁷ Pierre Bailly’s obituary in *Le Monde*, 3 December 1981, p. 27.

⁷²⁸ ADT, 506W55, Letter from Regional Prefect to the Prefect of the Tarn, 27 December 1941.

⁷²⁹ During the 1939–1940 campaign, both the rabbi and the sub-prefect had held positions in Thann (Haut-Rhin), see AIU, CC-36, Report on Rabbinical Activity in 1941.

⁷³⁰ ADT, 506W324, Bailly’s épuration file, 1944.

⁷³¹ *Ibid.*

Bailly a agi en serviteur Ultra-Vichyssois. Il a fait à Castres une besogne de basse police. A lire ses rapports il éprouvait manifestement une joie sadique à accabler ses victimes.⁷³²

Lautrec's close proximity to Castres, coupled with his task of liaising with departmental delegates, meant that Bailly came into regular contact with the disputes surrounding the Chantier. In November 1941, Bailly launched his own investigation into the Jewish presence at Lautrec. From speaking to neighbours, Bailly's report concluded that, 'pas un de ces israélites ne travaille la terre'.⁷³³ His recommendation to Renouard in a report that followed revealed the complete disdain with which he held the Chantier. Bailly believed that the situation was urgent and recommended a number of measures that would return normalcy to the commune. His proposals went further than simply cutting off the Chantier's financial supply. Rather, Bailly wanted Renouard to move the Chantier away from its present location to a 'résidence surveillée'.⁷³⁴ Further, he recommended that any future mishap by the Chantier would lead to immediate internment in a concentration camp.⁷³⁵ Such recommendations had been added to the police report that Bailly received, suggesting that they were his personal solutions to the Jewish problem. Bailly was in regular contact with the Chantier and personally visited Lautrec on more than one occasion. Nevertheless, his personal convictions went unbeknown to Robert Gamzon who did not consider Bailly a threat to Lautrec's existence. On the contrary, on one of Bailly's visits to Lautrec he was accompanied by Libmann's replacement as head of the Legion for the Tarn, Albert Chabbert, and it was towards Chabbert, and not Bailly, that Gamzon unleashed

⁷³² ADT, 506W324, Report by the Syndicat National des Instituteurs on Bailly, 15 September 1944.

⁷³³ ADT, 506W171, Report from l'Inspecteur des Renseignements Généraux to Bailly, 5 December 1941.

⁷³⁴ ADT, 506W171, Letter from Bailly to Renouard, 10 December 1941. For more on assigned residences see Marrus and Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews*, pp. 169–170.

⁷³⁵ Ibid.

his frustration.⁷³⁶ Gamzon was relieved when at a cordial chance meeting with Bailly in March 1942, the sub-prefect happily proclaimed that he had not received any recent complaints on the Chantier.⁷³⁷ Little did Gamzon know that at this very moment, measures were being enacted by the prefecture with the support of Bailly to cut off much of Lautrec's refugee allowance.

Gamzon's complete misjudgement of the threat posed by Bailly is indicative of a broader trend concerning Lautrec's relations with local officials. The aim of the Chantier was not to isolate itself away from the administration. A previous section has revealed the extent to which Lautrec intended to coexist with the regime, which necessitated forging links and relationships with the local administration. Here, local officials and administrators were not always seen as a threat to Lautrec's existence. Evidence suggests that Gamzon, like other Jewish community figures such as Raymond-Raoul Lambert, was able to draw on the support of his networks and connections in the administration, which were supportive of the Chantier's return to the land, or were sympathetic to the Jews' plight.⁷³⁸ Some leading civil servants were particularly sympathetic to the EIF's cause and went out of their way to assist them. While sometimes these connections proved fruitful – the assistance of Gilbert Lessage, head of Vichy's Service Sociale des Étrangers representing one such case – positive cooperation did not always materialise.⁷³⁹ Some administrators, like Bailly,

⁷³⁶ CDJC, CMXLV 2e, Report of Gamzon's visit to Vichy, 9–20 March 1942.

⁷³⁷ Ibid.

⁷³⁸ The experiences of leading Jewish figures at Vichy force us to reflect on how far the Jewish question was a priority across administrators in the capital. The reports from Gamzon's trips coupled with Lambert's diaries shows the extent to which Jewish representatives met openly with civil servants in the bars and restaurants of the town, who openly received them. See Lambert's diary entries from 16 July 1941 and 5 May 1942 in Lambert, *Diary of a Witness*, pp. 55–59 and 116–118. See also CDJC, CMXLV 2e, Report of Gamzon's visit to Vichy, 9–20 March 1942.

⁷³⁹ For more information on Lessage see Poznanski, *Jews in France*, pp. 191–192.

whom Gamzon thought reliable, gave the pretence of wanting to coexist with Lautrec, but in reality were uninterested and at times even subverted the cause.

Gamzon had to rely on linking various connections to ensure that Lautrec would receive assistance and in some cases protection from the regime. His attempt to gain the support of Didier Gelin represents one such case. Gelin was the commissaire principal des Renseignements Généraux for the Tarn and was responsible for all police reports that were conducted in his department. Gamzon employed a convoluted web of connections in his attempts to win over local officials such as Gelin. The nature of Gelin's position meant that he came into regular contact with civil servants at the Ministry of the Interior, in whose upper echelons one finds Raymond Grimal, the *chef* of Pierre Pucheu's cabinet. Grimal was a 'great friend' of Dr Silberstein who worked for OSE and the CAR and who knew Gamzon.⁷⁴⁰ Gamzon thus felt that he could rely on a domino effect of support – Gamzon to contact Silberstein to contact Grimal to contact Gelin – to secure a favourable report for Lautrec. In the end, Gamzon believed that his attempt to win over Gelin had been successful. He noted that '[Gelin] a fait enquête sur Lautrec, et fait un rapport modérément tendancieux et concluant qu'aucune accusation contre nous n'a pu être prouvée'.⁷⁴¹

The assistance that Gamzon believed he was receiving often did not exist. In this instance, his efforts to recruit a supporter resulted only in further hostility. Gamzon had been duped and instead of proposing leniency, Gelin had suggested measures to relocate Jews from Lautrec to assigned residences.⁷⁴² Of course, Gamzon's failure to determine who was an enemy was not unique to him. Vichy had created a climate

⁷⁴⁰ CDJC, CMXLV 2e, Report of Gamzon's visit to Vichy, 9–20 March 1942.

⁷⁴¹ Ibid.

⁷⁴² ADT, 506W171, Letter from Gelin to the Prefect, 11 February 1942.

which encouraged prudence and secrecy in which they said one thing but thought another.⁷⁴³ Nevertheless, his miscalculations when determining where dangers were coming from calls into question existing accounts, which have portrayed him as the master networker coupled with a foresight that allowed him to remain one step ahead of the authorities.⁷⁴⁴

In November 1941, Renouard was appointed prefect of the Basses-Alpes. On his very last day in Albi before leaving for Digne, Renouard wrote - without prompting - to Georges Mussard the regional delegate for the SGJ in Toulouse. In one of his last acts as prefect, Renouard wrote a candid overview of Lautrec in which he set out what he thought should happen to the Chantier after his departure:

Les éléments qui, sous couvert de scoutisme et de rééducation, s'adonnent en réalité à une vie de facilité et de paresse devraient, à mon avis, être éliminés sans retard.⁷⁴⁵

Anti-Semitism was not a prerequisite for a prefect under the New Order and Renouard knew that his successor may not have shared his attitude on the Jewish Question. The case of Prefect Louis François-Martin in the neighbouring Tarn-et-Garonne and his sympathy towards the Jews, and in particular the EIF at Moissac, illuminates the multiple reactions of prefects towards the Jewish Question.⁷⁴⁶ The uncertainty over his successor's position on Jews and Renouard's desire for his instructions to be

⁷⁴³ For more, see Laborie, *Les Français des Années Troubles*, p. 33.

⁷⁴⁴ Pougatch, *Un Bâtitteur*, p. 50 and Hammel, *Souviens-toi d'Amalek*, p. 330.

⁷⁴⁵ ADT, 506W171, Letter from Renouard to Mussard, 19 December 1941.

⁷⁴⁶ His Protestant upbringing, which had placed an emphasis on the Old Testament, could go some way in explaining his leniency towards the Jews. I am grateful to Rod Kedward for alerting me to this point. On François-Martin and the Jews see Marrus and Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews*, p. 259; J-C. Fau, *Ces Tarn-et-Garonnais qui ont aidé et sauvé des Juifs durant les années noires, 1940-1944* (Montauban, 2006), pp. 21-22 and F. Boulet, 'Les préfets protestants 1940-1944', *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme Français*, no 154/4 October-December (2008), pp. 565-571.

implemented, led him to place the matter under the control of the regional delegate who had the power and the connections available to ensure that Renouard's recommendations would be followed.

Georges Darbou, became the next prefect of the Tarn on 22 December 1941. Despite being remembered as director of Pierre Laval's cabinet from 1943, Darbou's period in charge of the Tarn was considered to have been less controversial than Renouard's by the Commission d'épuration.⁷⁴⁷ It was reported that Darbou, at times, displayed republican tendencies; he reduced the control of the Legion and he did not continue Renouard's purge of the administration.⁷⁴⁸ However, nothing was mentioned of his zealous attitude towards implementing the racial laws. Like his predecessor, Darbou was active in encouraging surveillance of Lautrec and throughout the spring of 1942 sought to implement measures to further downgrade Lautrec.⁷⁴⁹

Evidence shows that Darbou enthusiastically continued where Renouard had left off, maintaining a close working relationship with the CGQJ and other departmental delegates involved in anti-Jewish measures. A letter from Darbou's first day in Albi to Vallat shows the direction that his policies would follow. Arriving from Béziers where he had been sub-prefect and thus already familiar with the CGQJ and the racial laws, Darbou immediately tabled an initiative that he believed would give the prefect

⁷⁴⁷ At the Liberation, the Commission d'épuration described Renouard as follows: 'Il s'est montré un partisan convaincu du régime de Vichy dont il a appliqué les consignes avec une grande rigueur et dans un esprit particulièrement étroit et réactionnaire, tant dans le Tarn que dans les Basses-Alpes. See AN F1bI/1111 (2), Renouard's appearance before the Commission d'épuration, 14 March 1945.

⁷⁴⁸ ADT, 506W324, Report from the prefect of the Tarn to the Commission d'Épuration à Toulouse, September 1944.

⁷⁴⁹ ADT, 506W171, Letter from Darbou to the departmental delegates for the SGJ, Services Agricoles and the Restauration Paysanne, 18 February 1942. See also the letter from Darbou to Intendant Maffre, Directeur départemental du Ravitaillement Général du Tarn and to M. l'Inspecteur d'Académie du Tarn, 18 February 1942. In ADT, 348W578, see Letter from Darbou to M. Le Contrôleur des Réfugiés in Albi, 27 January 1942 and Le Directeur des Services Agricoles to Darbou, 27 July 1942.

more control over Jews in their departments. He noted that existing information on Jews, namely the forms that they had filled in for the census in July 1941, had been sent to Vichy, leaving only incomplete lists and documents behind in the prefectures.⁷⁵⁰ Darbou proposed creating a ‘fichier complet’ on every Jew living in the department. No other prefect had ever gone to such extreme measures to control the Jewish question at the departmental level.⁷⁵¹

Although a number of ministries had ceased financing Lautrec by 1942, this had not been universally implemented across Vichy agencies. In January 1942, Prefect Darbou launched an enquiry into the funding of Lautrec, with a view to having it discontinued.⁷⁵² While for Darbou, the government’s programme for a return to the land was of less importance to him than his desire to marginalise the Jews at Lautrec, other local officials were more concerned with ensuring that their more immediate responsibilities were completed. These officials took little interest in the regime’s anti-Semitic agenda and refused to bend to pressure to promote it in their sectors. This was not out of any particular sympathy for Jews, but rather an entrenched work ethic that placed professional responsibility before any ideological convictions. Gallet, the local inspector of refugees, believed the Jewishness of Lautrec to be an irrelevant factor when determining how much refugee subsidy the Chantier should receive in February 1942. In a response to the prefect’s demands to reduce funding to the Chantier, Gallet noted that he did not intend to reduce Lautrec’s refugee allowance and went even further, defending the work being undertaken by Jewish youth:

⁷⁵⁰ CDJC, CXCv-182, Letter from Darbou to Vallat, 22 December 1941.

⁷⁵¹ Opinion of Joseph Billig. See Billig, *Le Commissariat Général aux Questions Juives*, vol. 2, p. 213.

⁷⁵² ADT, 348W578, Darbou to M. Gallet, Contrôleur des Réfugiés in Albi, 27 January 1942.

Certes les résultats sont forcément lents, étant donné qu'il y a lieu de faire connaître les choses de la terre à des jeunes gens que rien n'orientait vers la culture. L'effort qu'ils font est louable et à encourager.⁷⁵³

Even as late as 1942, Vichy's priority of returning young refugees to the land was the only factor that mattered for some of the regime's officials, who even supported Jewish youth's participation in this initiative. However, Gallet's attitude did not deter Darbou from seeking to hound Lautrec and he drew on other local officials to find ways of halting the Chantier's refugee allowance. It was eventually decided that because the refugees at Lautrec spent more time in production than in technical training, that the Chantier was not, technically at least, a training centre and that future subsidies should be withdrawn.⁷⁵⁴

Given their swift implementation, Darbou's arguments to halt the subsidies were largely successful. However, they were not implemented in their entirety, for this was being prevented by another one of Vichy priorities. Darbou had not accounted for the regime's special status for refugees from Alsace and Lorraine to take precedence over its racial laws. After a series of exchanges in the autumn of 1942, Darbou proved unsuccessful in rescinding refugee subsidies for Jewish refugees at Lautrec who originated from Alsace and Lorraine.⁷⁵⁵ A hierarchy amongst French Jewry had thus been created by the regime, who through promotion of its discourse of the 'provinces perdues', overlooked the Jewish element of Jewish youth's identity and instead promoted their status as refugees from these important regions.

⁷⁵³ ADT, 348W578, Gallet to Darbou, February 1942,

⁷⁵⁴ ADT, 348W578, Directeur des Services Agricoles for the Tarn to Darbou, 27 July 1942 and ADT, 348W578, Letter from the Director of Refugees in Vichy to Darbou, 19 September 1942. The allowances were immediately halved with a view to being permanently ceased in January 1943.

⁷⁵⁵ ADT, 348W578, Letter from the Director of Refugees in Vichy to Darbou, 25 November 1942.

In the period 1940–42, Jewish youth at Lautrec had been tricked into believing that the Chantier had developed cordial relations with its fellow residents. A focus on Lautrec's neighbours and local officials has illuminated the Chantier's ineptness at distinguishing who could and who could not be trusted during this uncertain time. The pretence that dominated these relations appears in stark contrast to the period that followed the first roundups, whereupon from 1943, the Chantier became almost entirely dependent on the commune for its protection. The Jewish nature of the Chantier, an aspect hitherto considered inconsequential, has been revealed as an important factor amongst locals who distinguished Jews from other refugees seeking sanctuary in the commune. The minimal role played by the CGQJ and the PQJ in attempting to marginalise the Chantier reveals the futility behind attempts to pinpoint these organisms as the driving force of anti-Semitism in the localities. Instead, it has been shown that hostility against the Jews came from multiple directions and was dependent upon the enthusiasm of certain local individuals. Although the Legion was eventually successful in alerting the prefect to the Chantier, this should not detract from the heterogeneity of views that existed over the Jewish Question within this curious Vichy organism.

Administrators at Vichy did not envisage or make provisions for any contradiction between its plans for regeneration and the marginalisation of Jews. Instead, officials in the localities were left to their own devices when attempting to reconcile the overlapping policies. The EIF's project for a Jewish return to the land encountered mixed reactions amongst Vichy officials. While some administrators rejected it outright, others either displayed little interest, or did not notice a contradiction in

Jewish participation in the National Revolution. Ultimately when the two priorities were at odds over Lautrec, the trump card lay in the hand of the prefect who consistently sought to find ways for the anti-Semitic policies to triumph over Vichy's policies for rejuvenation.

Chapter 5. Jewish Participation in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse

In June 1941 Maurice Nizard, a fourth-year medical student in Marseille, did not meet the quota for the *numérus clausus* and was expelled from university. A traditional reading of this case through a lens of persecution would suggest that Nizard's expulsion simply marked the first in a series of discriminatory acts which were set to follow. However, while the abandonment of his studies signalled personal victimisation by the regime, it was not obvious to young men like Nizard that the closing of this one door marked the closing of all doors. Since the summer of 1940 all male French citizens had been ordered to complete a period of service in one of Vichy's Chantiers de la Jeunesse: military-style boot camps which had replaced the army.⁷⁵⁶ Several weeks after his release from medical school, Nizard was incorporated into the Chantiers de la Jeunesse at Groupement [Gt] 14, Die (Drôme).⁷⁵⁷ After a period performing manual work, the unexpected illness of a fellow youth gave Nizard the opportunity to use his medical skills. Nizard was immediately transferred to the Chantier's health centre, where he remained until his release.⁷⁵⁸ Charged with the task of rebuilding the nation, Nizard's incorporation into Gt 14 signalled to him that he had not been completely ostracised by Vichy. Instead, the Chantiers offered tangible proof that in spite of the *Statut des Juifs*, other forms for Jewish co-existence continued under the New Order. The onus was on individual youths to reinvent themselves and their relationships with the regime and the experience of the Chantiers provided them with an ideal opportunity.

⁷⁵⁶ Details surrounding the creation of the Chantiers in July 1940 can be found in the memoirs of General de la Porte du Theil, IHTP, J. De la Porte du Theil, *Souvenirs* (1982), pp. 143–147.

⁷⁵⁷ YV, o.33 3488, Histoire de la famille Armand Nizard sous le Gouvernement de Vichy 1940–1944.

⁷⁵⁸ Ibid.

The Chantiers de la Jeunesse were compulsory youth camps, founded by General de la Porte du Theil in the weeks following the defeat to Germany.⁷⁵⁹ Set up with the aim of countering youth delinquency and unemployment, they were to be the Vichy alternative to compulsory military service, which had been prohibited by the Germans under the Armistice.⁷⁶⁰ From the summer of 1940, a spell of eight months in one of Vichy's forty-seven Chantiers became compulsory for every French male citizen upon reaching his twentieth birthday.⁷⁶¹ In the absence of an army, the purpose of the Chantiers was to remove youths temporarily from their routine daily existence which Vichy considered had become immoral, decadent and a contributor to France's defeat. The camps intended to instil in French youth a respect for authority, personal and physical responsibility as well as national pride. Young men in the Chantiers were at the disposal of local authorities who engaged them in useful community tasks, such as road repair and forestry. Influenced by scouting, Vichy sought to create and develop its *Homme Nouveau* by engaging young men in heavy, manual work. Indeed, a central purpose of the Chantiers was to introduce youths who had no experience of manual labour – those who worked in commerce or the civic professions – to outdoor life. The emphasis on manual work was not solely to encourage youth to become more socially responsible, it also complemented another of the Chantiers' ambitions: to regenerate the youth of France's mentality through physical regeneration. Youths

⁷⁵⁹ During the interwar years, General Joseph de la Porte du Theil had been an artillery instructor at the *École de guerre* and was also a scout leader for the Paris region. On 7 July 1940 he was charged by General Colson, Pétain's Minister for War, to take control of youths who had recently been discharged from regular army service.

⁷⁶⁰ De la Porte du Theil did not invent this notion of a civil service. It is likely that he was inspired by other national examples from the era such as the German *Reichsarbeitsdienst* (RAD) and the American Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). See K.K. Patel, *Soldiers of Labor: Labor Service in Nazi Germany and New Deal America, 1933–1945* (Cambridge, 2005).

⁷⁶¹ In addition to the Chantiers in the non-Occupied Zone, Vichy also created eight Chantiers in North Africa. Women's omission from participating in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse reveals the masculine domination of the New Order. In light of the military defeat, the reconstruction of the *Homme Nouveau* took centre stage in Vichy's policy of regeneration. Although women were invited to take part in the National Revolution, this was to be fulfilled in other areas, notably family and the home. Their absence from the Chantiers explains why they shall not be considered in this chapter.

were taught the importance of maintaining a healthy body and lifestyle and took part in daily sessions of *Hébertisme*.⁷⁶²

Until their expulsion in July 1942, French Jewish youth were called-up to the Chantiers and were expected to contribute in the same way as their comrades to this scheme for national renewal.⁷⁶³ Jewish involvement in the Chantiers, at a time when they had been marginalised from so many other professions, represents one of the biggest areas of overlap between the regime's dual priorities of regeneration and exclusion. Although article 2 of the first *Statut des Juifs* banned Jews from the teaching professions and from the armed forces, it made no reference to their participation in the Chantiers. One explanation for this omission could be that, unlike lawyers or civil servants, Jews in the Chantiers were performing a socially useful task in which they did not exert any power or influence. However, this could be said of other sectors of Jewish society. Jewish midwives, for instance, also lacked power and influence, but despite being useful contributors to the New Order, they found themselves outlawed in January 1942. Another explanation could be that Vichy did not consider Jews in the Chantiers to be a priority, amongst the mass of anti-Semitic legislation that the regime was enacting at the time. However, as it shall be demonstrated, evidence from April 1941 illustrates that the SGJ knew that Jewish youth were in the Chantiers and refused their expulsion. The reasons for Jews' continued presence in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse thus run deeper.

⁷⁶² Hébertisme, or the 'natural method', was an intensive outdoor physical education routine developed by Georges Hébert.

⁷⁶³ Upon their incorporation, young men were not required to declare their religious affiliation. A precise figure for Jewish participants between August 1940 and July 1942 therefore does not exist. Nevertheless, it is highly likely that with a total population of approximately 110,000 in France in 1939, the number of French Jews called up in the Chantiers would be thousands, rather than hundreds.

This chapter will explore the work undertaken in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse through the eyes of its Jewish recruits.⁷⁶⁴ It will examine the tasks in which Jewish youth were obliged to participate and will investigate how racial laws were circumvented and even ignored to allow Jews to enter into positions of responsibility. This focus on Jewish youth does not isolate them from their comrades. The friendships and interactions between Jewish youth and their peers are also investigated to consider how far young Jews were successful in integrating into the everyday life of the Chantier and to determine the factors that allowed anti-Semitic incidents to arise. A final section investigates the provisions that were made for Jewish youth by Vichy to observe their religious requirements and shall demonstrate the Chantiers' failure to understand 'religion' as a criteria for the regime's racial laws.

Between 1940 and 1942, Jewish youth were incorporated in the first six contingents of the Chantiers.⁷⁶⁵ The Chantiers de la Jeunesse was composed of forty-seven *groupements* scattered across the non-Occupied Zone. Each contained between 2000 and 2500 youths and was led by one *commissaire* and his *assistants* and *adjoints*. **Figure 17** shows the locations of each *groupement* and **Figure 18** reveals the hierarchical structure of the Chantiers de la Jeunesse. Upon arrival at the main site, the young men were divided equally into ten *groupes* which were spread across several kilometres. A map of Gt 4, Cormatin (Saône-et-Loire) illustrates just how

⁷⁶⁴ With the documents of individual *groupements* destroyed at the Liberation, oral history remains the only method with which to access these experiences.

⁷⁶⁵ Shortly before their twentieth birthday, youths were alerted to the date of their impending call-up to the Chantiers. Between 1940 and 1944, there were twelve separate call-ups, or 'contingents', to the Chantiers de la Jeunesse. Apart from the first contingent which happened in July 1940, incorporations took place en-masse in the months of March, July and November.

isolated and spread out these groups were from one another (**Figure 19**). At Gt, 4, Cormatin in the north of the *groupement* was fourteen kilometres from Cluny in the south. The distance from Cormatin to Group 1 in the east (Mt St Romain) was ten kilometres. Groups containing approximately 200 men were run by a *chef de groupe* and his assistants. Groups were in turn divided into *équipes* and a *chef d'équipe* was responsible for between fifteen to twenty-five youths. The Chantiers' forty-seven *groupements* were divided into five regions and each *chef de groupement* was responsible to his *chef régional*, who was in turn responsible to De la Porte du Theil and the Commissariat Régional, situated at Châtel-Guyon (Puy-de-Dôme).



Figure 17. Map showing the locations of the Chantiers de la Jeunesse.

