HAUTE-SAVOIE AT WAR: 1939-1945

A dissertation submitted for the degree of Ph.D at the University of Cambridge

by Paul Abrahams of Darwin College
This thesis examines the reaction of Haute-Savoie, a typical French department, to Vichy and the resistance movements. It argues that most of the population in this Catholic conservative department initially embraced Vichy’s ideals and was able to reconcile its support for the government’s domestic policies with its hostility to the government’s foreign policy.

Vichy’s popularity foundered, however, on policy implementation, and, in particular, the implementation of economic policy. This study examines the conflict between traditional rural localities and the Vichy state which, because of the demands of a war-time economy, was obliged to expand, in an unprecedented manner, its interference in the affairs of agricultural communities. However, this aspect of Vichy’s bureaucratic revolution in government foundered on peasant obstructionism, in part motivated by patriotism - the peasants did not want to hand over produce which they thought would be sent to the Germans - but mostly motivated by financial self-interest (profits on the parallel markets were often considerable). Vichy’s often inept meddling in local community affairs alienated the peasants who reacted by deliberately misinterpreting, subverting or even simply ignoring instructions from the centre.

The thesis demonstrates that the price paid for Vichy’s failure to harness the agricultural population was that the inhabitants of France’s largest conglomerations began to suffer deteriorating nutritional standards and mortality rates - a deterioration for which town-dwellers blamed both the peasants and the administration. This deterioration in living standards not only politically radicalised much of poorer sections of France’s urban population while at the same time undermining Vichy’s legitimacy, but also set the scene for bitter clashes between town-originating maquisards and many traditional Catholic and conservative agricultural communities.

Peasant rejection of Vichy’s administration did not necessarily result in support for the resistance movements. Those actively resisting in Haute-Savoie remained a tiny minority. Most peasants preferred not to commit themselves and resented maquisard demands often as much as Vichy’s. Although a culture of the outlaw existed in some areas where the population actively supported the resistance, in other districts the relationship quickly broke-down. In these areas, a substantial minority of peasants in rural communities, frightened by resistance violence and the possibility of a Communist seizure of power, reacted by joining Vichy’s anti-resistance Milice.

The thesis argues that after the liberation, the resistance movements were politically marginalised. This was partly caused by their pre-liberation behaviour. However, the failure of the liberation authorities to eliminate the black market and lawlessness also alienated the population. Attempts by former résistants to impose their political doctrines on peasant communities by dominating municipal councils were rejected in the elections of 1945 when the resistance candidates were often beaten or forced to compromise with pre-liberation power structures.
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Paul Abrahams.
Kuwait City, April 1991.
A people without a memory is not a free people. Dictatorships always begin by wiping from history books the accusations of the past - Francois Mitterrand.

WAR-TIME France, despite its importance in understanding both the Fourth and Fifth Republics, has been curiously neglected by historians. Many works on French history appear to stop in 1936 and then restart in 1944 at the liberation, moving on as though nothing had changed in the intervening period. Admittedly, there are plenty of books on occupation and resistance - an up to-date bibliography of the thousands of volumes on war-time France would fill several large tomes. Although some of these French studies have been impressive, the vast majority have been substantially flawed. A number have been too general, based on few contemporary sources. Others have been monographs, in some cases well-researched, but often without sufficient context to demonstrate the significance of what the authors might have uncovered. Many have simply been hagiographies of resistance heroes, or special pleadings for Vichy villains, while others have been anecdotal memoirs published well after events but without recourse to any contemporary written sources. Finally, almost all of these flawed works have been forced into and constrained by an imposed matrix of collaboration and resistance. This work is an attempt to help fill a part of a substantial void in the analysis of French history by looking at events in a single, though exceptional, department in Vichy France - Haute-Savoie.

French academics, with a few notable exceptions, appear to have avoided war-time France, or failed, on the whole, to address the subject in a way that might have been expected of French scholars who have been so masterly in their work on earlier epochs. They have preferred the equally passionate, but slightly more remote subject of the 1789 revolution, or the intricacies of the Medieval period, to that of war-time France. The research that dominates the historiography of the period is not the work of a Frenchman or woman, but an American, Robert Paxton. It is a work that was attacked on its publication by one French historian, not on historical grounds, but because of the book's alleged Francophobia.