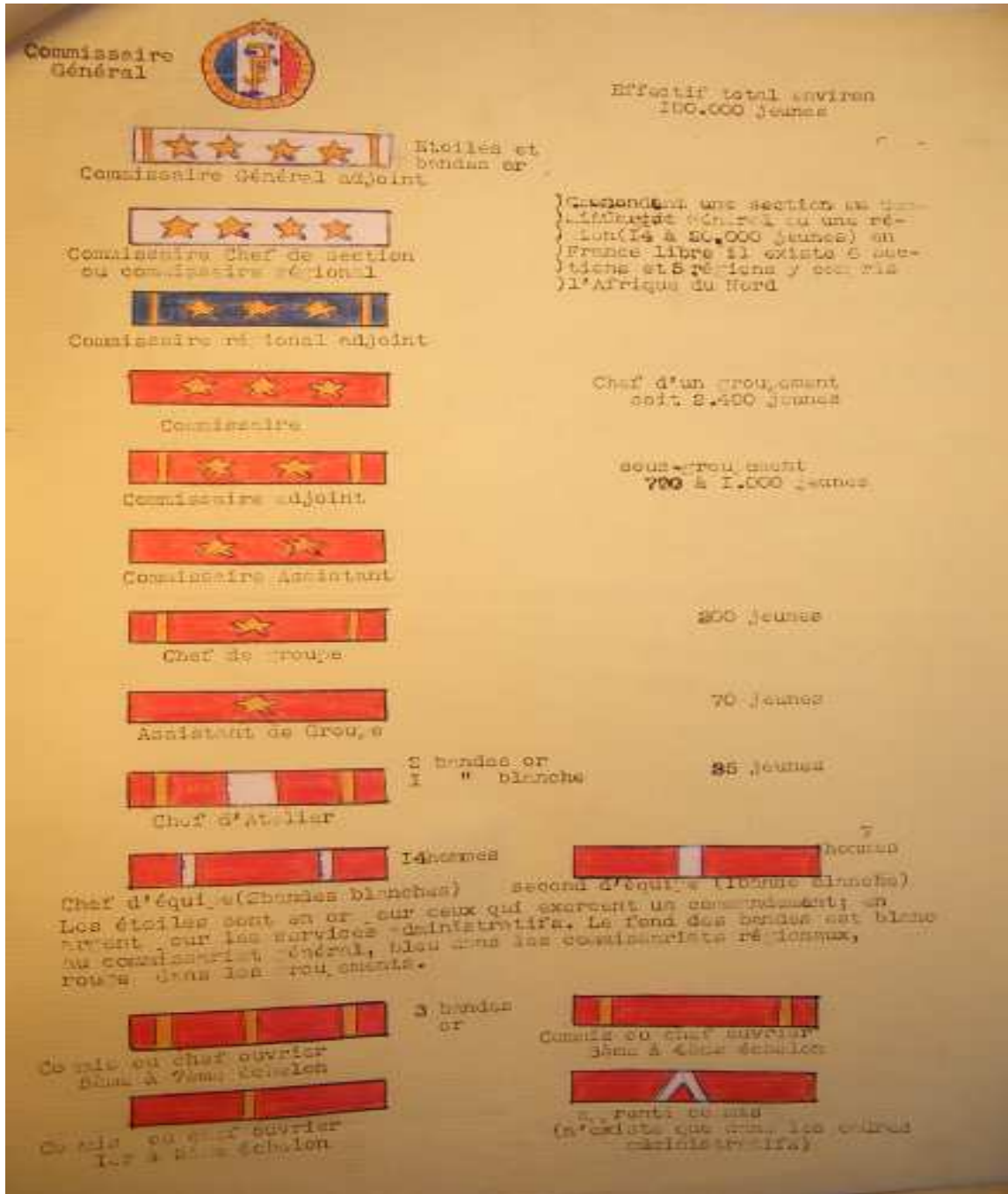


Figure 18. Chart displaying the hierarchical formation of the Chantiers de la Jeunesse.

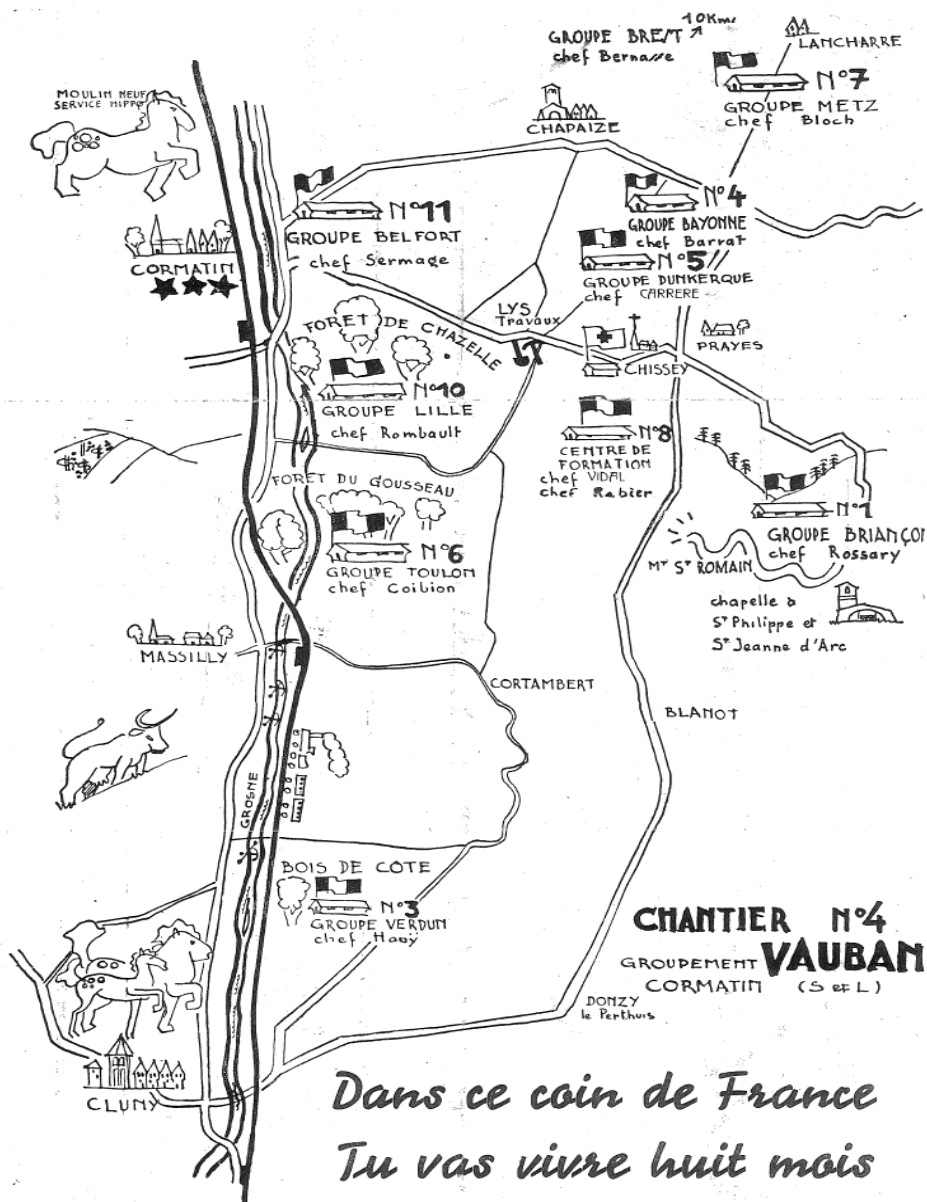


Figure 19. Map displaying the multiple *groupes* at Gt 4, Cormatin (Saône-et-Loire).

Temporal factors are important in assessing how Jews experienced their period of service in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse. At the time of the first incorporation, the first *Statut des Juifs* had not been passed, while at the time of the sixth, legislation was

already in place to remove the Jews from a compulsory service in the Chantiers. The experience of polish-born Félix Calek who was incorporated in the summer of 1940 was, as it shall be shown, different to the *israélite français* Roger Fichtenberg who, having already been affected by the anti-Semitic legislation, was called up in March 1942. However, the absence of the racial laws is not the only factor which separates the experience of Jews entering the first contingent from the five which were to follow. The first contingent was unique in so far as it was made up of youth who had been called to military service in June 1940 and whose careers had been abruptly ended by the Armistice. Military units of young men hailing from the same region had undertaken training during the Phoney War and in July 1940 were suddenly transferred to a Chantier. Although future contingents were made up solely of youth residing in the non-Occupied Zone, the first incorporation contained youth from across the whole of France. In the first contingent, Jews originating from Paris, Metz and Strasbourg explored their new surroundings in the non-Occupied Zone with peers from the same towns and with whom they had forged friendships either at school, or during the phoney war.

The summer of 1940 was a deeply confusing time for youths in the first contingent. They were detached from their families and found themselves – possibly for the first time – in unfamiliar rural surroundings in the newly-established, non-Occupied Zone. Recollections of these months emphasise the feelings of abandonment and even hostility from local villagers who blamed the young men for the defeat.⁷⁶⁶ Above all, in their interviews, former participants stressed that the lack of communication meant that they were completely detached from their families and from the political events

⁷⁶⁶ Interview with Félix Calek 3 September 2009, USC Shoah Foundation interview with Edgard Weill, January 1997, YV, Recorded interview with Etienne Weill, 1 April 1997.

that were transforming the nation. Félix Calek, who before his conscription to the army had sold menswear at the marché aux puces in the twentieth arrondissement, recalled the torrent of rumours about the new regime that were in circulation and stressed his frustration at not having access to newspapers at this difficult time.⁷⁶⁷ Edgard Weill, who had been at rabbinical school in Paris in 1939, went without news from his family during his entire spell in the Chantiers (from July 1940 to February 1941), but realised that in this instance he was not unique, ‘comme beaucoup d’autres, je perdais toute à fait le contact’.⁷⁶⁸

In the immediate aftermath of the defeat, the effects of deprivation and the large numbers of prisoners of war and separated families ensured that the passing of the first racial laws went largely unnoticed by the majority of French people. In October 1940, their physical isolation, coupled with poor communications, meant that this was even truer in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse. After the passing of the first *Statut des Juifs* in October 1940, Jews were not expelled from the Chantiers.⁷⁶⁹ Rather than feeling discriminated against, Jewish youths shared the same concerns as their comrades regarding living conditions and separation from families. In reacting as Frenchmen to the ushering in of the new regime, they strove to lead an identical existence to that of their comrades, with whom they shared a similar background. At this time, Étienne Weill, who after finishing his baccalauréat had studied photography in Paris, formed an artistic group which proved useful to ‘remonter la moralité des hommes’.⁷⁷⁰ His group was asked to represent the Chantiers and to sing midnight mass on Christmas Eve 1940 – the first Christmas under the New Order – at the nearest church. Weill

⁷⁶⁷ Interview with Félix Calek 3 September 2009.

⁷⁶⁸ USC Shoah Foundation interview with Rabbi Edgard Weill, January 1997.

⁷⁶⁹ In April 1941, Rabbi Samy Klein estimated that there were 400 Jewish youths in each of the Chantiers’ contingents.

⁷⁷⁰ YV, Recorded interview with Etienne Weill, 1 April 1997.

recalled, 'on a accepté. On était tout content de faire quelque chose. Ce qui était drôle c'est que près de la moitié de la groupe de la chorale était juive'.⁷⁷¹

Further, evidence suggests that large numbers of Jewish youth only became acquainted with the first *Statut des Juifs* upon their release from the Chantiers in February 1941.⁷⁷² In his preparation for the discharge of the first contingent, De la Porte du Theil alerted leaders across the non-Occupied Zone to the German law of 27 September 1940, which prohibited Jews and gens 'de couleur' from crossing the Demarcation Line.⁷⁷³ Etienne Weill described his experience of demobilisation as a 'folkloric and tragic' phenomenon.⁷⁷⁴

The mobilisation of the second contingent in the spring of 1941 was rendered official by a law of 18 January 1941, which made a service in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse obligatory for every French male at the age of twenty. Even though the *Statut des Juifs* had been passed in October 1940, the law of the 18 January did not exclude Jews from this service and Jews were not isolated into a specific Jewish Chantier. On the contrary, Vichy went to great lengths to ensure that the net had been cast widely, in order to include as many young men as possible to take part in its new venture. On 22 February 1941, Lamirand declared that a service in the Chantiers was obligatory even for refugees from the Occupied and forbidden zones.⁷⁷⁵ Moreover, a letter of crucial significance to this analysis was written by a state councillor at the SGJ on 30 April

⁷⁷¹ Ibid..

⁷⁷² Ibid. Also, USC Shoah Foundation interview with Isaac Jafet, January 1997.

⁷⁷³ Verordnungsblatt of the Militärbefehlshaber in Frankreich, 27 September 1940 and AN, AJ39 9, De la Porte du Theil, Note for the Commissaires Régionaux, 24 February 1941.

⁷⁷⁴ YV, Recorded interview with Etienne Weill, 1 April 1997.

⁷⁷⁵ AN, AJ39 9, Lamirand to the Prefects of the non-occupied zone, 22 February 1941. The forbidden zone included six departments and parts of four others in the east of France bordering Germany and Switzerland. See Jackson, *France The Dark Years*, pp. 246–247.

1941. Responding to a specific query over Jewish participation in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse that had been sent from the recently created CGQJ, the state councillor made the SGJ's position perfectly clear:

J'ai l'honneur de vous faire connaître que tout citoyen français, sans distinction de religion ou de race, est astreint à cette obligation.⁷⁷⁶

The legislation made no provisions to halt the admission of Jewish citizens, and the SGJ was adamant that Jews should undertake their service like all other Frenchmen. This note helps to explain the sentiments of some Jews, who felt that their participation in the Chantiers excused them from the racial legislation. Moreover, the note dispels the possibility that Jewish inclusion in the Chantiers had been overlooked by the authorities. To this end, Jewish youth's acceptance into the Chantiers sheds valuable light on how Vichy perceived the role of Jews in the construction of the New Order. Jewish youth's status as French citizens was of greater importance to Vichy than their Jewishness. This contrasts sharply with the German case, where Jews were explicitly prohibited from taking part in each of the Nazis' regenerationist schemes, including the equivalent to the Chantiers de la Jeunesse, the Reichsarbeitsdienst.⁷⁷⁷

Although neither the first *Statut des Juifs* nor the law of 18 January 1941 removed Jewish youth from the Chantiers, Jews were nevertheless prohibited from assuming positions of responsibility. In January 1941, De la Porte du Theil alerted *chefs* of each *groupement* that Jews were not allowed to be considered for promotion and they could not hold any role where they exerted influence over their peers. De la Porte du

⁷⁷⁶ AN, AJ38 64, Letter from the Councillor of State of the Ministry of Youth to the General Secretary at the office of the Vice-President of the Council in the Commission for Jewish Affairs, 30 April 1941.

⁷⁷⁷ Patel, *Soldiers of Labor*, pp. 132–134.

Theil gave no room for doubt that the legislation would include even the lowest-ranking Jewish *chefs*. ‘Chefs de tous grades et infirmières [...] seront rayés des contrôles des Groupements de Jeunesse à la date du 31 Janvier 1941’.⁷⁷⁸ In the spring of 1941, forms were sent to every *chef* – even in the most modest of positions – asking them to declare that they were not Jewish according to the definition laid out in the first *Statut des Juifs*. As **Figure 18** shows, the Chantiers adopted a broad definition of a *chef* that ranged from De la Porte du Theil at the top, down to an *apprenti-commis* at the bottom. Noel Jarniac, a *chef ouvrier tailleur* at Gt 16, Le Muy (Var) signed his declaration on 3 March 1941 and Roger Blum, an *apprenti-commis*, signed his at Gt 36, Ste Livrade (Lot-et-Garonne) on 28 February 1941.⁷⁷⁹ It is unlikely that the legislators behind the first *Statut des Juifs* had men like Lucien Bloch in mind: he occupied the lowly position of a moniteur, in Gt 26, Saint-Gaudens (Haute-Garonne) until his expulsion in March 1941.⁷⁸⁰

De la Porte du Theil’s decision to expel Jewish *chefs* had mixed results in the localities. Across the non-Occupied Zone, the majority of *chefs* signed these forms in February and March 1941. This was particularly evident at Gts 9, Monestier-de-Clermont (Isère) and 16, Le Muy (Var), where *chefs* completed their declarations by the end of February 1941 and Jewish *chefs* were swiftly removed.⁷⁸¹ Very soon however, other factors such as the continued existence of the Chantiers, relegated

⁷⁷⁸ AN, AJ39 69, Note from Porte du Theil to the *groupements* removing Jews from positions of responsibility in the *Chantiers*, 11 January 1941.

⁷⁷⁹ Archives at the Ministry of Education, Chantiers de la Jeunesse Française, box 47, file Jarniac and box 101, file Blum.

⁷⁸⁰ AN, AJ39 183, File on Lucien Bloch. Bloch was later deported from Drancy on convoy 73.

⁷⁸¹ Archives at the Ministry of Education, Chantiers de la Jeunesse Française boxes 20, 40, 41 and 47. At Gt 9, René Dauvergne and Paul Schaller declared in February/March 1941 that they did not have three Jewish grandparents. For Gt 16, see André Kervella, Roland Jacques and Noel Jarniac. AN, AJ39 183, Files of chefs expelled from the Chantiers de la Jeunesse, At Gt, 9, Jewish chef Georges-Léon Khaiete was removed on 31 March 1941 and on the same date, Jewish chefs Victor Glasberg and Alexandre Pront were also released from Gt 16.

these declarations to an afterthought amongst local *chefs*. Although variations existed and some newly incorporated *chefs* were swiftly made to sign their form, this was unusual. More often than not, declarations took many months to administer. At Gt 17, Hyères-Plage (Var), *chefs* only began to sign their forms at the end of February 1942, a year after most of the other Chantiers and at this groupement, Jewish *chefs* remained in position until this time.⁷⁸² Moreover, throughout the Occupation, new *chefs* were constantly joining the Chantiers de la Jeunesse and it was up to the personnel units in each Chantier to ensure that new recruits signed these forms. Once again, variation existed amongst individual Chantiers over the speed with which these forms were delivered to the new recruits. After the initial wave of declarations in spring 1941, Gt 13, Cavaillon (Vaucluse) continued to be extremely rigid in making *chefs* sign the declaration. Charles de Kerangal began work as a Group Assistant on 25 December 1941 and was made to sign his form that same day.⁷⁸³ Such precision was unusual. At Gt 37, Gap (Hautes-Alpes), René Kirmann signed his declaration in February 1942, seven months after signing his initial contract. At Gt 19, Meyruels (Lozère), Jacques de Daran, who became a *chef* in April 1941, only signed his declaration in August 1942 and at Gt 35, Labruguière (Tarn), Charles Schoenberg never signed such a form.⁷⁸⁴ Although only a small minority of *chefs* were personally affected by the racial laws, most *chefs* signed the declarations and were thus introduced to the legislation that prevented Jews from occupying positions of responsibility in the Chantiers. This would have significant consequences for Jewish youth who were, on occasion, given labour tasks by their *chefs* that violated the racial laws.

⁷⁸² AN F17bis 7897, File: Lardy, Archives at the Ministry of Education, Chantiers de la Jeunesse Française, box 11, File Kuchmunch and Box 88, File Menier. At this point a Jewish youth, Jean Mayer, was expelled. See AN, AJ39 183, Files of chefs expelled from the Chantiers de la Jeunesse.

⁷⁸³ Archives at the Ministry of Education, Chantiers de la Jeunesse Française, box 47, file: De Kerangal.

⁷⁸⁴ Archives at the Ministry of Education, Chantiers de la Jeunesse Française, box 40, file De Daran, box 42, file Schoenberg and box 47, file Kirmann.

An investigation into Jewish youth's daily routines illuminates the extent to which their experiences in the Chantiers differed from their non-Jewish companions. Work in the camps varied according to a number of important factors. Geography was one such factor. Tasks that were undertaken for the benefit of the Chantier or of a neighbouring community differed according to local needs. The work performed in the Chantiers in the Pyrenées was considerably different to the work undertaken in Provence. However, some common tasks such as producing charcoal for gazogène and performing forestry work were carried out at every Chantier and every Jewish interviewee has memories of performing exhausting manual tasks during their service.⁷⁸⁵

The work of Jewish youth also illustrates the failure of one of the main aims of the Chantier de la Jeunesse, namely, encouraging educated urban youth to become reacquainted with the lifestyle of rural France. What marks the Jewish experience of work in the Chantiers as different from that of the majority of youths is the way in which Jewish youth moved frequently from gruelling, manual jobs into more administrative roles. This occurred both due to their own initiative and following designation by their *chefs*. The latter feared that a shortage of literate and administratively competent youth would have severe consequences for the survival of the Chantier. Reports from *chefs* in the localities repeatedly illustrate their concern over poor literacy rates, which they believed were beginning to affect the successful

⁷⁸⁵ Interviews with Georges Weill 25 May and 3 June 2009, Sylvain Berman 22 December 2009; USC Shoah Foundation Interview with Pierre-Emile Manteuil (formerly Meyer), July 1995; USC Shoah Foundation Interview with Michel Kuna, January 1996.

running of the Chantiers.⁷⁸⁶ In Gt, 3, Bourg (Ain), only 11.5% of the youth had previously been employed in non-manual jobs, compared to 35% in agricultural work alone. The other main areas of employment were as steelworkers, mechanics and bakers.⁷⁸⁷ Writing about the literacy levels for all of the Chantiers in the Pyrénées-Gascogne, regional Chef Gèze noted that apart from Gt, 36, the intellectual level of all other groupements was very low and that there was a high level of illiteracy.⁷⁸⁸ De la Porte du Theil noted that 60% of youths who had arrived at Gt, 4, Cormatin (Saône-et-Loire) in March 1942 were semi-illiterate.⁷⁸⁹ This lack of educated youth in the Chantier is explained by a 'sursis' which was granted to university students and teachers who were approaching their twentieth birthday and were thus entitled to defer their call-up.⁷⁹⁰ A shortage of literate youth reveals why Roger Fichtenberg, an educated Parisian youth, who began his spell at Cormatin in March 1942 quickly became secretary to a *chef*.⁷⁹¹ The evidence suggests that Fichtenberg's removal from laborious manual tasks was not exceptional for Jewish youth in the Chantier.

While the overwhelming majority of youths undertaking a service in the Chantiers were manual and agricultural labourers with generally with low literacy rates, the same could not be said for Jewish youth, almost all of whom had lived in major towns or cities in the years leading up to the war. These urban dwellers – predominantly from Paris, Strasbourg and Metz – had generally achieved a higher level of academic

⁷⁸⁶ AN, AJ39 60, See for instance reports on the 1941 November incorporation and the 1942 March incorporation.

⁷⁸⁷ AN AJ39 60, Incorporation report from Gt 3 to Porte du Theil, 7 April 1941.

⁷⁸⁸ AN, AJ39 60, Report from Gèze to De la Porte du Theil summing up the March 1942 contingent, Toulouse, 7 April 1942.

⁷⁸⁹ AN, AJ39 60, Report of the March 1942 incorporation to the *Chantiers*, Porte du Theil, 18 May 1942, p. 6.

⁷⁹⁰ AN, AJ39 58, Notice concernant les conditions de stage dans les Chantiers de la Jeunesse: Sursis et Devancement de Convocations.

⁷⁹¹ Interview with Roger Fichtenberg, 4 November 2008.

instruction compared to their rural comrades.⁷⁹² In 1941–42, a large proportion of these young men found themselves as refugees in the non-Occupied Zone and they were either not enrolled in, or had been removed from, universities. A series of examples illustrate how the manual work performed by Jewish youth was immediately halted upon the realisation of the other skills that they could bring to the Chantier. An accountancy student in Paris, Henri Certner crossed the Demarcation Line in 1941.⁷⁹³ In Gt 7, Rumilly (Haute-Savoie), Certner engaged in the same work as all other youths. After a short spell working in the kitchens, Certner's experience of accounting became known to his *chefs*. They swiftly moved him to the offices of the groupement, where he became responsible for purchasing food supplies. In a 2009 interview, Certner recalled that prior to taking on his new position, administrative chaos had reigned at Rumilly and almost led to starvation across the Chantier. Certner was confident that, thanks to his administrative prowess, food was promptly and efficiently delivered and the camp was saved.⁷⁹⁴ Their literacy and numeracy skills ensured that Philippe Presberg, Roger Fichtenberg and Edgard Weill became secretaries to *chefs*, while Sylvain Berman, whose father was the Grand Rabbin de Bruxelles and whose uncle and grandfather were both prominent rabbis, became assistant librarian for the whole of Gt 47, Casteljaloux (Lot-et-Garonne).⁷⁹⁵

Similarly, Georges Weill and Sylvain Adolphe, a photographer, had spent six months in 1941 travelling the non-Occupied Zone as musical entertainers, part of the

⁷⁹² For statistics on Jews in higher education see W. Rabi, *Anatomie du Judaïsme Français* (Paris, 1962) and M. Roblin, *Les Juifs de Paris* (Paris, 1952).

⁷⁹³ Interview with Henri Certner 21 December 2009.

⁷⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹⁵ Interviews with Philippe Presberg, 28 February 2009, Sylvain Berman 22 December 2009 and USC Shoah Foundation Interview with Edgard Weill, January 1997.

Comédiens Routiers.⁷⁹⁶ After felling trees for a short while in Gt 7, the men were charged with an exceptional duty. Their theatrical experience was known to the *chefs*, and in autumn 1941 they were chosen to make a propaganda film for the administration at Châtel-Guyon, promoting life in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse. Weill and Adolphe were selected as two of twelve actors to epitomise Vichy's *Homme Nouveau* in a film that played to cinema audiences across the non-Occupied Zone. Unlike the rest of the youth in the Chantiers, who spent eight months undertaking arduous physical tasks and sharing barracks with forty other men, Weill and Adolphe ended their service in the Chantier by staying at a hotel in Nice while shooting the film at the Studios de la Victoire.⁷⁹⁷

Although the leadership of the Chantiers was concerned by the elevation of Jews away from manual positions, the examples that have been laid out did not, technically at least, contravene Vichy law. Nevertheless, a series of case studies demonstrate instances in which the regime's anti-Semitic legislation was deliberately ignored in order that a Chantier would function most efficiently. As has been shown, the poor literacy rates were a major concern for the leadership of the Chantiers. At Gt 4, Fichtenberg was encouraged by his *chefs* to set up evening classes to teach his comrades how to read and write.⁷⁹⁸ De la Porte du Theil had explicitly banned Jews from teaching and thus influencing other youths in the Chantiers.⁷⁹⁹ Moreover, in Fichtenberg's case, his Jewishness was known to his *chefs*. Throughout his spell in Gt 4, Fichtenberg wore his EIF badge on his Chantier uniform, which had been permitted by a 1941 law that encouraged all scouts, including the EIF, to publically display their

⁷⁹⁶ Interview with Georges Weill 25 May 2009 and 3 June 2009. See Chapter 2.

⁷⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁹⁸ Interview with Roger Fichtenberg, 4 November 2008.

⁷⁹⁹ AN, AJ39 69, Note from Porte du Theil to the groupements removing Jews from positions of responsibility in the *Chantiers*, 11 January 1941.

affiliations (**Figure 20**).⁸⁰⁰ One can only speculate on the motivations of Fichtenberg's *chefs* to deliberately flout the law which prevented Jews from holding positions of influence. It is possible that the law was unknown to them. However, in this instance, such a scenario seems unlikely, given that the incident took place as late as spring 1942, by which point almost all *chefs* had signed declarations attesting that they were not Jewish. A more likely explanation is that the anti-Semitic legislation formed an obstacle to the task of improving literacy rates and was deliberately ignored.



Figure 20. Roger Fichtenberg in his Chantiers de la Jeunesse uniform. His EIF badge is indicated.

⁸⁰⁰ Interview with Roger Fichtenberg, 4 November 2008. *Journal Officiel* of 13 May 1941, 'Les membres des associations de jeunesse ci-dessous énumérées, sont autorisés à porter des insignes représentatifs de leur groupement déposés au ministère de l'intérieure [...] EIF'.

Other examples further illuminate why, for some *chefs*, regeneration took priority over exclusion. Upon his April 1941 incorporation to Gt 47, Gabarret (Landes), Pierre Cahen already had the qualities that were sought after in the young *chefs*. Not only had he been involved in the *Éclaireurs de France*, the secular scouts, before the war, but in the six months prior to his service in the Chantiers, Cahen had been a *chef* in the *Compagnons de France* in the Pyrénées.⁸⁰¹ After his incorporation, Cahen came first in the exam which should have promoted him to the position of a *chef*. Nevertheless, Cahen's *chefs* were stringent in their application of the *Statut des Juifs*: Cahen was not permitted to take up this role.⁸⁰² However, a strategy to move Cahen to another part of the Chantier where his skills would not go to waste was quickly implemented. He was made third in command to one of the group *chefs* and was responsible for 150 to 200 new recruits from the Corrèze and the Lozère.⁸⁰³ Exceptions were also made for Pierre-Émile Meyer at Gt 12, Vizille (Isère), who before the Occupation was in the process of becoming a career officer. In September 1941, Meyer was made a *chef d'équipe* by his *chef de groupe*, Weisgerber.⁸⁰⁴ Such a position of leadership and responsibility was not open to Jews. In this case, evidence suggests that Weisgerber was aware of the restrictions on Jews in positions of responsibility. Weisgerber had declared in writing that he himself was not a Jew on 27 February 1941.⁸⁰⁵ By the time of the next incorporation, Meyer had received a second promotion and had twelve youths under his orders.⁸⁰⁶

⁸⁰¹ USC Shoah Foundation Interview with Pierre Cahen, July 1997.

⁸⁰² *Ibid.*

⁸⁰³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰⁴ Pierre-Emile Meyer's *Carnets de Guerre*, September 1941, in the possession of his daughter Simone Brutlag.

⁸⁰⁵ Archives at the Ministry of Education, Chantiers de la Jeunesse Française, box 11, Weisgerber's dossier.

⁸⁰⁶ Pierre-Emile Meyer's *Carnets de Guerre*, 12 November 1941, in the possession of his daughter Simone Brutlag

Before the war, Maurice Spira had gained a diploma from the Institut d'Enseignement Commercial Supérieur de Strasbourg.⁸⁰⁷ Throughout 1941 and 1942, he was continuously promoted at Gt 28, Castillon (Ariège), resulting in his appointment as a Commis on 1 July 1942.⁸⁰⁸ During this time, Spira had his own column, 'A travers le monde', in the groupement's bi-monthly newsletter *L'Écho de Castillon*.⁸⁰⁹ Such a role was not permitted to Spira, as Article 5 of the first *Statut des Juifs* banned Jews from writing in newspapers and periodicals.⁸¹⁰ Spira's Jewishness was known to his *chefs* who were not ignorant of the racial laws, having themselves signed declarations in March 1941.⁸¹¹ What factors explain why Spira's presence in the Chantiers was overlooked until the last possible moment? The general aptitude (or lack thereof) of his peers played an important role. An April 1942 report on Gt 28 reveals the severe problems faced by this Chantier, in which because of their low literacy rates the youth were described as 'retardataires'.⁸¹² Rather than applying the *Statut des Juifs* to the letter, the priority for the *chefs* in Gt 28, was to have the most competent people in the more demanding positions. In the case of Maurice Spira this ensured that the anti-Semitic legislation was temporarily overlooked.

⁸⁰⁷ ADHG 3807W218 Dossier of Maurice Spira in which he applied for a place to read law at the University of Toulouse, October 1942.

⁸⁰⁸ Archives at the Ministry of Education, Chantiers de la Jeunesse Française, box 140, Dossier – Spira. For the rank of a Commis, see **Figure 17**.

⁸⁰⁹ BN, 4- JO- 5459, *L'Écho de Castillon*, *Journal Bi-Mensuel du Groupement de Jeunesse Péguy*, Castillon-en-Couserans (Ariège), 25 April 1941 and 11 May 1941.

⁸¹⁰ JO, 18 October 1940, p. 5323, *Loi portant statut des juifs du 3 octobre 1940*.

⁸¹¹ See AN, AJ39 183, Dossiers on chefs removed from the *Chantiers* where Spira's name features. The reason for his eventual expulsion in August was 'cause raciale'. AN F17bis 7896, Personnel in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse Française, Chef Jean Lafond and Chef Aimé Laffont signed their declarations at Gt 28 in March 1941.

⁸¹² AN, AJ39 60, Report from Gèze to Porte du Theil on the March 1942 incorporations, Toulouse, 7 April 1942.

Pierre Kauffman, an EIF *chef* at Lautrec, also held a number of positions of responsibility during his spell in Gt 18, Le Vigan (Gard).⁸¹³ The favourable impression that Kauffman left on his *chefs* did not end on his release from the Chantiers. Having joined the Association des Anciens des Chantiers de la Jeunesse (ADAC) following his return to Lautrec in March 1942, Kauffman was asked to head its local branch in his canton. *Assistant-Commissar* Bertrand gave the following reason for Kauffman's nomination ; 'parmi les 63 anciens des chantiers inscrits à l'ADAC de ton canton tu es avec Chazand le seul qui ait l'appréciation assez élogieuse de tes chefs'.⁸¹⁴

The experience of Jewish youth in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse not only challenges traditional views on Jewish life under Vichy, but it also reveals the regime's failure to implement social levelling amongst its youth. The idea behind the Chantiers was to equip youths with the necessary qualities to bring forth the National Revolution. In reality, the camps were left to fend for themselves as self-administrative bodies amidst dire conditions of material shortages and a lack of trained personnel. Educated youths quickly found themselves engaged in positions similar to those they had left behind in their pre-war lives. Jewish youth, who had generally attained a higher level of education than their rural counterparts, formed part of this skilled grouping and before long were performing administrative duties that were often coupled with degrees of influence or responsibility. The survival of the Chantier was the ultimate goal of its *chefs* and Jewish contributions to achieve this cause were looked upon

⁸¹³ Interviews with Pierre Kauffman 11 April 2007 and 26 September 2008.

⁸¹⁴ CDJC, Archives of Pierre Kauffman, letter from Commissaire-Assistant Bertrand to Pierre Kauffman, 15 May 1942.

favourably as a means of helping rather than hindering the Chantiers' programme of regeneration.

While work took up a large proportion of Jewish youths' daily lives in the Chantier, there exist other means through which to assess how their experience of the Chantier affected their relationship with the regime. One way is to consider the extent to which Jewish youth were able to integrate with their peers. There is a need to analyse the factors which led some youths to feel completely isolated, while others were able to become immersed in the everyday life of the Chantier.

The Chantiers de la Jeunesse often represented the first occasion for Jewish youth to engage with young men from beyond their socio-economic background. Whereas in the first contingent of the summer of 1940 Jewish youth mixed with youths from similar backgrounds, from the Chantiers' second contingent of March 1941, conscription was carried out according to where youths were registered with a local town council. Upon incorporation, youths from towns and villages across the non-Occupied Zone were sent en masse to a designated Chantier. While the physical surroundings on entering a Chantier in a neighbouring department might have been unfamiliar to the youths, the solace of being amongst people with whom they had grown up and who spoke their patois would certainly have aided adjustment to their new lives. In some cases, Jewish youth were completely unfamiliar with the mores of their peers and found themselves isolated within their groupements. As Henri Certner

remarked, 'je ne connaissais personne'.⁸¹⁵ Their refugee status ensured that important differences existed between Jewish youth and their comrades. Moreover, Jewish youth's unfamiliarity with the customs of their peers was sometimes matched by sheer ignorance in the localities of what constituted a Jew. Immediately before his call-up to Gt 5, Pontgibaud (Puy-de-Dôme), Joseph Bollack worked in his father's business which had been relocated to Limoges from Strasbourg in 1939. Prior to working there, Bollack had been excluded from studying optometry for not meeting the faculty's *numerus clausus* quota.⁸¹⁶ Bollack's father arranged a private meeting with a *chef* in the Chantier shortly after his son's incorporation.⁸¹⁷ The Bollack family were devoutly orthodox and the purpose of this discussion was for M. Bollack to explain to the *chef* that as a practising Jew, his son had a number of religious requirements that he needed to observe regularly. Having listened attentively, the *chef* ensured that this demands would be possible, and requiring more information asked whether his son was 'juif catholique ou juif protestant'.⁸¹⁸

Most interviewees alluded to the difficulty of forging any lasting relations with the majority of the comrades.⁸¹⁹ Writing to Robert Gamzon in July 1941, Pierre Kauffman noted that he had nothing in common with the other youths and deeply regretted his separation from Claude Samuel and Maurice Bernsohn.⁸²⁰ Some former participants even recall instances of unambiguous hostility towards them. In a 2009 interview, Henri Certner recalled one such incident that took place on his first night in

⁸¹⁵ Interview with Henri Certner, 21 December 2009

⁸¹⁶ Interview with Joseph Bollack, 12 July 2010.

⁸¹⁷ Ibid.

⁸¹⁸ Ibid.

⁸¹⁹ Notable interviews with Roger Fichtenberg, 4 November 2008, Henri Ravouna, 15 June 2009 and Sylvain Berman, 22 December 2009.

⁸²⁰ CDJC, CMXLV (1), Letter from Pierre Kauffman to Robert Gamzon, 31 July 1941.

his barracks.⁸²¹ Upon getting ready for bed, Certner was suddenly encircled by the rest of his group who began to abuse him for wearing pyjamas.⁸²² Certner remained adamant that this incident was unrelated to anti-Semitism. Instead, Certner recalled that by not wearing a shirt to bed, Certner stood out from the others and he was ridiculed for looking like a ‘vrai parisien’.⁸²³ Similarly, Sylvain Berman also recalled his unfamiliarity with rural culture as motivating his feelings of isolation:

Les conversations étaient difficiles avec les illettrés qui ne connaissaient que de leurs vaches. [Il n’y avait] pas grand choses à dire. Ils racontaient des blagues soit en provençale, soit en catalan. Il y avait 18 qui sont tombés de rire et deux, moi et un autre, qui était du nord qui ne riait pas. Ils parlaient plus le provençale ou le catalan que le français.⁸²⁴

Nevertheless, certain communal interests and factors transcended social and religious boundaries and ensured that, in some instances, comrades could become friends. The hostile environment that had marred Henri Certner’s first night in the Chantier was soon forgotten. Certner recalled that although he too had little in common with the other youths, at Rumilly, ‘tout le monde est devenu ami [...] on était comme des frères’.⁸²⁵ Théo Klein who had completed his studies in Lyon in June 1941, was confident of having been the only Jew in his Chantier.⁸²⁶ Klein recalled that after his incorporation in November 1941 he quickly became firm friends with two educated youths; one whose father was a well-known bookseller in Montpellier, the other from a noble family.⁸²⁷ To be able to eat adequately, youths in the Chantiers shared food in

⁸²¹ Interview with Henri Certner, 21 December 2009.

⁸²² Ibid.

⁸²³ Ibid.

⁸²⁴ Interview with Sylvain Berman, 22 December 2009.

⁸²⁵ Interview with Henri Certner, 21 December 2009.

⁸²⁶ Interview with Théo Klein, 10 March 2009.

⁸²⁷ Ibid.

order to remain fully nourished. This response to the lack of food in the Chantiers provided an opportunity for Jews and non-Jews to bond and forge friendships.

In his letters home, René Klein, an apprentice-optician in Vichy in 1940–41, made regular reference to Frossard, who quickly became an intimate friend; ‘moi et Frossard, on partage tout ensemble’.⁸²⁸ Indeed, concerns about food mark an important communality between the experiences of youth taking part in the Chantiers. Almost all youths in the Chantiers complained about the food (or lack thereof). In June 1941, a survey carried out by the Commission de Contrôle postal for Gt 18, Le Vigan examined 523 letters that had been intercepted. The commission concluded above all else, the topic of food dominated the letters.⁸²⁹ The following table from March 1942 reveals what was mentioned in 300 intercepted letters from men stationed at Gt 35 (**Figure 21**).⁸³⁰

⁸²⁸ René Klein’s archives, letter to his grandparents and aunt, 10 August 1941.

⁸²⁹ ADG 1W31, Le Commissaire Special, Chef de Service Délégué auprès des Commissions Techniques de CPTT to the Prefect of the Gard, Nîmes, 19 June 1941.

⁸³⁰ ADT 506W145, Report of the Contrôle Postale d’Albi, 28 March 1942.

		Jeunes – Nombre 284			Chefs – Nombre 16	
MORAL	Nombre de lettres le reflétant : 37	Bon	Mauvais	Nombre de lettres le reflétant : 1	Bon	Mauvais
		20	17		1	-
DISCIPLINE	Nombre de lettres en parlant	En bien	En mal	Nombre de lettres en parlant	En bien	En mal
	15	-	15	5	4	1
REVOLUTION NATIONALE	-	-	-	-	-	-
PATRIE	-	-	-	1	1	-
CHEFS	11	8	3	1	1	-
NOURRITURE	108	100	8	1	1	-
HABILLEMENT	-	-	-	-	-	-
CANTONNEMENT	13	3	10	-	-	-
HYGIENE	14	5	9	1	-	1
TRAVAIL	30	5	25	1	1	-
EDUCATION PHYSIQUE	-	-	-	-	-	-
SPORTS	4	-	4	-	-	-
FORMATION INTELLECTUELLE	2	-	2	1	-	1
PERMISSIONS	250	250	-	5	5	-

Figure 21. Table showing the letters of youths in Gt 35, Labruignière (Tarn), intercepted by the Controle Postale d’Albi.

The letters of Jewish youth in the Chantiers follow this pattern. Food also dominates the letters that René Klein wrote throughout his eight month service. In a typical letter from September 1941 that Klein wrote to his family, Klein spent the first five pages discussing work and the difficulties of eating well in the Chantier.⁸³¹ Although René Klein dedicated two pages of his letter to inform his parents of the exceptional leave for Jewish youth to celebrate Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, the fact that this came at the end of his letter suggests that this was not the purpose of writing home. In another letter to his parents, Klein wrote exclusively about a restaurant lunch that he

⁸³¹ René Klein’s archives, letter to his parents and his sister dated 14 September 1941.

and a comrade had just finished. After describing the menu Klein wrote, 'ces copains ont admiré de la manière dont je vidais les plats'.⁸³²

Like René Klein, the correspondence between Pierre Kauffman and his friends Maurice Bernsohn and Claude Samuel reveals the important place of food in the letters of youth in the Chantiers. Upon their arrival at Gt 18, the three young men who had hitherto been at the EIF's Chantier Rural at Lautrec were separated into different groups. Kauffman worked in a carpentry unit and Samuel and Bernsohn joined a group in the mountains. While there was an abundance of bread in the mountains, Samuel and Bernsohn lacked other necessities. Samuel's letters to Kauffman show how he overcame these difficulties, sending Kauffman extra bread rations in order to exchange these for other products, and always ensuring that his friend did not go without.⁸³³ Food thus played a very significant role in the daily routine of all those in the Chantiers. Jewish youth's concerns over eating did not differ from their non-Jewish peers with whom they developed strategies to maximise their food intake.

Examples of humour reveals the extent to which many young Jews felt entirely immersed in the everyday routine of the Chantiers. Georges Weill recalled playing tricks on the new recruits, who were asked to search the camp for the 'clé pour la porte du theil'.⁸³⁴ Similarly, in one of his letters, René Klein described how he set out to play a trick on a new Jewish recruit by pretending to be an anti-Semite.⁸³⁵ Klein wrote that Samuel, the butt of this joke, sought to defend himself:

⁸³² Ibid., 7 October 1941.

⁸³³ CDJC, Pierre Kauffman's archives, Letter from Claude Samuel to Pierre Kauffman 26 August 1941.

⁸³⁴ Interview with Georges Weill 25 May 2009.

⁸³⁵ René Klein's archives, letter to his parents and his sister dated 10 November 1941.

Il m'a dit en ayant l'air de me bouffer que son père était mort des suites de guerres – tant de citations, tant de décorations – pensionné 100% etc, etc, et qu'il était Français à je ne sais combien de générations.⁸³⁶

Klein noted that Samuel left him, 'en me prenant pour un farouche ennemi'.⁸³⁷ Klein did not consider it inappropriate to have made such a joke. Moreover, the very style in which he reported this anecdote, his repletion of 'tant' and 'je ne sais pas combien de générations', reveals his almost dismissive attitude towards Samuel's exaggerated protests. Klein smiled while reflecting on the event almost seventy years later. He acknowledged that his mockery of Samuel was part of a broader exercise, whereby the youths of his contingent bullied the new recruits in the contingent that followed.⁸³⁸ This incident illustrates the extent to which Klein believed that he had successfully integrated into the Chantiers. Klein's letters offer other examples that support this reasoning. In August 1941, Klein performed in a recital to the local population of Urçay (Allier), which culminated in a rendition of the popular First World War army song '*La Madelon*'. In this performance, René Klein played the part of the beautiful young madelon and as he noted, 'j'étais ravissante'.⁸³⁹ Klein was proud of his performance on stage, called it his 'petit succès' and in placing an additional 'e' to the end of 'ravissant', he conveyed to his family the jocular nature of this episode.

⁸³⁶ Ibid.

⁸³⁷ Ibid.

⁸³⁸ Interview with René Klein, 20 December 2008.

⁸³⁹ René Klein's archives, letter to his grandparents and aunt, 7 August 1941.



Figure 22. René Klein pictured outside the bureau du travail at Gt 1 Tronçais (Allier), 1941.

Jewish youth's contribution to life in the Chantier was manifested in multiple forms. Before his call-up to the Chantiers, Henri Ravouna had just set up a small prêt-à-porter business in Lyon. While at Gt 2, Crotenay (Jura), Ravouna was one of two men from his group who were sent to undertake leadership training at an École des Cadres in Cerveau-les-lacs.⁸⁴⁰ With his reputation as an EIF *chef* scout known, Théo Klein was charged by his *chef* to organise the New Years' Eve party for the entire group, and Roger Fichtenberg served as a representative for the St George's Day festival in April 1942.⁸⁴¹ Interviewees' recollections, together with Pierre-Émile Meyer's carnets de guerre, show the regularity with which Jewish youth took part in marches and

⁸⁴⁰ Interview with Henri Ravouna, 15 June 2009.

⁸⁴¹ Interview with Théo Klein, 10 March 2009 and interview with Roger Fichtenberg, 4 November 2008.

ceremonies.⁸⁴² Their integration thus extended beyond their individual local units and Jewish youth participated publically in the official cycle of Chantier events.

Youths' participation in these official processions should not however, suggest their commitment to the National Revolution. On the contrary, the conclusions drawn from **Figure 21**, and others like it, point in the same direction as evidence from contemporary letters of Jewish youth and the personal recollections teased out during interviews. Robert Mader, a non-Jew who was called-up to Gt, 18, claimed that even after seventy years, he often reflected upon his service in order to understand its purpose.⁸⁴³ The information in **Figure 21** is important in conveying the failure of both the SGJ and the Chantiers de la Jeunesse to transform French youth into stalwarts of France's renewal. With not a single one of the 284 youths commenting on the National Revolution or the patrie, it appears that these messages had very little affect on the youths in the Chantiers, who instead dedicated their thoughts to food, their tasks and their next leave. In a 2009 interview, Philippe Presberg, who had studied at the École Commerciale and was working for Ford in Paris when war broke out, recalled the pretence of ideological commitment in the Chantiers; 'On a chanté 'Maréchal nous voilà', parce qu'il fallait chanter [...] On ne s'occupait pas de politique'.⁸⁴⁴ Sylvain Berman maintained that in Gt 47, Casteljaloux (Lot-et-Garonne), the National Revolution played little part in the day to day life of youth in Chantiers:

La Révolution Nationale. C'était un mot, ce n'était pas grand chose en réalité [...] Les paysans qui voulaient qu'une chose : La terre, les bêtes et à part ça,

⁸⁴² Notably the interview with André Ferber, 21 August 2009. Carnets of Pierre-Emile Meyer.

⁸⁴³ Interview with Robert Mader, 3 December 2008.

⁸⁴⁴ Interview with Philippe Presberg, 28 February 2009.

pas grand choses. Et les filles ! Quant au maréchal, ils s'en foutaient. Ils n'étaient pas politisés. Ni de droit, ni de gauche.⁸⁴⁵

Attempts to impose any form of ideology on the majority of youths called up to the Chantier would have been misplaced. The evidence suggests that the majority of youths were apolitical and unreceptive to Vichy's ideology. Rather than attempting to transmit the National Revolution, the *chefs*' focus instead shifted to teaching French youth basic living skills, notably hygiene.⁸⁴⁶ Further, many Jewish interviewees recalled that it was largely amongst the educated *chefs*, many of whom were 'anciens étudiants', that friendships formed.⁸⁴⁷ As Pierre Kauffmann recalled in a 2008 interview, 'ceux avec lesquels j'étais le plus proche c'était plutôt les officiers, qui étaient sympathique'.⁸⁴⁸ On multiple occasions, Pierre-Emile Meyer wrote in his carnets 'joue au bridge au mess avec le chef dentiste', while in one of René Klein's letters, Klein described his *chefs* who were only two to three years older than the youths and who, 'avaient aussi envie de rigoler'.⁸⁴⁹ Few of the interviewees recalled having *chefs* who were zealous transmitters of the National Revolution. Marcel David's *chefs* turned a blind eye to his cercles d'études in which he spoke his mind on the perils of the National Revolution and Sylvain Berman noted that although most *chefs* held an unyielding respect for Pétain, when it came to the National Revolution, 'ils n'avaient rien à foutre'.⁸⁵⁰

⁸⁴⁵ Interview with Sylvain Berman, 22 December 2009.

⁸⁴⁶ USC Shoah Foundation, Interview with Pierre Cahen, July 1997. The campaign to improve hygiene in the *Chantiers* was set out in the BPO. See AN, AJ39 56, BPO, 30 avril 1942, pp. 13–17.

⁸⁴⁷ AIU, CC35, Letter from Chef Rebiquet to Rabbi Schönberg in which the chef described the intellectual training of chefs at Rumilly, 5 June 1941.