The reason for the initial hostility to Paxton's work and the reluctance of French academics to address Vichy, is partly explained by a post-war consensus between both left and right in establishing and maintaining certain myths about Vichy and the resistance movements. Myths which, according to Robert Paxton, no French


2 For two outstanding examples, see, for example, Laborie, P., Résistants, Vichyssois et autres, Paris, 1980; Luiard, M., La région stephanoise dans la guerre et dans la paix: 1936-1951, St. Etienne, 1980.


4 Henri Michel, the leading French historian of Vichy in the 1960s, admitted that Paxton's work was 'la meilleure étude d'ensemble parue à ce jour sur l'Etat Francais,' but complained of 'un léger parfum d'hostilité à la France.' Michel, H., Review of Paxton, R.O., Vichy France: old guard and new order, in Revue d'Histoire de la Deuxième Guerre Mondiale (RHDGM), 93 (1974), p.112-117.
Introduction

political group had any interest in disturbing.\textsuperscript{5} Those politicians of the Fourth and Fifth Republics from all sections of the political spectrum who had been in the resistance had little desire to question the view of national unity described by de Gaulle in his memoirs.\textsuperscript{6} On the left, the Communists were anxious to play-down the significance of their pacifism before June 1941, while emphasising the importance of resistance, its popularity and the communist role within it. On the right, conservatives preferred to assert that Pétain had been misled by Laval, while the post-war technocrats endeavoured to distance themselves from the origins of the post-war economic planning and the undoubted bureaucratic revolution that took place under Vichy. Finally, many French men and women were anxious to maintain the myths of resistance in the post-war world, because by arguing that the resistance was a significant, popular and mainstream movement, France could claim that the country was naturally republican in a tradition dating back to 1789, that the Vichy fascist experience was an aberration, that France had been one of the Allies throughout the war, and that she had significantly contributed to her own liberation.\textsuperscript{7}

The subject has also been ignored by most French academics because it remains, even after 50 years, highly sensitive.\textsuperscript{8} The divisions between left and right, church and secular that have dominated so much of French politics since the revolution - and continue to do so - were cruelly laid bare during Vichy. Moreover, although there appeared to be brief unanimity after the liberation because of the collapse of the political right, in social terms, France emerged from the Vichy episode arguably more divided than at any period since 1789. Although the country was politically traumatised by its experiences between 1940 and 1944, it was wounded in other more fundamental ways. Not only was she riven by class divisions exacerbated by the black markets and the failure of Vichy to control the power of money, but she was also fundamentally divided between town-country lines. This mutual antagonism between the urban factory-worker and rural peasant was nothing new in French society, but by 1944 had reached a new low.

The social and political divisions created or exacerbated by the Second World War continue to have contemporary political significance in France. The emergence of Le Pen during the late 1980s and early 1990s has reawakened the debate about the nature of racism in French society, and created disturbing echoes of Vichy’s anti-semitic policies. Meanwhile, the arrest of Paul Touvier, a former member of Vichy’s hated anti-


\textsuperscript{6} It was not without reason that the second volume of de Gaulle’s memoirs was called \textit{L’Unité}, de Gaulle, C., \textit{Mémoires de guerre: l’unité 1942-1944}, (Pion edition), Paris, 1980.


\textsuperscript{8} For an excellent discussion of the importance of Vichy’s legacy and the way in which the period has been treated in France, see: Rousso, H., \textit{Le syndrome de Vichy 1944-198...}, Paris, 1987.
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resistance force, the Milice, has posed difficult questions for the French Catholic Church about its activities during the occupation and in protecting former Miliciens after the liberation. Even the vocabulary of Vichy remains taboo. There was outrage when one of the French presidential candidates in 1989, Raymond Barre, briefly used the former Vichy slogan Travailler, Famille, Patrie during the campaign, even though there is not a single French party that did not support those values. Given the political significance of Vichy and the depth of antagonism within French society after the liberation, it is hardly surprising that many French academics have avoided the period because it is simply too hot to handle.