⁸⁴⁸ Interview with Pierre Kauffmann, 26 September 2008.

⁸⁴⁹ *Carnets* of Pierre-Emile Meyer, entries on 5 and 6 September 1941 and René Klein's archives, letter to his grandparents and aunt, 7 August 1941.

⁸⁵⁰ USC Shoah Foundation, interview with Marcel David, March 1997 and Interview with Sylvain Berman, 22 December 2009.

Despite their different backgrounds, Jews did not seek isolation from their peers. Jewish youth's experience of being away from their family and friends for eight months pushed them towards forging new personal relationships beyond those which had hitherto been familiar. Despite occasional feelings of isolation (arguably stemming from their unfamiliarity with rural culture), Jewish youth participated in and were able to successfully integrate into the everyday life of the Chantier. The extent to which French Jewish youth actively sought to engage with this new form of youth culture is implied by Samuel's vigorous reaction to René Klein's anti-Semitic jibes. Complaining about the food and writing about the next leave was common to all youth in the Chantiers, irrespective of religion. Jewish youth occasionally formed relations with their peers and with their *chefs*, whom they did not consider to be transmitters of the National Revolution. Throughout their period of service they intended to contribute to the Chantier on the same terms as everyone else. That said, the experience of Jewish youth in the Chantiers was not always free of anti-Semitic incident. Situations sometimes arose in which Jewish youth were unambiguously targeted for abuse by their *chefs* and peers. These instances, and Jewish youths' reactions to them, took multiple forms. For some former participants, these narratives define their eight month service.

Seeking to locate their experiences of the Occupation within the dominant narrative of persecution, some interviewees drew conclusions between their Jewishness and their spell in the Chantiers. Henri Ravouna recalled that 'les Chantiers de la Jeunesse,

c'étaient tous, tous, contre les Juifs. C'était la politique de Pétain et Laval'.⁸⁵¹ Some believed that they had been designated to a particularly gruelling Chantier as a consequence of their Jewishness. Daniel Gauthier, known at the time as Daniel Samuel, believed that it was a result of his Hebraic name that he was sent to a special disciplinary Chantier.⁸⁵² Gauthier, an apprentice optician in Paris who was a refugee in Nice, undertook his service in Gt 13, Cavaillon (Vaucluse) and later at Gt 15, Agay (Var). While a specific groupement did exist for youths whom the Chantiers considered to be in need of rehabilitation, this was located at Gt 40, Murat (Cantal).⁸⁵³ In the event of unrest or delinquency, youths were sent there. No alternative provisions existed in individual Chantiers for long-term disciplinary action. Reflecting on his difficult experiences more than fifty years after the events and at the height of the Papon Affair, it is possible that Gauthier recalled his difficult experiences through the same lens as the then national discourse of the Occupation. This provided a useful strategy for him to make sense to himself of his participation as a Jew in this Vichy organisation.

Only on occasion do intercepted letters sent from the Chantiers de la Jeunesse reveal any expression of anti-Semitism from the non-Jewish youths.⁸⁵⁴ The anti-Semitism of these letters is not based on deep intellectual foundation, nor do they contain elements of traditional Catholic hostility towards Jews. Rather, their resentment appears to have been influenced by the immediate needs of the present. It is likely that the anti-

⁸⁵¹ Interview with Henri Ravouna, 15 June 2009.

⁸⁵² USC Shoah Foundation Interview with Daniel Gauthier (formerly Samuel), October 1996.

⁸⁵³ Gt 40 was the organisation's disciplinary *Chantier*. Youths were sent there for a variety of reasons that included murder, low levels of morality, theft, anti-National propaganda, indiscipline and all second offences. Reports on this Gt make no specific reference to the presence of Jewish youth. AN 2AG 459, Archives du Cabinet Civil, Chantiers de la Jeunesse, Report by Commissaire Le Fouest, 15 July 1941.

⁸⁵⁴ See ADT, 506W145 and ADG 1W31. An earlier section has already outlined the general content of letters sent home from the Chantier.

Semitic tone of such letters came as a consequence of the public display of anti-Semitic rhetoric that Vichy had promoted since the summer of 1940, which had attempted to portray Jewish individualism as being responsible for the defeat of France.⁸⁵⁵ In these letters, which were not specific to a particular Chantier or to any region, Jews were portrayed as unwilling to take part in the daily life of the Chantier and generally detached from other youths. As one youth wrote, 'il est malheureux que les prisonniers sont là-bas et que les sales Juifs trouvent de tout. Le petit juif reçoit presque tous les huit jours des colis'.⁸⁵⁶ Similarly, another youth testified that :

Les jeunes Juifs se montreraient peu disposés à faire leur stage dans les camps de jeunesse et leurs parents chercheraient à les en faire dispenser pour raisons de santé, d'études.⁸⁵⁷

Nevertheless, while these letters are crucial in revealing the private anti-Semitic attitudes of some youths, they do not illustrate how, or whether, this was ever manifested to Jewish youth.

There were, however, anti-Semitic incidents in the Chantiers that can not be confused with other forms of prejudice such as class or regional. These occurrences took many forms, some reflecting longstanding convictions, whereas others appeared as impulsive reactions to the difficulties of the era. In considering a possible re-

⁸⁵⁵ Renée Poznanski has recently argued that anti-Semitic state propaganda in the period 1940–1942, often through radio and the press, was in fact more prevalent than she had first suggested. See R. Poznanski, *Propagande et Persécutions* (Paris, 2008), pp. 77–97 and 130–146. Poznanski had originally written in her 1994 opus that anti-Semitic propaganda was practically non-existent in 1940–42. For her original comments See Poznanski, *Jews in France*, pp. 377–385.

⁸⁵⁶ AN, AJ39 75, *Contrôle de courrier* 1941, Intercepted letter from a youth in a *Chantiers de la Jeunesse* in the Gard, 31 October 1941. There is no additional information concerning the author of this letter.

⁸⁵⁷ AN, AJ39 75, *Contrôle de courrier* 1941, Monthly Report of the *Contrôle technique de Lyon*, 30 September 1941. There is no additional information concerning the author of this letter.

emergence of military anti-Semitism, Marcel David and Henri Ravouna both recalled instances in which Jewish youth were not allowed to take part in the raising of the flag ceremony.⁸⁵⁸ David, who had been excluded from pursuing a degree in medieval history in Lyon because of the *numerus clausus*, remarked that to not take part in this ceremony was a traumatic event for his friend Paul Frank; ‘il en a été très marquée; parce qu’il était très Français’.⁸⁵⁹ We do not have any evidence that explains why, at the end of his spell at an École des Cadres, Henri Ravouna’s *chef* awarded him a final grade of zero, even though he had finished top of his group.⁸⁶⁰ An example from the nineteenth century could shed light on this incident and the explanation may have its roots in the debate over Jewish participation in the French army. While preparing for his exam to enter the military corps, Captain Dreyfus was awarded the lowest possible grade even though he had finished amongst the top students in his class. The officer awarding the grades noted publically that Jews should not be allowed to enter the top echelons of the army.⁸⁶¹ It might be that the origins of the *chef*’s decision to award Ravouna a zero can be located in a longstanding ambivalence towards Jews that was not uncommon in French military circles. Most *chefs* in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse were former military men, whose careers had been suspended owing to the provisions set out in the Armistice. While a large number of *chefs* did not seek to discriminate against Jews, this was far from the case for all of them, with many holding fixed beliefs on whom France’s enemies were. Speaking in 1946 about the military background of his former colleagues, Lucien Blavier, a non-Jewish *chef* in Gt, 4, Cormatin (Saône-et-Loire) reported:

⁸⁵⁸ USC Shoah Foundation Interview with Marcel David, March 1997 and Interview with Henri Ravouna, 15 June 2009.

⁸⁵⁹ USC Shoah Foundation Interview with Marcel David, March 1997.

⁸⁶⁰ Interview with Henri Ravouna, 15 June 2009.

⁸⁶¹ Harris, *The Man on Devil’s Island*, p. 63

Ils avaient l'état d'esprit de ces milieux: tendance au cléricalisme, hostilité profonde à la démocratie, haine de la classe ouvrière. La tendance moyenne se situait entre le PSF et l'Action Française. Ils ont applaudi au programme de la Révolution Nationale; dissolution des organisations politiques et syndicales démocratiques, suppression du parlement et des organismes élus, exclusion des juifs des fonctions publiques et de certaines activités privées.⁸⁶²

As Blavier indicated, this form of discrimination sought the removal of Jewish influence from the army and consequently from the Chantiers de la Jeunesse. Jews could serve alongside their peers, but the possibility of promotion, which would mean exerting control over Frenchmen, was unthinkable.

However, some *chefs* who did not hide their anti-Semitic prejudices adopted a more conciliatory position with Jewish youth under their orders. Edgard Weill was secretary to Chef Montesquieu at Gt 39, Montmarault (Allier), and was present when Montesquieu learned of the passing of the first *Statut des Juifs*. According to Weill, Montesquieu became instantly overjoyed at the news.⁸⁶³ Unable to conceal his disdain, Weill recalled reproaching Montesquieu for his reaction and claimed that, as a descendant of the great political thinker, Chef Montesquieu was unworthy to carry his name.⁸⁶⁴ However, Montesquieu's reaction to his secretary complicates our understanding of Vichy anti-Semitism. Weill recalled, 'il m'a dit simplement que moi j'échappais à cette règle et que moi j'étais un cas particulier, comme chaque antisémite avait son juif, j'étais le sien.'⁸⁶⁵ The Jewish Question was not straightforward. Montesquieu's personal ambivalence illustrates the spectrum of cultural attitudes towards the Jewish problem amongst Vichy officials. In Germany, the Nazis had recognised that some officials may try to protect one 'good Jew'. To

⁸⁶² AN 3W 204, Statement of Lucien Blavier before the Haute Cour de Justice for the appearance of General de la Porte du Theil, 21 January 1946.

⁸⁶³ USC Shoah Foundation Interview with Rabbi Edgard Weill, January 1997.

⁸⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁶⁵ Ibid.

curb this tendency, propaganda was initiated by Himmler to dispel that such a notion could even exist.⁸⁶⁶ These measures were never introduced under Vichy and until the Liberation, a number of leading Vichy figures continued to have relations with their ‘bon juif’.⁸⁶⁷

The ideological reasoning for this mode of thinking was unambiguously described in a letter from the *chef* départemental for the Puy-de-Dôme to Jean Netter, recently expelled from ADAC in July 1942. Netter had been a part of the Chantier’s first contingent. After his release in February 1941, he maintained relations with the Chantiers as an EIF *chef* in Clermont-Ferrand where, having not yet been affected by the numerus clausus, he was able to pursue a medical degree.⁸⁶⁸ Although Netter’s patriotic spirit was hailed as having been genuine, his *chef* suggested that Netter was only an exception to the rule:

Précisément parce que vous êtes Français et que vous PENSEZ Français, il vous sera plus facile de reconnaître en toute objectivité que tous vos compatriotes ne professaient pas et ne professent pas encore les mêmes bons sentiments à l’égard de notre patrie commune [...] Toutefois, quelque soient leur race ou leur religion, les Français de cœur et d’esprit ne se sentent pas atteints par ces mesures s’ils voient avant tout l’intérêt de la seule France, et sauront continuer à faire leur devoir.⁸⁶⁹

⁸⁶⁶ R. Breitman, ‘Himmler and the Terrible Secret’ among the Executioners’, in *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol, 26, 3–4, (1991), p. 445. Zygmunt Bauman has treated in greater depth how anti-Semites negotiated the difference between the good ‘Jew next door’ and the abstract stereotype of the Jew. See Z. Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 184–188.

⁸⁶⁷ Cohen, *Persécutions et Sauvetages*, p. 305. Some examples include: Georges Lamirand, who liberated his friend Samuel Brull from Drancy in October 1942, see AN 3W 203, Georges Lamirand’s appearance before the Haute Cour de Justice. Colonel Pascot, Vichy Minister for Sport, remained a friend of Raymond-Raoul Lambert and the men continued to dine openly at Vichy until Lambert’s deportation in November 1943, see Lambert, *Diary of a Witness*, p. 141. Even Xavier Vallat saw the possibility for the ‘bon juif’. Vallat continued to dine with his Jewish friend Marie Halphen-Trèves while Commissioner for Jewish Affairs and Vallat’s Jewish friend Hubert Walch spoke in his favour at his appearance before the Haute Cour de Justice, see Joly, *Xavier Vallat*, p. 92, AML Fond Vallat, letters from H Walch to Xavier Vallat.

⁸⁶⁸ YV, o.89 107, Biography of Jean Netter.

⁸⁶⁹ YV, o.89 107, Letter from the Chef Départemental of ADAC in the Puy-de-Dôme to Jean Netter, 11 August 1942.

Interactions on the ground reveal the ideological overlap that existed when a *chef* was confronted with a Jewish participant. These *chefs* remained resolute that Jews were generally a destructive force in society whose influence needed to be reduced. Nevertheless, their brand of anti-Semitism made allowances for the certain Jews with whom they came into contact, who was a real person and not just a propagandistic image and who could demonstrate a willingness to contribute to the National Community.

Jewish youth in the Chantiers suffered from the abuse they received from their peers, which was often coloured with anti-Semitic stereotypes. Pierre-Emile Meyer entered Gt 12, Vizille (Isère) in September 1941 and remembers the anti-Semitic taunts that he met there, ‘je dois dire que malgré mon âge, j’en ai pleuré toute la nuit, on m’a dégradé comme juif’.⁸⁷⁰ Many Jews chose not to become the passive victims of their tormentors. Some employed means with which to avoid and combat anti-Semitic incidents. In Théo Klein’s Chantier at Gt 35, Labruguière (Tarn), youths could occasionally go to the local town to buy food and cigarettes. Klein recalls that some youths sought to make a small profit from these excursions, buying a number of items that they would then sell to other youths at an increased rate.⁸⁷¹ Klein recalled hearing mild jibes directed at these profiteers, ‘le salaud, le juif, il nous a eu’.⁸⁷² Klein explained that when it was his turn to visit the town, he purchased the greatest number of goods possible and sold them back to the youths at the same price that he had paid.⁸⁷³ Following the initial surprise of his comrades, Klein recalls reminding them of the way that they had chastised other men, calling them ‘juifs’ for having made a

⁸⁷⁰ USC Shoah Foundation Interview with Pierre-Emile Manteuil (formerly Meyer), July 1995.

⁸⁷¹ Interview with Théo Klein, 10 March 2009.

⁸⁷² Ibid.

⁸⁷³ Ibid.

profit, even when they were not Jews, while he, as a Jew, had not sought to take advantage.⁸⁷⁴ Klein is quite certain that he received only positive reactions to his actions.

Other examples reveal a choice made by some Jewish youth to create and promote an alternative representation of Jews, and in so doing, to combat anti-Semitic stereotypes. Henri Ravouna recalled the anti-Semitic attacks that were inflicted on his friend Dreyfus.⁸⁷⁵ According to Ravouna, Dreyfus, the son of a rabbi in Lyon, was a literature teacher who found the physical labour too difficult to master and who soon became a victim of anti-Semitic jibes from the other youths.

Chaque fois les jeunes se moquaient de lui, et les chefs aussi. C'est parce qu'il était juif surtout [Ils ont dit que] C'était normal qu'il ne voulait [sic] pas travailler, qu'il ne sache pas travailler, puis qu'il était juif.⁸⁷⁶

Daniel Samuel also witnessed anti-Semitic abuse, in particular towards a young man named Blum, who was unaccustomed to physical labour for whom the experience 'était vraiment un cauchemar'.⁸⁷⁷ Like Théo Klein, Ravouna and Samuel were not submissive to these anti-Semitic outpourings and both men's proactive reactions were identical. Ravouna claimed 'moi, je travaillais deux fois plus que les autres en tant que juif. [...] moi, je voulais faire voir que j'étais comme tout le monde'.⁸⁷⁸ While for Samuel, 'J'avais à cœur de faire mieux que les autres, parce qu'ils savaient que j'étais juif'.⁸⁷⁹ Ravouna and Samuel reacted as proud Jews to these incidents, which should not be confused with personal survival strategies. Combating anti-Semitism and

⁸⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁷⁵ Interview with Henri Ravouna, 15 June 2009.

⁸⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷⁷ USC Shoah Foundation Interview with Daniel Gauthier (formerly Samuel), October 1996.

⁸⁷⁸ Interview with Henri Ravouna, 15 June 2009.

⁸⁷⁹ USC Shoah Foundation Interview with Daniel Gauthier (formerly Samuel), October 1996.

showing that there was no contradiction to being French and Jewish was central to Ravouna's identity. He had spent much of the late 1930s actively involved with the LICA in Lyon.⁸⁸⁰ These examples demonstrate that there were those amongst the French Jewish youth who refused to shy away from confronting anti-Semitism in whatever expression it took. Some youth sought to confront it and made use of their personal attributes and experiences to dispel the stereotypical image of the Jew and to replace it with one that was indistinguishable from other Frenchmen of their generation.

When it appeared, anti-Semitism constituted one of many unfamiliar experiences that Jewish youth encountered in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse and they responded to it in a variety of ways. Some succumbed to the taunts while others reacted vigorously, intending to counter the prejudices of their peers. However, and as elsewhere in Vichy France, hostile attitudes towards the Jews also varied considerably. While some youths merely projected the propagandistic image of the Jew on to their comrades in the Chantier, others, while still remaining broadly opposed to Jews, were able to distinguish between Jews in the Chantiers and Jews whose images they might have encountered elsewhere.

In the Chantiers de la Jeunesse, Jews were not prohibited from fulfilling their religious obligations. Moreover, exceptions were even made for the youth to observe

⁸⁸⁰ The LICA was the Ligue Internationale Contre l'Antisémitisme. In 1979 it became the LICRA (Ligue Internationale Contre le Racisme et l'Antisémitisme). For most of the post-war period, Henri Ravouna was the president of the LICA/LICRA for the Rhône-Alpes region. He organised the visit of Martin Luther King Jr. to Lyon in 1965.

the Jewish festivals which fell during their period of service. The experience of the Chantiers acts as a useful prism through which to assess Vichy's attitude towards religious worship and reinforces the argument that the racial laws were not implemented evenly.

The relationship between the Chantiers and Jewish religious worship did not have a smooth beginning. At the general assembly of French Rabbis that took place in Lyon in September 1940, the religious education of Jewish youth was made a priority and measures were immediately enacted to ensure that a form of Jewish life would be available to youths in the Chantiers.⁸⁸¹ On 18 November 1940 the Grand Rabbi of France, Isaie Schwartz, wrote to De la Porte du Theil explaining that it was urgent for the latter to nominate a Jewish chaplain for the Chantiers de la Jeunesse.⁸⁸² Chaplains in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse had different responsibilities to army chaplains. With the task of rebuilding France it was vital for De la Porte du Theil that the chaplain's role extended beyond offering religious guidance. Moral guidance based on the tenets of the New France, became a core feature of the chaplain's tasks and upon their appointment, chaplains automatically took on an official position by becoming assistants to the *chefs* of the groupements.⁸⁸³ De la Porte du Theil refused Rabbi Schwartz's request, claiming that such a position of responsibility had been outlawed to Jews in the first *Statut des Juifs*.⁸⁸⁴ However, in a second attempt, Rabbi Schwartz

⁸⁸¹ YV, o.9 118, The continuation of religious teaching is mentioned in a circular from the Grand Rabbin of France Isaie Schwartz to an unknown rabbi in the non-Occupied Zone, Vichy, 12 November 1940.

⁸⁸² YV, o.9 118. Letter from the Grand Rabbin of France Isaie Schwartz to De la Porte du Theil, 18 November 1940.

⁸⁸³ AN, AJ39 15, Circular from De la Porte du Theil, 1 March 1941.

⁸⁸⁴ YV, o.9 118, Porte du Theil to Rabbi Schwartz 4 December, 1940. Nevertheless, the first *Statut des Juifs* made no reference to the *Chantiers de la Jeunesse* or to any other movements for national renewal and in this instant Porte du Theil was not quoting any specific legislation. He merely interpreted Article 2 of the first *Statut des Juifs* that had banned Jews from teaching in public establishments. See *Loi portant statut des juifs du 3 octobre 1940*, JO 18 octobre 1940, p.5323.

modified his initial request and asked whether he could appoint a Jewish chaplain for the Chantiers who would remain outside the official hierarchy of the institution.⁸⁸⁵ De la Porte du Theil granted Schwartz's request.⁸⁸⁶ Samy Klein, a twenty-five year old rabbi, responsible since August 1940 for all of France's youth, was appointed unofficial Jewish chaplain to the Chantiers de la Jeunesse.⁸⁸⁷ In obtaining this position, Rabbi Schwartz was shown that bargains could be made with certain ministries of the new regime and was given to believe that even though the anti-Jewish legislation was dangerous and wide-ranging, there remained in practice some scope for adaptation and manoeuvre.

For the leadership at Châtel-Guyon, religion was supposed to play a central role in the daily lives of youth in the Chantiers. Attendance at religious services on Sundays was encouraged and chaplains had columns in their groupement's weekly newsletter.⁸⁸⁸ Although statistics do not exist for 1941, figures from the beginning of 1942 reveal that there was a combined total of 163 Catholic and Protestant chaplains across the Chantiers de la Jeunesse.⁸⁸⁹ While not all of the Chantiers had a Protestant chaplain, provisions were put in place for Protestants to receive religious guidance on an ad-hoc basis.⁸⁹⁰ The Jewish youth were permitted only one unofficial chaplain, Rabbi Samy Klein, who was alone in providing spiritual guidance to Jews in the Chantiers de la

⁸⁸⁵ YV, o.9 118 Letter from the Grand Rabbin of France Isaie Schwartz to De la Porte du Theil, 20 December 1940.

⁸⁸⁶ Ibid., and YV, o.9 118, Letter from De la Porte du Theil to Grand Rabbin of France Isaie Schwartz, 3 January 1941.

⁸⁸⁷ YV, o.9 118, Letter from De la Porte du Theil to Grand Rabbin of France Isaie Schwartz, 3 January 1941. Born in 1915, Klein was active in the Yechouroun and entered rabbinical school in Paris in 1934. In 1936–37 he studied at the Telsch yeshiva in Lithuania and was ordained as a rabbi in 1939. Following the armistice, Klein immediately joined the EIF's executive committee and in September 1940 Rabbi Schwartz appointed him as the Consistoire's official Aumônier de la Jeunesse.

⁸⁸⁸ BN, FOL-JO-3962, *Chantiers* 35, In Gt, 35's newsletter, the chaplain's message always appeared on the second page.

⁸⁸⁹ JO 12 March 1942, Loi no 347 du 21 février 1942 relative à l'organisation du Commissariat Général des Chantiers de la Jeunesse.

⁸⁹⁰ AN, AJ39 18, Note from Porte du Theil to Bonnard, 29 April 1942.

Jeunesse. From the start, Klein was concerned about the logistical impracticalities of his mission and let this be known to Rabbi Kaplan at the Consistoire.⁸⁹¹ Nevertheless, Klein proved himself dedicated to the task. Throughout 1941 and 1942 and alongside his responsibilities for the EIF and the rest of Jewish youth in France, Klein made regular visits to Jewish youth in Chantiers across the non-Occupied Zone. In late April 1941, the rabbi made visits to all the Chantiers in the Var (Gts 15, 16 and 17), and in late May he visited those in the Auvergne (Gts 20, 21 and 22).⁸⁹² In June and July 1941 he visited the majority of the Chantiers in the Alpes-Jura (Gts, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12).⁸⁹³



Figure 23. Rabbi Samy Klein

Despite being an almost entirely Catholic organisation, the Chantiers made public their desire to show respect for other religions. Writing in March 1941 in the *Bulletin Périodique Officiel* [BPO], the Chantier de la Jeunesse's weekly newsletter, De la

⁸⁹¹ AIU, CC 42, Letter from Samy Klein to Rabbi Jacob Kaplan, Vichy, 5 February 1941.

⁸⁹² AIU, CC 39, Report of rabbinical activities, Rabbi Klein to René Guastalla, Vichy, 12 June 1941.

⁸⁹³ AIU, CC 42, Letter from Samy Klein to Rabbi Kaplan, Vichy, 6 June 1941.