This work is not intended to be a history of resistance movements in France, although it is hoped that those readers interested in resistance and its motivation may be offered some sort of insight as to the context in which such movements had to operate.9 Debate about whether France was a nation of resisters or a nation of collaborators has often been intensely nationalistic,10 is frequently linked to its significance to post-war politics, and is often redundant. A matrix of collaboration and resistance distorts what happened between the debacle in 1940 and the liberation in 1944, and continues to distract historians from other significant themes during the period. By focusing on resistance and collaboration, historians have ignored the preoccupations of the vast majority of the population which was not involved militarily on either side - preoccupations which were dominated by the need to find food, heating and shelter. The resistance did have a significant role in the shaping of post-war France; but so too did these social and economic forces, without which, incidentally, the phenomenon of resistance can not be fully understood.

Nor is this work a general study of all aspects of the implementation of Vichy policy. Even within the confines of a departmental case-study such a task would prove almost impossible because of pressures of space as well as the difficulties of archives which remain unavailable. This thesis does not set out to address certain important aspects of Vichy France. For example, it does not attempt to tackle the implementation of Vichy’s educational and youth policies. Nor does it examine Vichy’s relationship with the Haut-Savoyard urban working class in any detail. Nor are the complexities of gender issues and the sexual division of labour studied to any great depth.

Rather, this study will examine the conflict between traditional rural localities and the Vichy state which, because of the demands of a war-time economy, was obliged to expand its interference in the affairs of agricultural communities. It will argue that in spite of its hated policy of collaboration with the Germans, the

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9 For details about the best of the many accounts of the military aspects of the resistance in Haute-Savoie see the bibliography. There is an excellent study about clandestine crossings into Switzerland by Odile Munos: Munos, O., 'Les passages clandestins entre la Haute-Savoie et la Suisse pendant la Seconde Guerre Mondiale' (unpublished mémoire, séminaire d’histoire contemporaine, religions, mentalités, sociétés, Grenoble, 1984.)

10 Such nationalist debates can prove distinctly sterile. Anglo-American historians are also prone to being drawn into these arguments, often adopting one country and triumphing over others. The author has attended a conference on Italian resistance at which one Anglo-saxon historian announced that a higher proportion of the Italian population resisted than French. Given the problems of defining resistance, an observer is inclined to question the importance or significance of such information.
Introduction

Vichy government and its values were initially extremely popular in Haute-Savoie. However, the increasing requirements for the government to supply food for the cities forced the administration, in an unprecedented manner, to become involved in the peasants' financial businesses. This often inept meddling in local community affairs alienated the peasants who reacted by deliberately misinterpreting, subverting or even simply ignoring instructions from the centre. The thesis will show that the price paid for Vichy's failure to harness the agricultural population was that the inhabitants of France's largest conglomerations began to suffer deteriorating nutritional standards and mortality rates - a deterioration for which the town-dwellers blamed both the peasants and the administration. This deterioration in living standards not only politically radicalised much of poorer sections of France's urban population while at the same time undermining Vichy's legitimacy, but also set the scene for bitter clashes between town-originating maquisards and many traditional Catholic and conservative agricultural communities. A substantial proportion of peasants in these rural communities became frightened about a possible Communist seizure of power and reacted to the increasing demands and violence of the maquisards by joining the anti-resistance Milice. After the liberation in August 1944, the attempts by former résistants to impose their political doctrines on the peasant communities by dominating the municipal councils were rejected in the elections of 1945 when the resistance candidates were often beaten or forced to compromise with pre-liberation power structures. The thesis will conclude that, as is probably the case in other controlled economies, centralising political power remained impotent when confronted by basic human instinct to survive and prosper economically.

The extent of the study has been limited geographically to a single department - Haute-Savoie. Although the population of the department, which varied during the war between 240,000 and 284,000, represented little more than one half of one per cent of the country's total population, the study is justified by the difficulties in generalising about war-time France, despite the numerous attempts to do so.

France was divided by the vagaries of the Second World War into many more than Caesar's three parts. In 1940, there were seven discrete zones in France, including the north (occupied) zone, the south (non-occupied or free) zone, the reserved zone in the north east, the forbidden zone in the north,12 together with the area around Arras which was administered by the military authorities in Brussels. In addition, Alsace and Lorraine were annexed by the Germans, and a small area on the Italian frontier occupied by the Italians. Even before November 1942 when Axis forces occupied the whole of France, each of these areas had widely differing experiences. After this date, there were significant differences in the experiences of departments such as Haute-

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11 The work will also demonstrate that the traditional framework for studying opinion during the Vichy period - that of a fundamental shift in opinion from 1940, when France was predominantly Pétainist, to 1944 when the population was Gaulist and pro-resistance - inadequately reflects the complexity of opinion during this period. See, for example, Sweets, who writes, 'The crucial factor for the Resistance in France was a dramatic shift in public opinion from 1940 when it was predominantly Pétainist to 1944, when it had become clearly Gaulist and pro-resistance.' Sweets, J.F., The Politics of Resistance, Illinois, 1978, p.18.