Porte du Theil explained that for those who wanted to practise their religion, 'la plus grande liberté doit être laissée à tous'.⁸⁹⁴ These claims were repeated by *chefs* in the localities:

On a voulu aux Chantiers de la Jeunesse que chacun puisse conduire librement, sans se cacher, sa vie religieuse, qu'il en ait toutes les facilités, que tous respectent ses convictions, mais qu'il respecte également celles des autres avec le même scrupule.⁸⁹⁵

Although such proclamations were expressed in print, there is a need to consider the extent to which these sentiments were applied in reality. The evidence suggests that Jews were encouraged to fulfil their religious obligations. The leadership of the Chantiers facilitated Klein's visits to Jewish youth in Chantiers across the non-Occupied Zone. In January 1941, *chefs* from every groupement were alerted to Klein's role and were ordered to provide whatever facilities Klein should require in order for him to carry out his mission.⁸⁹⁶ Klein's reports from this time show that the *chefs* in the Chantiers took heed of such instructions and lent him their assistance. He wrote that 'partout, les Chefs à tous les échelons ont à cœur de me faciliter la tâche et se montrent d'une amabilité des plus sympathiques'.⁸⁹⁷

11 April 1941 marked the start of Passover and presents an excellent opportunity to test how far the Chantiers tolerated Jewish youth's observance of this festival. In the weeks before Passover, the Consistoire Central wrote to the SGJ attempting to obtain eight days leave for Jewish youth in the Chantiers to fulfil their religious

⁸⁹⁴ AN, AJ39 54, BPO # 26, 13 February 1941, Article on Chaplains by Porte du Theil, 1 March 1941, p. 2.

⁸⁹⁵ BN, FOL-JO-3804, *Au cœur des Chantiers*, Numéro Spéciale, January 1942.

⁸⁹⁶ YV, o.9 118, Mourey to Rabbi Schwartz, 3 January 1941.

⁸⁹⁷ AIU, CC 39, Report of rabbinical activities, Rabbi Klein to René Guastalla, Vichy, 12 June 1941.

requirements.⁸⁹⁸ Although leave was possible on occasion, such as for weddings or funerals, it could not be taken during the first four months that followed incorporation.⁸⁹⁹ Because the second contingent of the Chantiers had only been called up at the end of March 1941, the Consistoire Central's request was denied. Nevertheless, this should not suggest that Jews were unable to practise Passover from inside the Chantiers. The Consistoire Central reported that facilities were put in place across the Chantiers de la Jeunesse that enabled Jewish youth to observe the festival.⁹⁰⁰ A note appeared in the BPO of 10 April 1941 with detailed instructions to the *chefs* on how to acquire the Matza, a replacement for bread which is the festival's main religious symbol, for their youths:

Il sera porté à la connaissance des Jeunes israélites des Chantiers que les demandes de pain Azime doivent être adressées au Grand Rabinat de France: 77, rue de Vingré, Vichy.⁹⁰¹

Jean Moïse's recollections of obtaining Matza from his *chefs* at Gt 1 (Tronçais) indicate that this procedure was carried out effectively.⁹⁰² The significance of the chefs' role in this process is important to illustrate that, for a brief moment under the Occupation, *chefs* were simultaneously responsible for the revitalisation of French youth and for ensuring that Jewish youth had the necessary provisions to observe their religious holiday. Further, it reveals that many *chefs* were, possibly for the first time, made aware of the presence of Jewish youth within their contingents.

⁸⁹⁸ AIU, CC 39, Rapport de la Commission Centrale, 4–5 June 1941.

⁸⁹⁹ AN, AJ39 64, Note on permissions exceptionnelles, 3 July 1941.

⁹⁰⁰ AIU, CC39, Rapport de la Commission Centrale présenté des 4 et 5 Juin 1941.

⁹⁰¹ AN, AJ39 54, BPO # 34, 10 April 1941, p. 10.

⁹⁰² Jean Moïse quoted in Huan, et al. (eds.), *Les Chantiers de la Jeunesse 1940–1944*, p. n. 48.

In the days that followed, Samy Klein sent letters to all the Jews in the Chantiers – he estimated that there were 400 across the non-Occupied Zone – which were also distributed to Jewish youth by their same *chefs de groupes*.⁹⁰³ The absence of the traditional Passover themes of slavery and liberation is noticeable in Klein’s message in which he made explicit references to the place of Jewish youth under Vichy. Klein hailed some of the main tenets of the New Order and showed them to be in line with Judaism’s central teachings. Above all, Klein dismissed idleness amongst Jewish youth. He employed the same arguments used by the EIF during the 1930s, which had spoken of the need to radically alter ‘la pyramide sociologique des Juifs’ by returning youth to the land and to manual trades. Klein wrote that these constituted the true vocations of Jewish youth and he specified that they should be fulfilled on French soil. Describing the work undertaken by Jewish youth in the Chantiers, Klein wrote:

Il sait qu’en défrichant la terre, il embellit le monde de Dieu, collabore à une œuvre nationale et mène une existence vigoureuse, conforme à la jeune robustesse de son corps [...] Pour toi qui es dans un Chantier de Jeunesse, cette Fête sera une réalité concrète, parce que tu aides effectivement à cette rénovation.⁹⁰⁴

Klein was not the only rabbi who used the Chantiers de la Jeunesse to illustrate links between the main tenets of the National Revolution and Jewish teachings. As part of a seminar series on les grandes religions, the Grand Rabbi of Lyon Rabbi Bernard Schönberg was invited to Gt 7, Rumilly (Haute Savoie) on 21 July 1941, to give a presentation to its *chefs* on Judaism. Schönberg had always been preoccupied by youth. In Lyon, he had organised a series of workshops and study sessions and had

⁹⁰³ AIU, CC 39, Report of rabbinical activities, Rabbi Klein to René Guastalla, Vichy, 12 June 1941.

⁹⁰⁴ AIU, CC 42, Letter from Samy Klein to youths undertaking a service in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse, 3 April 1941.

even formed a youth movement, *Le Lien*.⁹⁰⁵ Rabbi Schönberg was not invited to Rumilly on a whim, for he had received an invitation over six weeks in advance. Much preparation went into these invitations, which had to be approved by a committee of *chefs*.⁹⁰⁶ There was thus ample opportunity to withdraw Rabbi Schönberg's invitation after a reconsideration of the subject matter. Rabbi Schönberg was only too aware of the importance and rarity of such an invitation, observing that 'le fait qu'un rabbin soit invité à parler du judaïsme dans un chantier de la jeunesse est particulièrement significatif de l'esprit qui y règne'.⁹⁰⁷ This *esprit* that Schönberg signalled was not in his view hostile to Jews or to Judaism. From Schönberg's letter to Rabbi Schwartz, written over a month before his visit, Schönberg already seemed to hold a particular view of the Chantiers de la Jeunesse as a politically neutral organisation, which was not averse to Jewish participation. The forty *chefs* taking part in this seminar were not expected to be a passive audience. Rabbi Schönberg was asked to send a plan of his seminar, in order that the *chefs* could study the subject in advance.⁹⁰⁸

Following the seminar, Rabbi Schönberg sent a four-page report to the Grand Rabbin Schwartz outlining in precise detail his day at Rumilly. For Schönberg, the visit could not have gone better. As with Samy Klein's reports, Schönberg's summary made constant references to the hospitality shown to him by the entire Chantier. He described a convivial atmosphere and highlighted the respect shown to him by the *chefs* and by the Protestant and Catholic chaplains. Schönberg spoke for one hour on four main points. First, he explained how, just as in Christianity, Judaism was a way

⁹⁰⁵ AIU CC 35, Letter from Mme Schönberg to M. Manuel not dated in which she explains her husband's rabbinical activities in Lyon from 1936 until his deportation.

⁹⁰⁶ AN, AJ39 115, Monthly Report from Gt 7, May 1941.

⁹⁰⁷ AIU CC 35, Monthly report from Rabbi Schönberg to Grand Rabbin Schwartz 10 June 1941.

⁹⁰⁸ AIU CC 35, Letter from Chef Rebiquet to Rabbi Schönberg 16 June 1941.

of conducting one's life. In a second part, Schönberg outlined the Jews' relationship with God, while a third section focused on the concept of a chosen people and Jewish universalism. Finally, the Rabbi spoke about Jewish suffering. Schönberg reported that the *chefs* had paid great attention throughout the seminar, which was followed by a question and answer session for forty-five minutes. By asking questions on assimilated Jews and Zionism, the *chefs* sought to clarify their own preconceptions of Judaism. According to Schönberg, several *chefs* were profoundly surprised by the seminar, finding what they had heard entirely unexpected.⁹⁰⁹ Schönberg noted that Chef Verluca from Gt, 8 Chatelard-en-Bauges (Savoie), was so impressed that he invited him to deliver 'plusieurs conférences' at his Chantier.⁹¹⁰ Chef Verluca asked the rabbi whether he might be able to give a conference which related to the National Revolution. Schönberg replied as follows, setting out how the Jewish religion and the Jewish people have a role to play in the New Order:

Voyons, Révolution Nationale... la Famille ? Oui, le Judaïsme repose essentiellement sur la famille et le Culte des vertus domestiques. – Le travail ? Le Judaïsme a toujours honoré le travail, nos ancêtres étaient des agriculteurs et les docteurs du Talmud étaient des artisans. Je pourrai vous faire un développement sur le travail. Enfin pour la patrie. Dans tous les pays du monde, les juifs ont donnés des preuves éclatantes de leur attachement à leur patrie respective, ce qui est une chose naturelle et presque biologique.⁹¹¹

In linking the principal foundations of Judaism with the main tenets of *Pétainism*, Schönberg sought to dispel the negative perception of a Jew as an inassimilable outsider. He explained that, on the contrary, there continued to be a place for Jews to coexist with Christians within the French National Community. To conclude the day's session, the Catholic chaplain thanked Rabbi Schönberg for his 'objective' seminar

⁹⁰⁹ AIU CC35 Report from Rabbi Schönberg to Grand Rabbin Schwartz, 1 August 1941

⁹¹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹¹ Ibid.

and told the group that he would like to invite the Rabbi back on another occasion after the group had spent some time studying the Thora.⁹¹²

Unlike Jewish youth in the Chantiers, the additional responsibilities in the daily lives of Rabbis Klein and Schönberg ensured that they were in a privileged position to consider the overlap in Vichy policy-making. Between the summer of 1940 and July 1941, the rabbis constantly interacted with French Jews who, having hitherto worked in the civic and liberal professions, had become marginalised by the regime. Nevertheless, Vichy had not yet begun legislating against Jews in the manual trades and it was not clear at that point that this was ever its intention. Klein and Schönberg saw that Jews were not discriminated against for practising their religion and that they were permitted, and indeed even encouraged, to take part in schemes that promoted the physical reconstruction of the nation. Of course, most aspects of the New Order were considered entirely abhorrent by Klein and Schönberg, both of whom were eventually to die at the hands of the regime.⁹¹³ Nevertheless, rather than to dwell on aspects of everyday life which had been closed to Jews, the rabbis concentrated their energies on navigating a new relationship with the regime. To this end, they promoted the paths that remained open for French Jewry and used the model of the Chantiers to put forward a viable form of coexistence with Vichy. Klein's letter to the youth at Passover suggested that work in the Chantiers was returning Jews to Judaism and this line was taken even further by Schönberg's explicit fusion of the National Revolution with the main tenets of Judaism. Both examples had as their intention to aid the image of French Jewry by showing that Jews had a role to play within the National Community.

⁹¹² Ibid.

⁹¹³ Klein was executed for resistance activities in July 1944 and Schönberg was deported to Auschwitz on convoy 62.

The provisions put in place for Jewish youth to observe Passover coupled with the invitation of Rabbi Schönberg to Gt 7 reveals that to a great extent, the Chantiers de la Jeunesse mirrored Vichy's overall handling of the Jewish Question. Although the regime sought to marginalise Jewish influence, it did not seek to impinge on their religious worship. Nevertheless, the essence of the *Statut des Juifs* which defined a Jew both racially and religiously was not always made clear to those in charge of policy implementation and situations often arose in which decisions produced in the Chantiers ran counter to Vichy law.

In September 1941, in preparation for *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippour*, Rabbi Kaplan wrote to De la Porte du Theil to seek dispensations from work for Jewish youth for these festivals.⁹¹⁴ In his cordial reply to Rabbi Kaplan, De la Porte du Theil's deputy, Colonel Mourey, largely consented and reiterated the religious ethos of the Chantiers:

Comme quiconque dans les Chantiers de la Jeunesse, les Israélites peuvent observer les pratiques de leur religion. Je fais donner des instructions pour que toutes les facilités possibles soient données aux Israélites pratiquants à l'occasion des solennités dont vous m'avez fait part.⁹¹⁵

Despite this seemingly pleasant and professional reply, an important problem arises through the use of Mourey's word '*pratiquants*', an expression that had not been employed in Kaplan's original letter.⁹¹⁶ Reading Mourey's handwritten comments on the margins of Kaplan's letter explains why he only partially granted the rabbi's

⁹¹⁴ AN, AJ39 15, Letter from Rabbi Kaplan to De la Porte du Theil, Vichy, 15 September 1941.

⁹¹⁵ AN, AJ39 11, Letter from Mourey to Rabbi Kaplan, Châtel-Guyon, 22 September 1941.

⁹¹⁶ AN, AJ39 15, Letter from Rabbi Kaplan to De la Porte du Theil, Vichy, 15 September 1941

request. He wrote, ‘oui pour ceux qui sont vraiment Juifs pratiquants, mais attention aux carottiers’.⁹¹⁷

With the word Juif not appearing in any of the official correspondence between the Rabbis and the Chantiers, it is not only the way in which Mourey uses *Juif* and *Israélite* interchangeably that is of particular interest to this analysis. Mourey revealed that his priority was above all to ensure the orderly running of the Chantiers. As in the military, there was no question that youths should be allowed to take impromptu days off without exceptional cause. Through employing such logic, Mourey decided against granting exceptions for non-practising Jews to observe these festivals which he believed would represent only an excuse for additional days’ leave. However, and as curious as it may seem, Mourey’s decision not to permit all Jews a period of leave, was in direct contradiction with the second *Statut des Juifs*. As it is known, Xavier Vallat had enormous problems with defining a Jew according to racial criteria that had been outlined in the first *Statut des Juifs*. His principal motivation behind the Second *Statut des Juifs* was to adjust the definition to include religious criteria. Categorising Jews as a race was extremely difficult to prove and provided too many loopholes, as Vallat explained in a letter to Pétain in May 1941, ‘il n’y a pas de critère juridique de la race’.⁹¹⁸ The second *Statut des Juifs* made it easier to determine who was a Jew. One was Jewish if one had three grandparents who belonged to the Jewish religion.⁹¹⁹ Therefore, by adding the religious dimension to its definition of a Jew, Vichy did not allow for some Jews to be more or less Jewish than others. While one

⁹¹⁷ AN, AJ39 15, Mourey’s handwriting at the bottom of the letter from Rabbi Kaplan to Porte du Theil, Vichy, 15 September 1941

⁹¹⁸ AML, fonds Vallat, 21ii-42, Report from Vallat to Pétain on the modification of the *Statuts des Juifs*, 25 May 1941, quoted in Joly, *Xavier Vallat*, p. 221. For more on this, see Weisberg, *Vichy Law*, pp. 41–42.

⁹¹⁹ JO, Loi du 2 juin remplaçant la loi du 3 octobre 1940 portant statut des juifs, 14 juin 1941, pp. 2475–2476.

could distinguish amongst Jews based on their nationality there was no room for differentiation amongst their religious practices. A law that was related to Jews could not make religious distinctions amongst them; all Jews had to be subject to it. Bizarrely, Vichy logic was such that in theory at least, all Jews were practicing Jews. Mourey was not ignorant of the second *Statut des Juifs*, as he had personally sent a copy of it to each Groupement on 25 June 1941.⁹²⁰ His refusal to apply his decision evenly reveals Vichy's complete failure to make comprehensible its anti-Semitic legislation, even to those in positions to implement it. The central purpose of the Second *Statut des Juifs* escaped Mourey completely, as he prioritised everyday practical concerns over paltry elements of the regime's anti-Semitism.

René Klein's letters to his family at this time serve to demonstrate how Mourey's decision affected Jews in reality. In September 1941, Klein described a meeting between all the Jews in his group and a *chef*, where a note that had appeared in the groupement's weekly bulletin was read out that gave Jewish youth exceptional leave for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.⁹²¹ Klein offered no indication that these days were only awarded to practising Jews. It is particularly striking that René Klein first mentioned the exceptions for Jewish youth on 14 September 1941, a week before Mourey had even written to the Commissaires Régionaux, alerting them to the leave that was to be given to Jewish youth.⁹²² Klein's letter reveals that a decision, granting dispensation for Jewish youth, was made internally in Gt 1 and was thus independent of any directives given by Mourey or from above. This example is important in

⁹²⁰ AN, AJ39 69, Copy of the second *Statut des Juifs* sent by Mourey to all the *Commissariats Régionaux* and the *Groupements* of the CJ, 25 June 1941.

⁹²¹ René Klein's archives, letter to his parents and his sister dated 14 September 1941. A similar point is made in a letter to his grandparents and his aunt, 14 September 1941.

⁹²² *Ibid.*, and AN, AJ39 11, Mourey's note to the Commissaires Régionaux giving practicing Jews special leave for the holidays, 22 September 1941.

illuminating how *chefs* at the local level had powers to grant exceptions to the Chantiers' rigid definitions of special leave. More importantly for this study, it shows that the message of religious tolerance, espoused in theory at least by the Chantiers de la Jeunesse, was implemented locally in Gt 1.

During their periods of service, Jewish youth participated in the daily life of the Chantier on the same terms as other youths. Like all other youths called up to undertake a spell, Jewish youth marched in the same units, sang the same songs and played the same jokes on new recruits. Further, Jews complained about the food, dreamt of their next period of leave and paid little attention to the ideological outpourings to which they were exposed. In this light, the familiar story of omnipresent Jewish victimisation appears perplexing. Rather, Jewish youth's experiences in the Chantiers have illustrated how far some Jews were given reason to believe that they had entered into a new, unclear relationship with the New Order, one which it was up to them to test and navigate. Naturally, such an assertion should not imply the complete absence of anti-Semitism in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse. However, anti-Semitism did not dominate the experience of Jews in the Chantiers. Although laws existed preventing Jews from positions of responsibility, this study has shown how in reality they were only implemented on an ad hoc basis.

At least in some localities, the anti-Semitic legislation entered the Chantiers de la Jeunesse as a complication to its agenda rather than an initiative. A study of the work undertaken by Jews in the Chantiers acts as a valuable microcosm in revealing the tensions that existed between two central tenets of the New Order; its anti-Semitism

and its calls for regeneration. The regime's anti-Semitic drives should eliminate Jewish influence at all costs, while its policy for renewal and rebirth should ensure that the most efficient people remain in the jobs which would allow for this to come to fruition. The Chantiers show the difficulties of reconciling these two objectives.

The successful running of the Chantiers by those most qualified was a greater priority across the Chantiers than the implementation of the regime's anti-Semitism. Despite the legislation, Jews were not removed from exercising responsibilities and even after the aryanisation measures were passed, the Chantiers continued to purchase its paper from a Jewish supplier.⁹²³ As with so many Vichy schemes, practicality far outweighed ideological dogma and the Chantiers de la Jeunesse proved no exception.

⁹²³ AN, AJ38 1089, Letter from the CGQJ's delegate in Montpellier to Lécussan, regional delegate of the CGQJ in Toulouse, 30 December 1941. In December 1941, the Chantiers in the Languedoc was still purchasing its paper from a Jewish printer, M. Crémieux, in Clermont-l'Hérault (Hérault). This was technically prohibited owing to a law of 22 July 1941 that had banned Jews from owning businesses and properties. These were to be placed in the temporary control of an administrateur provisoire, who was responsible for finding a new owner. However, in December 1941, M. Crémieux's industry had not been placed under the control of an administrateur provisoire, and it continued to function. The need for the Chantiers' bureaucratic machine to function during a period of paper shortages was of greater importance than Vichy's anti-Semitic drive.

Chapter 6. The Chantiers de la Jeunesse, Stations of Sanctuary ?

The rescue and shelter of Jews by the Chantiers de la Jeunesse has until now been the only lens through which to consider the relationship between this Vichy organisation and Jewish youth. Arguably, this interpretation stems from recent developments that reflect broader historiographical changes. For many years, and despite the existence of two historical interpretations of the resistance activity of the movement, Jews did not feature in any study of the Chantiers de la Jeunesse.⁹²⁴ However, in recent years, historians of the Occupation have paid greater attention to the role of the non-Jewish rescuer. This new focus has not gone unnoticed by those in charge of writing the official history of the Chantiers, who for the first time have brought Jews into the history of the movement by depicting the leadership as the protectors of Jews, and the camps themselves as providing stations of sanctuary for hidden Jews.

The Association Nationale des Anciens Chantiers de la Jeunesse and in particular its president, Honoré Lemaire, forcefully deny that anti-Semitism ever existed in the organisation.⁹²⁵ According to Lemaire, any anti-Semitism that permeated the

⁹²⁴ There have traditionally existed two schools of thought over the Chantiers de la Jeunesse. A first believes that through top down decisions, the Chantiers were a secret army that consistently resisted the Occupier. See notably Huan, et al. (eds.), *Les Chantiers de la Jeunesse 1940–1944* and L. Battut, *Le Groupement 22 des Chantiers de la Jeunesse, 1940–1944* (Parçay-sur-Vienne, 2007). Laurent Battut is the official historian to the Association Mémoire des Chantiers de la Jeunesse, a group largely made up of the children of former officers in the Chantiers and is thus naturally sympathetic to this version of history. A second school of thought entirely dismisses the notion that the Chantiers were a secret army. Further, they see any acts of resistance as germinating from the bottom up. See R. Josse, 'Les Chantiers de la Jeunesse', *Revue d'Histoire de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale*, no 56, October (1964); R.O. Paxton, *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order, 1940–1944* (London, 1972), p. 164; C. Pécout, *Les Chantiers de la Jeunesse et la revitalisation physique et morale de la jeunesse française (1940–1944)* (Paris, 2007). Amongst the earliest studies of the Chantier, see Delage, *Grandeurs et servitudes des Chantiers de la Jeunesse* and Van-Hecke, *Les Chantiers de la Jeunesse au secours de la France*.

⁹²⁵ Interview with Honoré Lemaire, President of the Association Nationale des Anciens Chantiers de la Jeunesse, 24 September 2009.

Chantiers was able to do so solely as a result of German demands.⁹²⁶ André Souyris-Rolland, who consistently cites the somewhat controversial historian François-Georges Dreyfus, is director of research at the Centre de recherches historiques du patrimoine et des anciens combattants des Chantiers de la Jeunesse (CERPA).⁹²⁷ CERPA's influence extends far beyond internal newsletters for its members. On the contrary, it is now particularly wide-reaching, with André Souyris-Rolland recently used as an expert contributor for the 'Mini-guides Histoire & Collections'.⁹²⁸ The publications of this group and M. Souyris-Rolland's correspondence with the author actively portray the rescue of Jews to have been an important policy of the leadership of the Chantiers de la Jeunesse.

According to the official history of the Chantiers, in the period 1940–42, Jews were treated like any other French citizen in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse:

Jusqu'à la loi du 15 juillet 1942, les Chantiers de la Jeunesse ont réussi à ne pas appliquer les précédentes décisions gouvernementales [Statuts des Juifs]. Cette situation équivoque aux yeux d'Abel Bonnard, devenu en avril 1942 ministre de l'Éducation nationale et collaborateur notoire – il crée 2 chaires sur l'antisémitisme à la Sorbonne – l'amène à faire prendre une loi spécifique aux Chantiers.⁹²⁹

General de la Porte du Theil, the founder of the Chantiers de la Jeunesse and the hero of CERPA, has been portrayed as helpless in the face of Abel Bonnard, who it claims was the real initiator of the Jewish expulsions. Similarly, in the period 1942–44,

⁹²⁶ Ibid.

⁹²⁷ Interview with André Souris-Rolland, 25 September 2008.

⁹²⁸ The 'Mini-guides Histoire & Collections' is a popular history textbook aimed at the non-specialist. Its UK equivalent would be the 'For Dummies' collections. See A. Thers, (ed.), *Les Chantiers de la Jeunesse* (Paris, 2006).

⁹²⁹ Mémoires Des Chantiers, No 30 Juin 2008, p. 8. This line has also been adopted by historians of the Chantiers who have viewed them as a quasi-resistance organisation. Huan, Chantepie and Oheix argue that the expulsions emanated solely from: 'Les mesures gouvernementales'. See Huan, et al (eds.), *Les Chantiers de la Jeunesse 1940–1944*, p. 47.

CERPA constructs the relationship between the Chantiers and the Jews as founded entirely on rescue. Based on a statement made by De la Porte du Theil at his post-war trial, CERPA argues that the leadership of the Chantiers promoted a clandestine top-down policy to hide and protect Jews: '[Les] Israélites qui furent préservés de l'exécution des lois raciales, et maintenus aux Chantiers tant qu'ils le voulurent'.⁹³⁰

The rescue efforts of the Chantiers de la Jeunesse in the period 1942–44 lie beyond the scope of the present enquiry. Nevertheless, it is important to state the absence of any evidence suggesting that such a policy ever existed. While a large number of Jews were hidden in the Chantiers across the localities, it appears more likely that their shelter was a result of local and personal factors which was entirely disconnected from instructions coming from above. Matthieu Horbet, later the well-known singer Francis Lemarque, was friends with a *chef* at Gt 18 who facilitated his entry, while Arthur Choko was fortunate enough to be examined by a Jewish doctor when attempting to incorporate himself under a false identity.⁹³¹

While recognising that, on occasion, the Chantiers de la Jeunesse did come to the rescue of Jewish youth in the period 1942–44, there remains a need to consider the organisation's official sentiments towards its Jewish participants during the earlier years of the Occupation, when the necessity for rescue was arguably less pressing. This will be undertaken for the first time by a top-down study that investigates the relationship between the leadership of the Chantiers at Châtel-Guyon and the Jewish

⁹³⁰ AN 3W 205, Declaration of De la Porte du Theil in front of the Haute Cour de Justice, 14 November 1947. In a letter to the author on 26 June 2008, Souyris-Rolland noted: 'On peut dire qu'après le 15 juillet 1942, les Juifs sont nombreux à se réfugier dans les Chantiers où ils sont protégés par de fausses identités'.

⁹³¹ Lemarque, *J'ai la mémoire qui chante*, pp. 216–220 and USC Shoah Foundation. Recorded interview with Arthur Choko.

question, centring on an analysis of De la Porte du Theil. Rather than admitting Jews into the Chantiers on the same terms as other youths or even remaining disinterested in Jewish participation, it will be argued that De la Porte du Theil was imbued with an anti-Semitism that did not remain hidden when it came to Jewish affairs inside the organisation. Indeed, anti-Semitic instances in the localities were often linked to a series of internal mechanisms that were generated by De la Porte du Theil and his team at Châtel-Guyon. The aim of such an examination is not merely to tarnish yet another high-ranking Vichy official. Rather, an enquiry into the nature and extent of De la Porte du Theil's anti-Semitism has broader consequences for our understanding of anti-Semitic policy-making by adding another dimension – that of the 'hesitant initiator' – to the spectrum of anti-Semitic attitudes that existed under Vichy. More importantly still, and building on the precedents of Michael Marrus, Robert Paxton and Laurent Joly, it reveals the complicity of Vichy ministries other than the CGQJ in shaping the regime's anti-Semitic laws.

While Marrus and Paxton have correctly identified De la Porte du Theil as the initiator of Vichy's decision to expel Jews from the Chantiers de la Jeunesse, neither they nor any other historians since have traced the ideological origins of De la Porte du Theil's proposals.⁹³² Why did he encourage Vallat to legislate against the Jews in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse? As head of the Chantiers de la Jeunesse, each piece of legislation that affected youths completing their compulsory service passed through the hands of General de la Porte du Theil. Although never renouncing his admiration for Petainism and the National Revolution, De la Porte du Theil's reputation has not

⁹³² Marrus and Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews*, p. 127.

been compromised by historians of the regime. This is due to a number of reasons that stem largely from his post-war trial in which he was completely cleared of ever having collaborating with the enemy.⁹³³ The fact that De la Porte du Theil attempted to prevent French men from being sent to Germany, encouraged resistance links at the end of 1943 and was himself taken prisoner by the Germans in January 1944 has largely shielded his reputation from the scrutiny that has befallen most of his colleagues in the Vichy government.

To his peers, it is unlikely that De la Porte du Theil's anti-Semitism ever constituted a defining feature of his character. On the contrary, at his post-war trial, the only reference made to the Jews came in the context of their shelter in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse after 1942.⁹³⁴ In his memoirs, De la Porte du Theil explained that he had personally tried to secure the services of a Jewish chaplain to attend to the needs of Jewish youth in Chantiers.⁹³⁵ Further, historian Limore Yagil has argued that the Chantiers were completely apolitical and were not affected by the regime's discriminatory programme. Yagil has even stated that the Chantiers' newsletters intended for the youths were void of any political propaganda:

Les questions de collaboration, la politique de répression vis-à-vis des juifs, des communistes et des francs-maçons sont des sujets tabous que l'on n'aborde pas. Mais plus frappant encore est le manque de toute idéologie antisémite dans ces publications pour les jeunes.⁹³⁶

⁹³³ AN 3W 204–206, De la Porte du Theil's appearance before the Haute Cour de Justice, 1946–1947.

⁹³⁴ AN 3W 205, De la Porte du Theil's appearance before the Haute Cour de Justice, 1946–1947. See in particular the accounts of De la Porte du Theil on 16 May 1945, Jean-Charles Mourey on 14 March 1947 and Colonel Ballot on 20 March 1947.

⁹³⁵ For De la Porte du Theil's memoirs, see De la Porte du Theil, *Souvenirs*, p. 159.

⁹³⁶ Yagil, 'L'Homme Nouveau et la Révolution Nationale de Vichy 1940–1944', Doctoral thesis in History under the supervision of Jean-Pierre Azéma, IEP Paris, 1992, p. 305.

The present analysis however, interprets the evidence differently. An earlier section has already revealed that instead of proposing that Jews have their own official chaplain, it was De la Porte du Theil who as early as December 1940 personally stripped them of this right.⁹³⁷ Far from being a taboo subject and at the personal request of De la Porte du Theil, the Jewish Question was one that often featured amongst the agendas of the leadership of the Chantiers de la Jeunesse and was not ignored in their publications. Rather than a passive bystander, De la Porte du Theil believed that France had a right to protect itself from the Jewish influence. His defensive form of anti-Semitism, a kind not so dissimilar to Xavier Vallat, did not remain dormant and had far-reaching consequences in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse.

The nature and rationale of De la Porte du Theil's anti-Semitism is revealed in a letter he wrote to a recently expelled Jewish chef in September 1941. He began his letter by outlining that the Jewish question was not one of religion, but exclusively of race.⁹³⁸ His disregard for the second *Statut des Juifs*, which defined Jewishness according to religious rather than racial grounds, provides a way of understanding his attitude towards Jews.⁹³⁹ The content of De la Porte du Theil's letter shows his attitude towards the Jews to have been just as vitriolic as some of the regime's most notorious anti-Semites:

Votre race a fait dans l'ensemble un mal immense à notre pays dans ces dernières années. Il est obligé aujourd'hui de se défendre : si on admet des exceptions, on sera bien vite débordé : vous vous plaignez à juste titre d'être sacrifiés. Ceux qui sont aujourd'hui les pitoyables victimes des Blum, Moch, et des banquiers, et des fabricants d'avions, et des entrepreneurs de cinémas

⁹³⁷ See YV, o.9, 118, Letter from De la Porte du Theil to Rabbi Kaplan, 4 December 1940.

⁹³⁸ AIU, CC39 Letter from De la Porte du Theil to an unknown *chef* that had recently been removed from Gt 20, Lapeau (Corrèze).

⁹³⁹ These details need not detain us here, as a similar case involving Colonel Mourey's misinterpretation of the second *Statut des Juifs* has already been examined in Chapter 5.

juifs, qui ont empoisonné et ruiné la France, ont tout de même le droit de se plaindre aussi. Et le Gouvernement a le devoir strict de prendre les mesures capables d'interdire le retour de toute cette bande.⁹⁴⁰

In refusing to acknowledge the possibility for exceptions, De la Porte du Theil's brand of anti-Semitism went even further than that of Darlan or Vallat. Theirs, as is known, made distinctions between French and foreign Jews and allowed for legal exceptions to the racial laws, a factor that as we will now see, seemed to be positively absent from De la Porte du Theil's variety.

Several case studies reveal that De la Porte du Theil did not keep his anti-Semitism private and that instead, he was an active player in marginalising Jews from the rest of the population. In June 1941, he complained to Darlan about the release of Jewish inmates from the Gurs internment camp who had been designated to live in the Vallée d'Ossau, close to Gt 31, Arudy (Basses-Pyrénées).⁹⁴¹ De la Porte du Theil proposed relocating these Jews either to a concentration camp or to an assigned residence.⁹⁴² Playing upon stereotypes, he claimed that Jews in the Vallée d'Ossau were involved in the black market and that they had taken over all of the local accommodation 'maisons, villas et hotels', leaving nowhere to house the leadership of the groupement.⁹⁴³ De la Porte du Theil, using *Juif* and *Juifs allemands* interchangeably, was convinced that their presence so close to Gt, 31 would have a damaging effect on the Chantier.⁹⁴⁴ However, a thorough police investigation revealed that De la Porte du Theil's letter to Darlan had overstated the situation to the point that the prefect

⁹⁴⁰ AIU, CC39 Letter from De la Porte du Theil to an unknown *chef* that had recently been removed from Gt 20, Lapeau (Corrèze), Montpellier, 7 September 1941.

⁹⁴¹ AN, AJ39 10, Letter from De la Porte du Theil to Darlan 16 June 1941.

⁹⁴² Ibid.

⁹⁴³ Ibid.

⁹⁴⁴ Ibid.

labelled De la Porte du Theil's denunciations as 'nettement exagérés'.⁹⁴⁵ The prefect noted the presence of only sixty-four Jews across the entire Vallée, referring to them as 'une petite colonie', who had not taken over the villages, the proof being found in the number of free rooms available in the hotels and pensions de familles.⁹⁴⁶ The prefect claimed that there was no evidence that Jews were involved in the black market or any kind of clandestine activity.⁹⁴⁷ Pierre Pucheu, who had by this time replaced Darlan at the Ministry of the Interior, reported this information back to De la Porte du Theil but significantly, he gave him the option of ignoring the prefect's report, telling the General that he would arrange for the removal of Jews from the Vallée if De la Porte du Theil believed that their continued presence 'est préjudiciable à la bonne marche du Gt 31'.⁹⁴⁸ Pucheu's reaction is not surprising. Only four days before he had taken control of the regime's anti-Semitic agenda by attaching the CGQJ to the Ministry of the Interior.⁹⁴⁹ Despite the prefect's report that had found no proof of any irregular Jewish activity in the region, De la Porte du Theil took the decision to ignore this and ordered the Jews' removal.⁹⁵⁰ In so doing, he chose to apply his unfounded anti-Semitic prejudices over the investigative findings of a senior colleague. De la Porte du Theil's brand of anti-Semitism was in his eyes at least, of a defensive nature. He did not require proof to discriminate against Jews, whose racial composition would, he believed, inevitably lead to France's destruction and this he felt justified his actions.

⁹⁴⁵ AN, AJ39 15, Report from the Prefect of the Basses Pyrénées to the Secrétaire Général pour la Police, Pau, 20 August 1941.

⁹⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁴⁸ AN, AJ39 15, Letter from Pucheu to De la Porte du Theil, 5 September 1941.

⁹⁴⁹ Law of 1 September 1941 in Journal Officiel de l'Etat Français, 2 September 1941, p. 3695. For more on Pucheu's self-confessed anti-Semitism, see Pucheu, *Ma Vie*, pp. 268–271.

⁹⁵⁰ AN, AJ39 12, This was mentioned in a confidential letter from De la Porte to Theil to the regional commissioner for the Pyrénées Gascogne, 24 October 1941.

De la Porte du Theil's brand of anti-Semitism, one which made no allowances for exceptions, placed Jews firmly outside the national community. This even included Jews who had taken part in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse, whom De la Porte du Theil distinguished from their peers. In January 1942 a joint decision was made between De la Porte du Theil and Pierre Pucheu that suspended the right of Frenchmen to apply for a passport or an exit visa in the three month period leading up to their incorporation in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse.⁹⁵¹ This measure was imposed to prevent youths from any attempt to circumvent their legal obligation of joining a Chantier. Crucially, specific provisions were made that omitted Jewish youth from this policy, in order not to delay their departure from France.⁹⁵² De la Porte du Theil wanted the law changed to encourage Jewish youth to move abroad rather than to take part in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse.⁹⁵³ His desire to rid France of Jews took precedence over his own law of 18 January 1941 that obliged all French men to undertake a compulsory service in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse. De la Porte du Theil's hostility towards Jews did not amount to hostility towards naturalised foreigners whom he believed were able to assimilate.⁹⁵⁴ His willingness to exclude Jews of this obligation – that defined Jews as citizens – reveals a fundamental contradiction at the heart of the Chantiers' regenerationist agenda according to which some French men were capable of regeneration and renewal while others were not.

From October 1940, the leadership of the Chantiers employed the broadest possible definition of the first *Statut des Juifs*. Bypassing the commissariats régionaux, a circular that called for the removal of Jewish chefs was sent directly to the

⁹⁵¹ AN, AJ39 18, Letter from De la Porte du Theil to Pierre Pucheu, 12 January 1942

⁹⁵² Ibid.

⁹⁵³ Ibid.

⁹⁵⁴ AN, AJ39 13, Report to Pétain signed by Darlan, Pucheu, Charles Platon, Yves Bouthillier, Joseph Barthélemy

groupements on 11 January 1941.⁹⁵⁵ The Chantiers' definition of a Jewish Chef included chefs at the lowliest of grades, and even included nurses.⁹⁵⁶ However, there was no such obligation for them to have proceeded so far down the hierarchy. The *Statut* made no direct reference to the Chantiers. Under Article 2, the law stated that Jews were not permitted to be either 'membres des corps enseignants' or 'officiers des armées de terre, de mer et de l'air' and under Article 3 Jews were not allowed to hold positions in the *fonction publique* unless they had received a derogation.⁹⁵⁷ Marc-Olivier Baruch has shown the confusion that surrounded defining the *fonction publique* at the end of 1940 and beginning of 1941, with some ministries applying the law to all fonctionnaires and others omitting those on temporary or auxiliary contracts.⁹⁵⁸ Vichy eventually decided that: 'Seul pourrait être admis l'exercice de fonctions purement subalternes'.⁹⁵⁹ As has been shown, this was not enforced in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse, who legislated against all Jews with contracts, regardless of their position in the organisation.

While a large number of young French Jews may not have noticed the passing of the first and second *Statut des Juifs*, the mandatory census in July 1941 marked the first occasion where many of them were personally affected by the regime's anti-Semitic legislation. The implementation of the obligatory census in the Chantiers requires momentary consideration in order to show how relations over the Jewish question, between the Chantier and other branches of the state, played out in the localities. Chefs across the localities were ordered by De la Porte du Theil to collect the number

⁹⁵⁵ AN, AJ39 69, Note from De la Porte to Theil (signed Mourey) to the *Commissariats Régionaux* and all of the *Groupements*, 11 January 1941.

⁹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵⁷ Loi portant statut des Juifs du 3 octobre 1940, JO, 18 octobre 1940, p. 5323.

⁹⁵⁸ Baruch, *Servir l'État français*, pp. 136–141.

⁹⁵⁹ AN, AJ38 119, Circulaire SG du 16 février 1941, quoted in Baruch, *Servir l'État français*, p. 141.

of declaration forms necessary from local mairies to pass on to youths in their groupement to sign.⁹⁶⁰ However, chefs did not receive any further instructions; indeed, this lack of direction presented an important dilemma. How were chefs supposed to ascertain the number of Jewish youth in their units? Here we can only speculate.

In June 1941, figures did not exist that established the number of Jews in a Chantier. Young men undertaking a spell in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse were not uniformly asked across the Chantiers for their religion on their arrival. So while those incorporated into Gt 3, Bourg (Ain), were asked to declare their religion, the incorporation forms at Gt 18, Le Vigan (Gard) had no such section.⁹⁶¹ Moreover, youths were not asked to sign a declaration stating that they were not Jewish. These, as has been shown, were reserved only for chefs and those in positions of responsibility. The *Bulletin Périodique Officiel* did not make reference to the census in any of its weekly editions in the summer of 1941.⁹⁶² Nor are there any references in the internal newsletters produced for each Chantier.⁹⁶³ Individual chefs therefore devised their own methods to locate Jews in their Chantier. Chefs may have been explicit and asked the youths across the groups whether there were any Jews present. Alternatively, and as in other Vichy organisations, this could have been undertaken by guess work. In the run-up to the census, the Ministry of the Interior asked local mayors to guess the number of Jews that were living in their commune.⁹⁶⁴ Having a

⁹⁶⁰ AN, AJ39 15, Note from De la Porte du Theil to Chefs de Groupements, 22 July 1941.

⁹⁶¹ Ministry of Education, Boxes 18 and 62, Fernand Guibbert and Georges Lambert's Fiches Individuelle de Renseignements.

⁹⁶² AN, AJ39 54, Bulletin périodique officiel des Chantiers de la Jeunesse, Editions 46–53, July and August 1941.

⁹⁶³ See for instance BNF, 4-JO-4388 and 4-JO-4135. The internal newsletters from Gt 7 and Gt 18.

⁹⁶⁴ ADT 506W43, Intérieur Sûreté 5 bureau à Préfets zone libre, circulaires 04570 and 04902, Vichy, 13 and 23 June 1941.

Jewish-sounding name or not attending Mass may have given chefs reason to believe that a youth could have been Jewish.

A complete Jewish census of 1941 no longer exists and it is therefore impossible to know the number of Jews whose names did or did not feature. Nevertheless, some departmental censuses survive which give some indication of local Chantiers' willingness to implement this policy. The 1941 census from the département of the Ain reveals that at Gt 3, Bourg, seven Jewish declarations were submitted while at Gt 43, Artemare, the total was four.⁹⁶⁵ Seven declarations were made at the mairie of St-Jean-du-Gard from youths undertaking their service at Gt, 45, Anduze (Gard).⁹⁶⁶ Sylvain Berman was the only Jew to have signed a declaration while undertaking a service at Gt 47, Casteljaloux (Lot-et-Garonne).⁹⁶⁷ At Gt 40, Murat (Cantal), the Chantiers' disciplinary camp, there were four Jews, of which one was a chef.⁹⁶⁸ To administer the census, mayors were required to report to the prefects the lists of Jews in their commune. When there were no Jews in a Chantier, this information was also transmitted to the Ministry of the Interior. A note from the mayor of Pindères (Lot-et-Garonne) stated that there were no Jews in his commune and this included one unit that made up part of Gt, 47.⁹⁶⁹ The fact that local mayors were responsible for declaring the number of Jews in their communes, even if there were none, ensured that the regime's anti-Semitic policies pervaded even the most secluded localities.

⁹⁶⁵ YIVO, RG 210, UGIF, Folder 6.3, Ain, the census from 1943 with information concerning the 1941 census.

⁹⁶⁶ Archives Municipales de Nîmes, Fonds Lucien Simon, Liste des Juifs à Nîmes 1940 à 1942.

⁹⁶⁷ Archives Départementales de Lot-et-Garonne [ADLG] 1W291, Recensement des Juifs dans le Lot-et-Garonne.

⁹⁶⁸ Archives départementales du Cantal [ADC], 1W 153/1, Recensement des Juifs dans le Cantal.

⁹⁶⁹ ADLG 1W291, Recensement des Juifs dans le Lot-et-Garonne, letter from the Mayor of Pindères to the Prefect, 29 July 1941.

The importance of maintaining good relations between the Chantiers and community officials ensured that the Jewish census was taken seriously by the Chantiers. In the communes where a Chantier was located, a dialogue emerged between the chefs and the local mayors. While an order from Châtel-Guyon may have gone unnoticed or even ignored, this was less likely to have occurred following instructions that were received directly from local officials. Mayors were situated within close proximity of the Chantiers and they had regular contact with the chefs. The relationship was underpinned by the chefs' responsibility to respect and obey their local state representatives.⁹⁷⁰ Mayors were required to return their forms to Prefects by a certain date and were in a strong position to ensure that the chefs in the Chantiers would not hinder these obligations.

De la Porte du Theil's personal encouragement of anti-Semitic publications allowed propaganda to filter down to the youth in the localities. The Chantiers de la Jeunesse had its own propaganda unit that functioned independently of the Ministry of Propaganda. A Service de la Propagande auprès des Chantiers de la Jeunesse was established in March 1942 which fell under the leadership of journalist and Action Française member Jean Delage.⁹⁷¹ Printed propaganda was the standard method of diffusing information and was widely accessible to the chefs and the youth. The creation of this unit paved the way for anti-Semitic propaganda to enter the Chantiers de la Jeunesse. Sometimes Jews appeared as one of the Chantiers' many public enemies and on occasion they featured as its number one target. Above all, the

⁹⁷⁰ Problems arose in June 1942 in Ales (Gard), when the sub-prefect deemed the commissioner of Gt 45, to not be respecting regional hierarchical procedures. See ADG, 1W131, Letter from sub-prefect to prefect, 9 June 1942.

⁹⁷¹ AN, AJ39 16, This is mentioned in a letter from De la Porte du Theil to Paul Marion, 9 March 1942. After the war, Delage wrote the first history of the Chantiers de la Jeunesse. See Delage, *Grandeurs et Servitudes des Chantiers de la Jeunesse*.

Chantiers de la Jeunesse's anti-communist agenda first allowed anti-Semitism to enter its propaganda. In July 1941, Mourey sent a note to all the commissaires régionaux on the subject of anti-Communist propaganda, informing them of the need for it to be diffused 'le plus largement possible'.⁹⁷² For the leadership of the Chantiers, Communism was the antithesis of everything that they were trying to create and youths suspected of being communists were, in theory at least, sent to the disciplinary Chantier, Gt, 40, Murat (Cantal).⁹⁷³ From 1942, the anti-Communist propaganda in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse regularly linked Communists with Jews, 'le Communisme est Juif [...] Le Front Populaire était Juif [...] Les Juifs sont contre le paysan français'.⁹⁷⁴ However, De la Porte du Theil did not shun explicit anti-Semitic references, instead promoting its diffusion from within the organisation. In March 1942 Charles Lesca's *Quand Israël se venge* featured first on De la Porte du Theil's list of publications to be purchased for distribution across the Chantiers.⁹⁷⁵ De la Porte du Theil's encouragement of anti-Semitic propaganda is one of many examples that reveal the extent to which the Chantiers de la Jeunesse acted autonomously in filtering anti-Semitism to its youth in the localities. His anti-Semitic drive then reached a new level when he used it to expel the Jews from completing their service in the Chantiers.

A specific colonial debate over Jewish citizenship in North Africa provided the catalyst that led to the removal of Jews from the Chantiers de la Jeunesse. Until now, scholars have not considered the extent to which Vichy's colonial anti-Semitism

⁹⁷² AN, AJ39 81, Note from Mourey to the Commissaires Régionaux, 26 July 1941.

⁹⁷³ AN 2AG 459, Archives du Cabinet Civil, *Chantiers de la Jeunesse*, Report by Commissaire Le Fouest, 15 July 1941.

⁹⁷⁴ AN, AJ39 81, *Terre de France*, anti-Communist pamphlet, undated. Likely to be from 1943, pp. 18–19.

⁹⁷⁵ AN, AJ39 16, Letter from De la Porte to Theil to a book dealer in Châtel-Guyon, 6 March 1942.

impacted on Jews in France. That is to say, Vichy anti-Semitism is seen as going in only one direction: from Vichy to the colonies. An investigation into the expulsion of Jews from the Chantiers is unique in illustrating that the Jewish Question in North Africa had highly significant consequences for Jews in mainland France.⁹⁷⁶ As a result of the *décret Crémieux* of 1870 all Jews living in Algeria had been made French citizens.⁹⁷⁷ Vichy abrogated this decree on 7 October 1940, reducing the Jews to the status of subjects. The law of 18 January 1941 that required French men at the age of twenty to undertake a service in a Chantier de la Jeunesse, made clear that it was open only to those of French citizenship.⁹⁷⁸ However, a large number of Jews in Algeria retained their citizenship. These *dérogations* were not only awarded to Jews who had demonstrated exceptional service to France. Rather, not all Jews in Algeria were ‘Crémieux Jews’. Many Jews living in the Maghreb had only immigrated to North Africa after 1870 and did not have their citizenship revoked in 1940. A situation thus arose in Algeria in which some Jews were entitled to take part in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse while others were not.

In June 1941, the Commissaire Régional for Afrique du Nord, Alphonse Van Hecke, entered into a correspondence with De la Porte du Theil over the Jewish Question and the right of Jews to be included in the Chantiers. Van Hecke alerted De la Porte du Theil to what he considered to be an anomaly in the legislation. In 1941, an Algerian-born Jew born to a foreign father was eligible to take part in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse, but because of the abrogation of the *décret Crémieux*, the son of an Algerian

⁹⁷⁶ It is hoped that this discovery will have important historiographical consequences by prompting deeper investigation into the situation of Jews in the Maghreb under the Occupation, who have remained largely absent from existing studies of Vichy and the Jews.

⁹⁷⁷ P. Weil, *Qu'est-ce qu'un Français? Histoire de la nationalité française depuis la Révolution* (Paris, 2002), p. 97.

⁹⁷⁸ JO Loi du 18 Janvier 1941.

Jew who had fought in the First World War was not.⁹⁷⁹ A variety of Jewish youth with a mixture of legal and political statuses existed in North Africa. This heterogeneity and the confusion that surrounded citizenship led to certain youths, who were not eligible for incorporation, to seek admission into the Chantiers in North Africa. This was pointed out to De la Porte du Theil by Van Hecke in November 1941 in a four page report on 'La question juive vis à vis des Chantiers de la Jeunesse en Afrique du Nord', which looked to all Jewish youth from a service in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse in North Africa.⁹⁸⁰ Van Hecke argued that by tracing their heritage, Jewish youth would have no difficulty in locating an ancestor who had moved to Algeria, which would transform their status into one of citizen, rather than of Crémieux Jew. Van Hecke noted:

Voilà donc la porte de la nationalité Française largement ouverte à tout le Ghetto et, par là même, celle des Chantiers, si un barrage sévère n'est pas immédiatement établi.⁹⁸¹

In the conclusion to his report, Van Hecke revealed the extent to which he believed that Jewish youth were different to other youths and that they should be eliminated from the Chantiers de la Jeunesse.

Ils ne gagneront rien parce que leur nature, essentiellement orgueilleuse, n'admet aucune supériorité et surtout parce qu'ils ne peuvent offrir aucune perméabilité aux conceptions nationales basées sur les vertus purement Françaises, sur lesquelles s'appuient la Révolution Nationale et l'effort de redressement de la Jeunesse [...] Il n'y a qu'un moyen de résoudre la question juive, un moyen radical : éliminer purement et simplement du recrutement des Chantiers, tous [his emphasis] les individus de race juive reconnus tels par la loi du 2 juin 1941.⁹⁸²

⁹⁷⁹ AN, AJ39 10, Letter from Van Hecke to De la Porte du Theil, Alger, 11 June 1941.

⁹⁸⁰ AN, AJ39 69, Report on the Jewish Question from Van Hecke to De la Porte Du Theil, Alger, 24 November 1941.

⁹⁸¹ Ibid.

⁹⁸² Ibid.

Van Hecke's decision had severe repercussions for Jewish incorporation into the Chantiers in the Métropole, as De la Porte du Theil was in complete agreement with his commissioner's proposals. In February 1942, De la Porte du Theil wrote to Vallat, whom just a few weeks before had been his guest of honour at an official ceremony, asking him to expel Jews from the Chantiers de la Jeunesse.⁹⁸³ In his letter, De la Porte du Theil expanded on Van Hecke's arguments for Jewish expulsions. He explained to Vallat that although Jews in the Métropole were unreceptive to the moral programme of the Chantiers and brought nothing good, their minority presence was not a source of inconvenience.⁹⁸⁴ Whereas in France, Jews constituted less than 1% of the population, in North Africa their numbers made up 3.5%.⁹⁸⁵ For De la Porte du Theil, such a large proportion threatened to compromise the task of the Chantiers, because 'une réunion de quelques centaines de Juifs est incompatible avec l'œuvre de redressement national'.⁹⁸⁶

Above all, De la Porte du Theil put forth two principal reasons that he believed merited Jewish youth's expulsion from the Chantiers de la Jeunesse. Both of these factors serve to illustrate his fundamental misunderstanding of Vichy law and the *antisémitisme d'État* which governed it. First, De la Porte du Theil conceded that his primary motivation to expel the Jews from the Chantiers de la Jeunesse in Algeria and the non-Occupied Zone was entirely linked to the complicated situation surrounding

⁹⁸³ The event in question was a raising of the flat ceremony on 29 December 1941. See BN, FOL-JO-3804, *Au Cœur des Chantiers: Organe du Commissariat Général et du Groupement 42*, Numéro 9, January 1942.

⁹⁸⁴ CDJC, CCCLXXI-46, Letter from De la Porte du Theil to Xavier Vallat, 7 February 1942

⁹⁸⁵ M. Abitbol, *The Jews of North Africa during the Second World War* (Detroit, 1989), p. 7.

⁹⁸⁶ CDJC, CCCLXXI-46, Letter from De la Porte du Theil to Xavier Vallat, 7 February 1942.

Jewish citizenship in North Africa.⁹⁸⁷ In a separate letter, he also spoke of the exclusions as a necessary method to ensure the unification of law between Vichy and Algeria:

Il ne semble pas possible d'adopter à l'encontre des Juifs deux régimes différents : l'un en Afrique du Nord, suivant lequel ils seraient exclus du stage, l'autre dans la Métropole, en vertu duquel ils y seraient admis.⁹⁸⁸

Second, De la Porte du Theil argued that the expulsion of Jews from the Chantiers would marginalise them even further from public life. A *certificat de moralité et d'aptitude* was awarded to youths upon their completion of eight months at a Chantier and Vichy had made this certificate a prerequisite for applicants to all state sector positions.⁹⁸⁹ By removing Jews from the Chantier, De la Porte du Theil explained that they would not be entitled to this certificate, thus creating a firm barrier between Jews and public life. He argued that after a spell in the Chantiers, Jews:

[...] ont beau jeu pour réclamer tous les avantages de la nationalité et de la citoyenneté française et l'on se demande comment on pourrait les leur refuser. Mais c'est là une question qui me dépasse [...] Il est certain que le moyen le plus simple pour résoudre la question Juive serait d'éliminer purement et simplement du recrutement des Chantiers de la Jeunesse tous les individus de race Juive, reconnus tels par la Loi du 2 Juillet 1941, mais il ne m'appartient pas de proposer au Gouvernement l'adoption d'une telle mesure.⁹⁹⁰

To draw attention to the style of De la Porte du Theil's letter elucidates his preferred legal method when dealing with the Jewish Question. Using expressions such as 'mais c'est là une question qui me dépasse', his letter is laden with signals revealing that

⁹⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸⁸ AN, AJ39 17, Note sent from De la Porte du Theil to an unknown Minister, 19 May 1942.

⁹⁸⁹ Battut, *Le groupement 22 des Chantiers de la Jeunesse*, p. 63.

⁹⁹⁰ CDJC, CCCLXXI-46, Letter from De la Porte du Theil to Xavier Vallat, 7 February 1942.

although he was content to initiate anti-Semitic proceedings, he did not want to be personally responsible for pushing through the racial legislation.

Despite his senior position at Vichy, De la Porte du Theil's knowledge of the *Statut des Juifs* once again appears elementary. First, separate laws existed for Jews in Algeria and Jews in the non-Occupied Zone. Jewish children were expelled from schools in Algeria but in the non-Occupied Zone they were not. The existence of two coherent legal systems meant that the removal of Jews from Chantiers in North Africa did not need to result in their elimination from the Chantiers in the Métropole. Second, it had long since been established that the possession of a completion certificate did not facilitate Jews' entry into public sector jobs. De la Porte du Theil's two main reasons to eliminate Jews were thus highly erroneous and should not have resulted in their expulsion.

Vallat's reply to De la Porte du Theil is reminiscent of the one that had been sent by Pucheu concerning the Jewish presence in the Vallée d'Ossau. In his response, Vallat stated that De la Porte du Theil's two main objections for the removal of Jews were entirely unfounded and that he could not propose legislation based on such tenuous arguments.⁹⁹¹ Yet Vallat's rejection of De la Porte du Theil's motivations went even further. He cited a recently passed law of 18 February 1942, which he believed had solved the question of Jewish citizenship in Algeria. Vallat claimed that this law ensured that Jews with foreign ancestors would not benefit from the status as citizens, which would severely limit the number of Jews eligible to take part in the

⁹⁹¹ CDJC, CCCLXXI-46, Xavier Vallat to De la Porte du Theil, 23 February 1942.

Chantiers.⁹⁹² As a result of such a change Jewish participation in the Chantiers in North Africa would remain open to a small minority of men. Vallat noted that ‘quant aux autres, il n’y a aucune raison pour ne pas les soumettre au même statut à ce point de vue, que leurs coreligionnaires de la Métropole’.⁹⁹³ The Algerian dilemma was effectively resolved and De la Porte du Theil’s preferred method of discriminating against the Jews, by hesitantly initiating proceedings, had reached a dead end. Vallat had made it clear that the General was under no obligation to proceed with the expulsions. On this occasion, it was not enough for De la Porte du Theil to plant the seed and leave Vallat to do the rest. Moreover, Vallat gave him the opportunity to withdraw his proposal:

Je suis tout disposé à proposer au Gouvernement, sauf avis contraire de votre part, une disposition législative tendant à dispenser les juifs de l’obligation édictée par l’article Ier de la loi du 18 Janvier 1941.⁹⁹⁴

Despite this offer, and as he had previously done with the Jews in the Vallée d’Ossau, De la Porte du Theil’s anti-Semitic convictions distorted his objectivity in formulating policy and he chose not to back down.⁹⁹⁵ Rather, he vigorously pursued Jewish expulsions to ensure that they entered into law. Although the legislation seemed to get off to a promising start with the proposal being placed before a host of ministers, this was halted by the dismissal of Vallat and Carcopino in the spring of 1942.⁹⁹⁶

⁹⁹² See article 6 of the law no 254 of 18 February 1942 fixant le statut des Juifs indigènes d’Algérie.

⁹⁹³ CDJC, CCCLXXI-46, Xavier Vallat to De la Porte du Theil, 23 February 1942.

⁹⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁹⁵ AN, AJ39 16, De la Porte du Theil to Xavier Vallat, undated letter from early March 1942, in which he stated : J’ai l’honneur de vous faire part de mon accord à ce sujet.

⁹⁹⁶ AN, AJ39 17, Note pour M. le Commissaire Chef de la Section de Liaison de Vichy, 2 March 1942. See also CDJC, CXV-26, Vallat’s letters to the Ministers asking for their signatures to the new law, 21 March 1942.

Following the changes of government in April 1942, all texts that had not yet come into law had to be studied and approved by the new ministers.⁹⁹⁷ In May 1942, De la Porte du Theil initiated proceedings to expel Jewish youth for the second time.⁹⁹⁸ With Vallat out of the way, De la Porte du Theil was able to conceal his involvement in the formulation of the law and from this point on claimed the Jewish expulsions to have been based on German demands.⁹⁹⁹ The new Commissaire Général aux Questions Juives, Darquier de Pellepoix, would never have been reluctant to impose anti-Semitic measures on the Chantiers in the way that Vallat had been. Darquier's vulgar brand of anti-Semitism sought the elimination of Jews from French life and made no room for exceptions. Beginning in early June 1942 it took him only six weeks to process the law that resulted in the Jewish expulsions from the Chantiers de la Jeunesse in July 1942.¹⁰⁰⁰

In the immediate aftermath of the Jewish expulsions in summer and autumn of 1942, the leadership of the Chantiers devised a strategy to ensure that no Jew would ever be allowed to again set foot in a Chantier. The law of 15 July 1942 that expelled Jewish youth from a compulsory spell in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse appeared in the Journal Officiel on 19 July 1942.¹⁰⁰¹ This law forbade all Jews from a service in the Chantiers, making no provisions for *dérogations*, or even for volunteers. In addition, Jews were not allowed to join ADAC and those Jews that stood down in the middle of

⁹⁹⁷ AN, AJ39 17, Note pour M. le Commissaire Chef de la Section de Liaison de Vichy, May 1942.

⁹⁹⁸ AN, AJ39 17, De la Porte du Theil to M. le Commissaire Chef de la Section de Liaison de Vichy, Objet : Dispense du stage des Juifs dans les Chantiers de la Jeunesse, 20 May 1942.

⁹⁹⁹ AN, AJ39 17, De la Porte du Theil to Bonnard, May 1942. Although the Germans had legislated on other forms of Chantiers in the Occupied Zone, which were not connected to the Chantiers in question, they had not made any demands on the Chantiers de la Jeunesse.

¹⁰⁰⁰ CDJC, CXV – 26, Darquier's correspondence with Pierre Cathala, Minister of Finance and Joseph Barthélemy, Minister of Justice, 11 and 16 June 1942.

¹⁰⁰¹ JO 19 July 1942, p. 2.481.

their service were not entitled to a *certificate de moralité et d'aptitude*. Evidence suggests that this law was carried out in Chantiers across the entire non-Occupied Zone. Nevertheless, it is difficult to ascertain the number of Jews that were, to use the language of the Chantiers, 'liberated' in the summer of 1942. In their monthly reports to De la Porte du Theil from July and August 1942, only six out of forty-seven chefs de groupements directly mentioned the Jewish expulsions.¹⁰⁰² Only three of these six chefs gave a precise number of Jews that were released. At Gt 1, Tronçais (Allier), thirty-one Jews were expelled.¹⁰⁰³ At Gt 17, Hyères (Var), forty-three Jews were released.¹⁰⁰⁴ Gt 34, Mèzieres-en-Brenne (Indre) expelled six Jews.¹⁰⁰⁵ One must not assume that when a chef did not write the number of Jews that were liberated, it meant that at his Chantier, no Jews had been present. Roger Fichtenberg was expelled from Gt 4, Cormatin (Saône-et-Loire) yet Chef Salkin's reports from July and August 1942 made no reference to any Jewish liberations.¹⁰⁰⁶ Similarly at Gt 47, Casteljaloux (Lot-et-Garonne), there was no mention of any Jewish expulsions.¹⁰⁰⁷ Marc Gouzy recalls that the three or four Jews, who were incorporated alongside him in Gt 47 in July 1942, were expelled immediately following the obligatory medical visits, when presumably questions were asked over why the men had been circumcised.¹⁰⁰⁸

The application of the law of 15 July 1942 was applied rigorously and continued to be enforced long after the expulsions of summer 1942. In the weeks that followed the law, a note was sent to all the commissaires régionaux in which it was reiterated that

¹⁰⁰² AN, AJ39 114–124, these were the chefs of Gts 1, Tronçais (Allier), 7, Rumilly (Haute-Savoie), 17, Hyères (Var), 24, Lodève (Hérault), 29, La Bastide (Tarn) and 34, Mèzieres-en-Brenne (Indre).

¹⁰⁰³ AN, AJ39 114, Monthly report by Furioux, Gt 1, July 1942.

¹⁰⁰⁴ AN, AJ39 118, Monthly report by Turcat, Gt 17, July 1942.

¹⁰⁰⁵ AN, AJ39 122, Monthly report by Dusailly, Gt 34, July 1942.

¹⁰⁰⁶ AN, AJ39 114, Monthly reports by Salkin, July and August 1942.

¹⁰⁰⁷ AN, AJ39 61 Chart showing the July 1942 incorporations for the region of the Pyrénées-Gascogne and AJ39 124, Monthly reports of Gt 47, by Chef Lambret, July and August 1942.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Interview with Marc Gouzy, 30 January 2009.

recently-liberated Jewish youth were not entitled to a *certificat de moralité et d'aptitude*.¹⁰⁰⁹ This measure was rigorously implemented by certain chefs who refused to allow Jews to acquire any such certificates.¹⁰¹⁰ In October 1942, a note advised chefs to be on alert for Jewish youth who may attempt to join the Chantiers in the November call-up and to make sure that they were not incorporated, 'même temporairement'.¹⁰¹¹ Shortly after this, specific measures were put into place to ensure that a Jew would not be admitted into a Chantier. From January 1943, all youths incorporated into the Chantiers de la Jeunesse were to declare that they were not Jewish.¹⁰¹² After their expulsion, Jews without anywhere else to go were not always, as Souyris-Rolland and others would have us believe, welcomed into the Chantiers with open arms. In December 1942, an unnamed Jewish youth who had been expelled in July, attempted to rejoin Gt 1, Tronçais (Allier) under a false identity. When his Jewish identity was revealed, he was immediately expelled.¹⁰¹³

Jews constituted only a tiny minority in each Chantier, but it would be incorrect to claim that in the summer of 1942 non-Jews did not notice their expulsion. One youth enquired to the Chargé de Mission from the propaganda section, as to whether the liberated Jewish youths would be incorporated into a separate work scheme.¹⁰¹⁴ Marc Gouzy, as has been shown, recalled that several youths did not rejoin the group following the medical inspection upon incorporation.¹⁰¹⁵ Some even interpreted the Jewish expulsions as a measure that would benefit the Jews in the short-term. Writing

¹⁰⁰⁹ AN, AJ39 69 Note from Mourey to the Commissaires Régionaux, 1 August 1942.

¹⁰¹⁰ Private archives of Roger Fichtenberg, his correspondence with a chef in Gt, 4, September 1942 and AN, AJ39 19, and the appeal sent by Jules Sixou to Châtel-Guyon, 22 August 1942.

¹⁰¹¹ AN, AJ39 56, *Bulletin Périodique Officiel*, No 110, 25 October 1942, p. 666.

¹⁰¹² AN, AJ39 58, Directives concernant les opérations d'incorporation de contrôle et de libération des jeunes des Chantiers de la Jeunesse, January 1943.

¹⁰¹³ AN, AJ39 19, the Commissaire Régional d'Auvergne to De la Porte du Theil, 22 December 1942

¹⁰¹⁴ Hoover Institution Archives, Papers of Jean Delage, Questions posed to the Chargé de Mission à Marseille, 3 September 1942.

¹⁰¹⁵ Interview with Marc Gouzy, 30 January 2009.

to the regional director of the CGQJ in Marseille, the Président du Conseil de l'Ordre National des Médecins des Bouches-du-Rhône noted :

C'est donc une « exemption » qui va favoriser ces non aryens, étudiants ou élèves des grandes écoles, tandis que les mêmes catégories de jeunes et authentiques aryens perdront un an encore qui concerne leurs études.¹⁰¹⁶

Jewish organisations protested against the expulsions by writing to Vichy and illustrating the historic relationship between Jews and their participation in the French army.¹⁰¹⁷ Samy Klein began a campaign to illustrate to the authorities that the excellent contributions made by Jewish youth to the Chantiers was indicative of their loyalty to the regime. In August 1942, Klein wrote to all the synagogue presidents in the non-Occupied Zone, pressing them to send him lists of all the Jews who had completed a service in the Chantiers, and where possible, to send copies of their *certificats de moralité et d'aptitude*.¹⁰¹⁸ In July 1942, the direction that Vichy policy on the Jews was set to take was still not obvious to Klein and he continued to believe, despite their removal from the Chantiers, that Jewish youth's history of a commitment to France and their willingness to adapt could still render them a contributor, however marginal in the New Order.

This study has shed important new light on the anti-Semitic enterprise of the Chantiers de la Jeunesse. It has revealed that anti-Semitic propaganda coming from

¹⁰¹⁶ CDJC, CXV-26, Letter from the Président du Conseil de l'Ordre National des Médecins des Bouches-du-Rhône to the Directeur Régional aux Questions Juives, 28 July 1942.

¹⁰¹⁷ AIU, CC 39, Letter from the Consistoire to Pierre Laval, 28 July 1942.

¹⁰¹⁸ CDJC, CMLV-9, Letter from Samy Klein to M. Hirtz-Weill, President of the Jewish community of Vichy, 18 August 1942.

the Chantiers' own propaganda unit was a priority for the organisation and that it was not imposed on them from above. Moreover, it has shown the memory of the Chantiers as havens for Jews to be invented, born out of a post-war narrative that aimed to convey unity amongst the leadership and the youths across the localities. The sheltering of Jews in the Chantiers after the deportations of 1942 was administered on a case by case basis and despite what was claimed at De la Porte du Theil's post-war trial, there is no evidence that this was ever encouraged by the leadership. Individual cases exist which illustrate that far from protecting Jews, the Chantiers were on occasion zealous in enhancing their suffering. Finally, this research has shown that De la Porte du Theil was decisive in the anti-Jewish legislation that affected the Chantiers. With regards to initiating policies for the New Order, his anti-Semitism was not a priority. Nevertheless, on the multiple occasions that it was expressed, he proved himself a confident architect of the regime's *antisémitisme d'Etat*, constantly offering proposals and suggestions for its instigation, but always avoiding responsibility for its implementation.

Ultimately, the expulsion of the Jews from the Chantiers de la Jeunesse constituted a fundamental moment in the relationship between Jewish youth and Vichy. As Henri Ravouna commented: 'Un juif ne pouvait pas être patriote'.¹⁰¹⁹ July 1942 irrevocably shifted the relationship between Jewish youth and the New Order. Any lingering hope from the Jewish youth that they could be accommodated by Vichy slowly began to disappear. Vichy had removed the last remaining mechanism that had allowed Jewish youth to think that they might continue to play a role in the national community. Not

¹⁰¹⁹ Interview with Henri Ravouna, 15 June 2009.

being allowed to carry out this obligation distinguished them from other youths and robbed them of the possibility to prove their commitment as citizens.

Conclusion

The exceptions to the racial laws presented in this study have served to illustrate that a reading of the relationship of Vichy and the Jews underpinned solely by anti-Semitism and persecution can only take the historian so far. It has shown that exemption from the regime's exclusionary laws went beyond the allowances created for longstanding French citizens, veterans and their families. Rather, this thesis has revealed instances in which Vichy showed its flexibility by allowing Jewish youth to participate and contribute to the construction of the New Order. It has overturned any possibility which suggests that Jewish ambitions to coexist with Vichy were founded upon a series of loopholes which were exploited by Jews in their efforts to survive. Instead, this investigation has shown that Vichy was aware of exceptions to the racial laws and did not seek to close the gaps. Vichy's belief that Jews could contribute to the New Order adds another layer to discussions over the existence of a 'Plural Vichy'. For some ministers, Jews, like non-conformists and Vichysto-résistants, were not wholly excluded from contributing towards Vichy's 'pluralist dictatorship'.

Multiple factors on both the Vichy and Jewish sides made this space for coexistence possible. First, contradictions lay at the heart of Vichy's dual priorities for regeneration and exclusion. In the years 1940–42, the regime's anti-Semitic drive discriminated primarily against Jewish influence in commerce and the liberal professions. Religious life continued unabated and the regime did not legislate against Jews in the manual trades. Although the marginalisation of certain elements of society was fundamental to the National Revolution, Vichy did not seek to completely exclude Jews from playing a role in the rebirth of the nation. Its anti-Semitism was

complicated by its broader regenerationist agenda. This analysis has revealed that Jewish youth's participation in Vichy's youth schemes crystallises the overlap between regeneration and exclusion: cooperation was made possible when reconstruction took precedence over anti-Semitism. Had anti-Semitism formed the basis of state-Jewish relations, as it did in Nazi Germany, room for coexistence would not have existed. In Germany, Jews were immediately prohibited from taking part in any regenerationist schemes such as the Hitlerjugend or the Reichsarbeitsdienst. If anti-Semitism had been Vichy's main priority then as soon as a loophole was discovered, it would immediately have been closed. This was not the case and the tensions surrounding the two objectives allowed for recurrent compromise and negotiation.

A second reason for the emergence of coexistence stems from the diverse responses of Vichy agencies towards the Jewish Question. Vichy anti-Semitism was not evenly spread across its agencies and ministries: rather, it worked in different directions. The marginalisation of Jews underpinned the actions of Vallat, Darquier and several others responsible for policy making. As the case of De la Porte du Theil has revealed, some ministers who conceived exclusion as central to regeneration were favourable to the racial laws, and sought to include them as far as possible within the frameworks of their organisations. Although some existing studies have acknowledged certain flexibility amongst officials, they are resolute that any exceptions were 'always of local origin'.¹⁰²⁰ This investigation has revealed that this was not the case and that Vichy ministers were not in agreement over the direction that anti-Semitic legislation should follow. Investigations of Lamirand and Caziot have revealed that some

¹⁰²⁰ Poznanski, *Jews in France*, p. 478.

ministers did not welcome the racial laws and sought where possible to subvert their impact. Demonising all of Vichy's ministers as passionate anti-Semites fails to appreciate the complexities of policy-making that existed over the Jewish Question at the very top of the regime. Lamirand's social Catholicism prevented him from discriminating against Jews taking part in youth organisations and Caziot believed that the racial laws would have severe consequences for agricultural production. Unlike their ministerial colleagues, the support Lamirand and Caziot lent to Jews ran deeper than a passive recognition of one or two 'good' Jews with whom they had been acquainted in the interwar years. Rather, their acceptance of Jews into various youth and agricultural initiatives offered some Jews the possibility to coexist with Vichy, at a time when other avenues had been closed to them.

Third, a tension in policy between the central and local levels of governance also offered the possibility for coexistence. Decisions taken at Vichy over the Jewish Question did not always filter down into the localities. Rather, it was the responsibility of local officials to interpret and implement the new laws, which was performed unevenly across the non-Occupied Zone. Despite Vichy's propaganda and the discourse of official state anti-Semitism, in reality a French Jewish youth entering a new province was a person and no longer a caricature. At a time of material shortages and abandoned land, regional delegates at Lautrec placed local concerns first and anti-Semitism second. Similarly more often than not, *chefs* in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse put the immediate needs of their Chantier beyond the regime's vague ideological outpourings and did not discriminate against Jews assuming positions of responsibility.

Factors from within French Jewry also came together to create a space for coexistence with the regime. First, the EIF responded favourably to Vichy's prioritisation of youth and agriculture. From June 1940, the movement sought to take opportunity in defeat by implementing its pre-war projects based on scouting and a *retour à la terre* to create the New Jew. State recognition and support legitimised both the ideology and the work performed at Lautrec and gave Jewish youth reason to believe that they would not encounter any future hostility from the New Order. Vichy – albeit unintentionally – offered an arena for Jewish self-identification. Far away from their bourgeois lives, Jewish youth experienced a living Judaism that centred on folklore, manual work and community living. Ultimately, Lautrec embodied the interface between Vichy and the Jews, where elements of each project converged, making ideological exclusiveness difficult to distinguish.

Second, the EIF was equipped with a leadership that was French and endowed with a series of important connections. The movement's reliance on Anatole de Monzie to reinvent itself in the south-west was a privilege which was not afforded to other Jewish groups. Coexistence with Vichy became a reality thanks to the support of General Lafont and other leading figures in SF which showed its commitment to the EIF by included it in all of its schemes, and defending the movement from hostile forces. Moreover, the EIF could officially perform SGJ tasks, thanks to the positive relations that it had developed with Louis Garonne and other figures at the SGJ. The links between the two institutions were strengthened when the SGJ allowed the EIF to undertake relief work at Gurs in its name, and later sent its leaders to North Africa as SGJ delegates.

Jewish routes to coexistence also benefitted from the tension in policies between the centre and the localities. On occasion, the expression of local hostilities to Jews was constrained by the regime's broader agenda. At Lautrec, the prefect was unable to halt the funding which refugees from Alsace and Lorraine were entitled to receive. For most local delegates, their priority was to fulfil the responsibilities of their agency or governmental ministry. The Jewish Question was largely dependent on the zeal of the CGQJ, which proved uninterested in Lautrec. By returning to the land, Lautrec presented itself as having the support of Vichy, which confused local people and for a time prevented them from vehemently criticising the Chantier.

In the non-Occupied Zone, the roundups of foreign Jews in the summer of 1942 and the invasion by the Germans in November of the same year had almost extinguished any remaining ambition of Jewish youth to coexist with Vichy. The roundup of French Jews from the spring of 1943 was the final nail in the coffin. Nevertheless, the German dimension does not adequately explain why cooperation broke down between the two sides. Anti-Semitic forces also existed in 1940–42 which were unrelated to German demands and were constantly testing and reshaping the boundaries of coexistence. One factor, demonstrated in this study, has been the role of hesitant initiators of anti-Semitic policies, such as General de la Porte du Theil. Since the autumn of 1940, De la Porte du Theil's hostility to Jews limited their contribution to the Chantiers de la Jeunesse. De la Porte du Theil did not want to recommend anti-Semitic legislation to government, preferring to initiate a policy measure and allow others to follow it through. On the occasions that this method did not result in success,

De la Porte du Theil did not concede, and instead confidently pushed through his proposals to obtain his desired outcome.

This study has also shown that the North African dimension played an important contribution in the breakdown of relations between Vichy and Jews in the Chantiers. Jews' expulsion from the Chantiers in the non-Occupied Zone was unrelated to events in France or from German pressure. This analysis has revealed that a debate which was unique to the situation of Jews in the colonies had far reaching consequences for Jews in mainland France. This aspect of the relationship between Vichy and the Jews has not been treated in existing studies, and one can only speculate on the ways in which additional decisions taken on Jews in the colonies, eventually impacted on Jews in the Hexagone.

Sometimes however, the breakdown of coexistence was brought about by other factors, unrelated to specifically anti-Semitic acts. Jews were not expelled from participating in Jeune France. However, the organisation's closure by Pucheu in March 1942 impacted on the movement's Jewish performers, who needed to reinvent their lives at the very moment that the powers of Bonnard, Pelorson and Darquier were suddenly increasing.

The rupture of coexistence on an institutional level was matched by a break down on the individual side. The EIF was officially disbanded by Darquier in January 1943 and Lautrec was closed in March 1944. Places where coexistence had taken place thus fell apart, and individuals sought different routes upon which to continue their journeys

under the Occupation. The experience of 1942–44 showed many young French Jews that in the eyes of the authorities they were no longer *Français israélite* and that they had instead become *Juifs français*.¹⁰²¹

As they had done in the period 1940–42, Jewish youth reacted differently to the German presence in the former non-Occupied Zone. Their personal trajectories were unpredictable. Young Jews that were hostile to Vichy in 1940–42 did not always engage in Resistance activities faster than Jews who had earlier tried to coexist with the regime. The German presence in the south deprived Jewish youth of much of the freedom and choices which they had been afforded in 1940–42. A constant danger hung over their heads and they found themselves taking on additional familial responsibilities. The time for young Jews to seek opportunities in defeat no longer existed: concerns for parents and siblings took precedence over scouting, music and self-discovery.

By continuing to follow state regulations and decrees, some Jews sought to maintain a legal existence for as long as possible. Jews, like the rest of French youth, were ambivalent over their inclusion in the *Service du Travail Obligatoire* [STO]. Even though Jews had been expelled from the *Chantiers de la Jeunesse*, many chose, however, to remain within the margins of legality and responded to their call up to the STO from February 1943.¹⁰²² Félix Calek was conscripted to work in the Dordogne and Maurice Schneigeiger was sent to work as a mechanic in Germany.

¹⁰²¹ Opinion of Roger Fichtenberg, 4 November 2008.

¹⁰²² Jewish participation in the STO has not featured in studies of the period 1942–44. Only Bernard Reviriego in his study of Jews in the Dordogne has investigated Jews in the STO. Reviriego has shown that in the summer of 1943, 117 Jews took part in the STO in the Dordogne. See Reviriego, *Les Juifs en Dordogne*, pp. 161–165. A large number of interviewees made reference to their refusal to participate in the STO.

The German presence and the introduction of STO forced many young Jews to flee or to retreat into a non-Jewish existence. Claude Strauss who had been in the Zionist resistance from the autumn of 1940 escaped to the USA at the end of 1942. As was the case with large parts of the French population, resistance was not always considered a viable option. Henri Certner and Robert Arnaud hid their Jewish identities and lived out the war as agricultural labourers. After obtaining false identification papers, Jacques Lang spent time as a stage manager for the theatrical group the Tournées Rasini.

Many Jews, however, participated in a range of Resistance movements, some of which were made up entirely of Jews. From summer 1942, Théo and René Klein became fully immersed in the EIF's clandestine operations to hide foreign children which remained active until the Liberation. A large number of the EIF's former participants including Pierre Kauffman and Gilbert Bloch joined the armed Jewish Resistance in the Tarn. Bloch was killed in an attack by the Wehrmacht on 8 August 1944 alongside two other EIF members. In total, 157 Jewish youths who had been involved in rescuing Jewish children and Jewish armed combat, most of whom were EIF members, were either killed or deported.¹⁰²³

Jewish youth also participated in resistance cells that were not exclusively Jewish. Shortly after his liberation from the Chantiers de la Jeunesse, Bernard Epelbeim joined Combat in Nice. Epelbeim, his wife Simone and their baby son were denounced by the non-Jewish husband of Simone's sister, who as a member of the

¹⁰²³ G. Loinger, 'Message' in Brauman et al. (eds.), *Organisation Juive de Combat*, p. 9. Individual files on these youths killed and deported can be found at Yad Vashem: YV, o. 89.

Milice, had also denounced his own wife. Epelbeim was not present when the police arrived to round up his wife and child and later became involved in resistance activity, eventually becoming known as 'le libérateur d'Evian'. Georges Weill and Sylvain Adolphe, who as has been shown, participated in almost every Vichy youth movement, made their way to London in December 1942 where they joined De Gaulle and the Free French. At the same time Pierre-Emile Meyer managed to escape to Morocco where he joined General Leclerc's 2nd Armoured Division, taking part in the liberation of Normandy before liberating Dachau and going to Berchtesgaden.

The Occupation irrevocably altered the course of Jewish youth's lives. After the Liberation, many returned to their homes and communities and attempted to rebuild their future within the traditional parameters of French Jewry, resuming their studies and reengaging in youth organisations. Théo Klein was president of the Union des Étudiants Juifs de France (1945–1950), and later became a celebrated lawyer and president of the *Conseil Representative des Institutions Juives de France* [CRIF]. Roger Fichtenberg went into commerce and during the 1980s and 1990s was a town councillor for the eleventh arrondissement. However, the experience of Vichy and the Occupation led many Jews to stray from the paths that they had been following in 1939. Eliane Dutech, Félix Calek and Henri Steiner fell in love while in the south and married their non-Jewish partners, settling permanently in la France Profonde. Marcel David's intimate friendship with a number of figures in the *Jeunesse Étudiante Chrétienne*, introduced him to Christianity. After the war, David converted to Catholicism and became a renowned militant of the Christian left in Lyon.

In some instances, Vichy's institutions and models shaped Jewish youth's post-war existence. Simon Nora's experiences at Uriage led him to abandon academia and embark on a civil service career. Like many participants of Uriage, Simon Nora entered ENA in 1946 and later became one of France's greatest post-war economists. Similarly, Sylvain Adolphe had no desire to resume his pre-war life, in which he had trained to be an engineer. The experience of Jeune France had given him a taste of creativity and the need to live an alternative existence, which he did not feel ready to relinquish. As a photographer covering the first Indochina War, Adolphe arrived in Tahiti in 1946 where he remained, becoming a correspondent for *Paris Match* and *National Geographic*.

The continuities from Vichy into the post-war period were mirrored by Jewish youth who, under the Occupation, had been given a space in which to reflect on their position as Jews in France. Many young Jews, inspired by the Jewish and Zionist teachings that they had received under Vichy, saw their immediate future in Palestine where they sought to contribute towards building the Jewish state. Maurice and Annette Bernsohn made their Aliyah in 1947 and settled at Neve Ilan, a Kibbutz that had been created by EIF members in October 1946. By December 1961, 400 former Jewish scouts had made their Aliyah to Israel.¹⁰²⁴

A re-examination of 1940–1942 has shown the variation in Vichy's form of anti-Semitism and French Jewry's historically complicated relationship to France.

¹⁰²⁴ AHICJ, The Rescue of Jews via Spain and Portugal, Names and addresses of former EIF members living in Israel, December 1961.

During the Occupation, France enacted anti-Semitic legislation and through actively engaging in a policy of collaboration, was responsible for sending 76,000 Jews to their deaths. Nevertheless, the momentary exceptions from the anti-Semitic legislation during the period 1940–1942 allows us to understand a formative moment in French-Jewish history in which the regenerationist projects put forth by Vichy and the EIF, for a time, drove in the same direction. This convergence marked the culmination of a forty year debate, beginning with the Dreyfus Affair, about Jewish modernity. Representing a tiny proportion of Jews in France at that time, it is through cases such as Lautrec that one observes that there was no fixed identity for Jews under Vichy, nor was there a single definition of Jewishness.

Selected biographical details

Bailly, Pierre (1897 – 1981), sub-Prefect of Castres (Tarn) during the Occupation.

Bialik, Haïm Nachman (1873 – 1934), Hebrew poet.

Bonnard, Abel (1882 – 1968), Minister of Education under Vichy (April 1942 – February 1944).

Buber, Martin (1878 – 1965), Philosopher and spiritual Zionist.

Carcopino, Jérôme (1881 – 1970), Historian and Minister of Education under Vichy (February 1941 – April 1942).

Caziot, Pierre (1876 – 1953), agricultural engineer and Minister of Agriculture under Vichy (September 1940 – April 1942).

Chérier, André, Lawyer and former PPF militant. Headed the youth division of Pucheu's cabinet (1941– 1942).

Chevalier, Jacques (1882 – 1962), Catholic philosopher and Minister of Education under Vichy (December 1940 – February 1941).

Cohn, Bô (1916 – 1974), leader of Yechouroun and writer of the movements' cours de correspondances.

Cohn, Léo (1915 – 1945), Zionist, musician, EIF leader in Strasbourg before the war. Spent the Occupation at Lautrec.

Darbou, Georges, Prefect of the Tarn (December 1941 – March 1943), Director of Pierre Laval's Cabinet (November 1943 – Liberation).

De La Porte Du Theil, Joseph (1884 – 1976), General in the French army, founder and leader of the Chantiers de la Jeunesse (July 1940 – January 1944).

De Pellepoix, Louis Darquier (1897 – 1980), notorious anti-Semite of the 1930s, became second Commissaire général aux questions Juives (May 1942 – February 1944).

De Rouville, Guy (1915 – present), Industrialist in Vabre, head of the Maquis de Vabre.

Deutsch, Abraham (1902 – 1992), founder of the PSIL, rabbi of Limoges during the Occupation.

Dunoyer de Segonzac, Pierre (1906 – 1968), leader of the École de Cadres d'Uriage.

Fischer, Joseph – Key figure in the French Zionist movement, headed the KKL from its Lyon offices under the Occupation.

Gamzon, Denise (1909 – 2002), head of the Chantier Rural at Lautrec and wife of Robert Gamzon.

Gamzon, Robert (1905 – 1961), grandson of the Grand Rabbin of Paris and founder of the EIF in 1923.

Garonne, Louis – Devout Catholic, director of the elite Ecole des Roches. Lamirand's assistant as head of the SGJ. Looked favourably upon Uriage and *Esprit*.

Gordon, A.D. (1856 – 1922), ideological mentor of the Zionist agricultural pioneers. Settled in Palestine at the age of forty eight.

Haguenau, Marc (1904 – 1944), General Secretary of the EIF.

Hammel, Frédéric (1907 – 2001), EIF leader from Strasbourg and member of the movement's executive committee, headed the Chantier Rural at Taluyers.

Helbronner, Jacques (1873 – 1943), Président de section du Conseil d'Etat, President of the Consistoire Central and friend of Maréchal Pétain.

Jabotinsky, Waldimir, Zeev (1880 – 1940), Founder of revisionist Zionism.

Jarblum, Marc (1887 – 1972), Leading figure in French inter-war Zionism, president of the Fédération des Sociétés Juives de France.

Jefroykin, Jules 'Dika' (1911 - 1987), JOINT representative in France.

Kaplan, Jacob (1895 – 1994), Leading French rabbi, based in Lyon during the Occupation. Became Grand Rabbin de France in January 1944.

Klein, Samy (1915 – 1944), Rabbi at the Consistoire Central, official chaplain for Jewish youth from September 1940. Chaplain to the Chantiers de la Jeunesse.

Kook, Abraham, Isaac (1865 – 1935), Father of religious Zionism and appointed the first Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Palestine in 1921.

Lafont, Joseph (1874 – 1961), General in the French army. Chef Scout from 1936–1948.

Lambert, Raymond-Raul (1894 – 1943), From 1934 the editor-in-chief of the *Univers israélite*, the principal mouthpiece of French Jewry, Lambert headed UGIF in the non-Occupied Zone.

Lamirand, Georges (1899 – 1994) Social engineer, inter-war Catholic activist. Headed Vichy's SGJ from September 1940 – March 1943.

Libmann, Henri (1892 – 1973) Headed the Légion Française des Combattants for the département of the Tarn, August 1940 – August 1941.

- Maritain, Jacques (1882 – 1973) Neo-Thomist, Catholic philosopher and social theorist. Member of Action Française in early 1920s, later played a crucial role in the modern Catholic teaching about Jews.
- Mounier, Emmanuel (1905 – 1950) Founder of the French personalist movement and the spiritualist Catholic journal *Esprit*.
- Mourey, Jean-Charles, Career officer and De la Porte du Theil's deputy in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse.
- Nordau, Max (1849 – 1923) Zionist thinker for whom the transformation of the Jewish body was essential.
- Pougatch, Isaac (1897 – 1988) Specialist in Jewish and Yiddish culture. Educator. Founded the Chantier Rural at Charry (Tarn-et-Garonne).
- Renouard, Pierre (1887 – 1976) Prefect of the Tarn (November 1940 – December 1941)
- Schaeffer, Pierre (1910 – 1975) Catholic engineer. Led Vichy's Radio Jeunesse in August 1940. Founder of Jeune France.
- Schwartz, Isaie (1876 – 1952) Grand Rabbin de France under the Occupation.
- Simon, Edouard (1905 – 1993) Deputy leader of the EIF. Director of the Maison de Moissac.
- Simon, Shatta (1910 – 2003) Director of the EIF's Maison de Moissac and wife of Edouard Simon.
- Soutou, Jean-Marie (1912 – 2003) contributor to *Esprit* and links with Mounier in the 1930s, Soutou joined Jeune France in 1940 and in 1941 was involved in helping Jewish refugees.
- Vallat, Xavier (1891 – 1972) Catholic député for the Ardèche. Vallat made a scathing attack on Léon Blum following the latter's election as president of the Chamber of Deputies. Under Vichy, secrétaire général aux anciens combattants (August 1940 – March 1941) and Commissaire général aux questions Juives (March 1941 – May 1942).
- Ybarnégaray, Jean (1883 – 1956) Basque député close to Colonel de la Rocque. Vichy's first Minister of Youth and Family (July – September 1940).

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c. Films

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MER - Mémoire et Espoirs de la Résistance: <http://www.memoresist.org/>

ASIJA – Le judaïsme d'Alsace et de Lorraine: <http://judaisme.sdv.fr/>

e. Oral testimonies carried out by others. When known, the year of the recording is placed after the name of the interviewee.

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Georges Lamirand, 1984 (2AV 29–33)

Oral History Division of the Avraham Harman Institute of Contemporary Jewry – The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Project 1 - The Rescue of Jews via Spain and Portugal. Interviews conducted by Haim Avni between 1959 and 1963

Robert Gamzon (1 9)

Frédéric Hammel (1 10)

Charmi Fleischer (1 16)

Claude Vigée (1 49)

Maurice Bernsohn (1 50)

Félix Goldschmidt (1 56)

Jules 'Dika' Jefroykin (1 61)

Georges Garel (1 64)

Joseph Croustillon (1 65)

Steinhorn (1 66)

Henri Pohoryles (1 67)

Joseph Schwartz (2 10)

CDJC Interviews conducted by Anny Latour in the 1960s and 1970s

Maurice Bernsohn (CDJC, DLXI-6)
Roger Fichtenberg (CDJC, DLXI-24)
Rodolphe Furthe (CDJC, DLXI-27)
Shimon Hammel (CDJC, DLXI-38)
René Kapel (CDJC, DLXI-44)
Pierre Kauffmann (CDJC, DLXI-46)
René Klein (CDJC, DLXI-49)
Lucien Lublin (CDJC, DLXI-68)
Arnold Mandel (CDJC, DLXI-69)
Abraham Polonski (CDJC, DLXI-77)
Isaac Pougatch (CDJC, DLXI-79)
Jacques Pulver (CDJC, DLXI-81)
Chatta and Bouli Simon (CDJC, DLXI-96)

Yad Vashem

Maurice Bernsohn, 1969 (o.3 3473)
Abraham Bock, 1968 (o.3 3356 & 8845)
Max Gerber, 1995 (o.3 8975)
Jacques Samuel, 1969 (o.3 3355)
Etienne Weil, 1997 (o.3 1513)
Jeanine Weil (o.3 5707 & 11202)

*University of Southern California Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History –
Recorded interviews conducted 1994–1999. Accessed at Yad Vashem (o.93)*

Albert Aben
Jacques Angel
Jack Bienstock
Henri Bily
Jean Boris
Sylvain Caen
Pierre Cahen
Jean Cerf
Robert Chazine
Hubert Chimènes
Roger Climaud
Elie Crespi
Bernard Dargols
Marcel David
Bernard Epelbeim
Robert Eskenazi
Fernand Estenne
André Ferber
Roger Franck
Daniel Gauthier (né Samuel)

Roland Haas
Simon Holeman
Isadore Hollander
Isaac Jafet
Max Jussmann
Julien Kichelewski
René Klein
Michel Kuna
Charles Liche
Fernand Lévy
Henri Lvovsky
Pierre Manteuil (né Meyer)
André Marion
Samy Nehama
Charles Palant
Maurice Piontek
Bernard Pressman
Maurice Schneigeiger
Henri Schochet
Charles Schuster
Léon Spievak
Claude Stark
Gerard Theodore
Maurice Unger
Eli Utianski
Claude Veil
Edgard Weill
Jean Weill

Author's Interviews

Jewish interviewees:

Alter, Maurice,	Agen (Lot-et-Garonne)	3 February 2009
Arnaud, Robert,	Paris	15 December 2007
Baruch, Pierre	Paris	22 April 2009
Berman, Sylvain,	Brussels	22 December 2009
Blum, Arthur,	Paris	4 April 2008
Bollack, Joseph,	Jerusalem	12 July 2010
Borne, Isaac,	Nîmes	6 February 2009
Calek, Félix,	Paris	3 September 2009
Certner, Henri,	Paris	21 December 2009
Cohn, Margot	Castres (Tarn)	27 January 2009
Cohn, Margot,	Jerusalem	13 August 2009
Cuzin, Marianne	Paris	11 April 2007
Dutech, Eliane,	Lavaur (Tarn)	15 November 2008
Ferber, André	Philadelphia	21 and 28 August 2009
Fridmann, Boris,	Toulouse	10 November 2008
Gruszewski, Fanny,	Toulouse	1 February 2009
Guinat, Eytan,	Tel Mond (Israel)	3 June 2009
Grundman, Léa	Haifa	24 May 2009
Hayman, Marie,	London	15 February 2008
Herzog, Philippe,	Paris	9 April 2007
Hyafil, Paul,	Paris	4 April 2008
Imbert, Raymond,	Lyon	5 May 2009
Fichtenberg, R,	Paris	4 November 2008 and 15 January 2009
Fleischer, Charmy,	Tel Aviv	1 September 2009
Kauffmann, Pierre,	Paris	11 April 2007 and 26 September 2008
Klein, René,	Tréville (Aude)	11 November 2008 and 20 December 2008
Klein, Théo	Paris	10 March 2009
Klein-Liber, Liliane,	Paris	3 May 2009
Lang, Jacques,	Paris	19 December 2009
Lazare, Lucien,	Jerusalem	30 October 2008 and 3 August 2009
Lévy, Pierre,	Lyon	6 May 2009
Librati, Maxi,	Paris	9 April 2008
Maidenberg, Sacha,	Paris	23 April 2009
Mamon, Charles,	Paris	30 July 2008
Marcault, Robert,	Toulouse	10 November 2008
Munnich, Robert,	Paris	19 April 2009
Porat, Annette,	Kibbutz Ma'ayan Tzvi (Israel)	24 September 2010
Presberg, Philippe,	Paris	28 February 2009
Ravouna, Henri,	Cannes (Alpes Maritimes)	15 June 2009
Schwab, Jean-Pierre,	Toulouse	27 October 2008

Simon, Gilberte	Nîmes	6 February 2009
Steiner, Henri,	Albi (Tarn)	22 December 2008
Szpilfogiél, Freddy,	Toulouse	20 October 2008
Weill, Denise,	Paris	3 April 2007
Weill, Georges,	Jerusalem	25 May and 3 June 2009
Weill, Jacques,	Paris	6 April 2007

Non-Jewish interviewees:

Antoine, Paul,	Châtel-Guyon (Puy-de-Dôme)	24 September 2009
Bastien-Thiry, Hélène	Paris	31 March 2008
Bastien-Thiry, Odile	Paris	31 March 2008
Bernard, Jacques,	Lyon	7 May 2009
Canet, Yves,	Châtel-Guyon	24 September 2009
Cavaillès, (Père)	Châtel-Guyon	24 September 2009
Delannoy, Jacques,	Châtel-Guyon	24 September 2009
De Resseguier, Antoine,	Biarritz (Pyrénées Atlantiques)	8 October 2008
Etienne, (Abbé)	Montauban (Tarn-et-Garonne)	9 February 2009
Fossac, Raymond,	Châtel-Guyon	24 September 2009
Frayssinet, Aimé,	Tanus (Tarn)	22 December 2008
Gineste, (Abbé)	Montauban	29 January 2009
Gourmand, Auguste,	Lyon	4 May 2009
Hérail, Mme	Lautrec (Tarn)	12 February 2009
Houselstein, Victor,	Châtel-Guyon	24 September 2009
Jaquier (General),	Châtel-Guyon	24 September 2009
Lamirand, Gilbert,	La Bourboule (Puy-de-Dôme)	14 March 2008
Lemaire, Honoré	Châtel-Guyon	24 September 2009
Libmann, Paul,	Osséja (Pyrénées Orientales)	25 February 2011
Renouard, Jean-Pierre,	Paris	12 March 2011
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Glossary

Aliyah: the immigration of Jews to Eretz Yisrael

Chantier Rural: An agricultural community. Encouraged by Vichy from the summer of 1940

Eretz Yisrael: the biblical name of the 'Holy land' used regularly by Zionists in the interwar years to refer to Palestine

Hachshara: agricultural and community 'training' centres. Several hundred Hachsharot (plural) were founded by Zionists in the Diaspora to prepare emigration to Palestine.

Halutzic: a pioneer

Kibbutz: a communal settlement in the Holy Land originally based on agriculture.

Yeshiva: a Jewish educational institute for males in which sacred texts are studied.