Introduction

Savoie which were occupied by the Italians before the Germans arrived in September 1943, and those departments to the west of the River Rhône occupied by the Germans from November 1942 onwards. Furthermore, each region and department, often with its own political and social traditions, underwent widely different social and economic conditions. Within the departments themselves there were considerable variations in experiences - not least, the countryside fared better than the towns. And even the rural population experienced diverse conditions. Those living in areas with monoculture - particularly those dependent upon the wine industry - suffered considerably, while other regions, with a more varied agricultural tradition found themselves relatively privileged. Although there have been a number of notable departmental and regional case-studies, the diversity of experience in France suggests that not enough have yet been completed to compile an acceptable synthesis addressing the implementation of Vichy policy in the localities.

Nevertheless, although the thesis examines political behaviour in only a single department, given other comparable sources in other parts of the Zone Libre, the picture painted - notwithstanding the peculiarities of Haut-Savoyard society - has a relevance beyond the physical boundaries imposed on the thesis. There are, moreover, considerable benefits to be reaped from the more profound analysis allowed by a departmental study.

The choice of Haute-Savoie can be justified on two levels. The department is significant because its population appeared to experience such a fundamental switch in opinion in the four years after 1940. Immediately after the Armistice, there were probably few departments which felt more affinity towards Vichy than Haute-Savoie. This conservative and catholic department provided the Vichy government with one of the most impressive examples of the Légion des Anciens Combattants, the newly formed veterans' association which was to form the vanguard of the administration's National Revolution. The welcome given in September 1941 to Marshal Pétain, the French head of state, was almost unanimous in its enthusiasm. Yet within three years Haute-Savoie


was being feted by the BBC as one of three regions of Europe resisting the German occupier. During the autumn of 1943, the Vichy administration itself described the department as one of the most insecure in France, and by January 1944 had introduced a state of siege, targeting the department as the first sector where it wanted to destroy the maquis. It was on the Plateau de Glières situated to the east of Annecy, the departmental capital, that the resistance movements made their first, and highly unsuccessful, attempt to set up a redoubt in France. Even so, Haute-Savoie became the first department to liberate itself without the help of Allied ground forces. When de Gaulle visited the department in November 1944, he was welcomed no less enthusiastically than Pétain had been only three years before. In spite of this extraordinary apparent swing in public opinion from Pétain to de Gaulle and the resistance movements, no academic work on Haute-Savoie during Vichy has previously been completed and a gap clearly needed to be filled. Finally, the choice of the department can be justified by pointing out the department’s undoubted natural beauty and its magnificent ski stations, which the author can recommend to anyone with a passion for skiing.

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15 The other two were Greece and Yugoslavia. See: Crémieux-Brilhac, J-L. and Ben Simhon, G., 'Les propagandes radiophoniques et l'opinion publique en France 1940-1944', RHDGM, 101 (1976), p.3-18.
THE DEPARTMENT OF HAUTE-SAVOIE

Haute-Savoie is situated in the south east of France on the frontiers with Switzerland and Italy. To the north, the department is bordered by Lake Geneva, while to the south is the neighbouring department of Savoie. Geographically, the department is divided into three main areas. The Mont Blanc massif to the east of the department, adjacent to the Italian border, dominates Haute-Savoie although it covers only 10 per cent of the department. The area contains France's highest mountain at 4,248m. To the west of Mont Blanc massif are the prealps which are heavily eroded by both glaciers and water, but nevertheless contain some substantial mountainous areas over 2,000m. These make up about 50 per cent of the surface of the department and include the Haut-Chablais, south of Lake Geneva, the Giffre situated to the north of Cluses and the Borne, to the east of Annecy. Trees can be found on these mountains to about 1,600m. There are two main valleys in the area: the Vallée de l'Arve, running east-west from Annemasse on the Swiss border to Chamonix, and the Annecy valley running north-south. During the 1940s, communications were often hazardous above these valleys during winter months. Little permanent habitation was found above 1,200m. Finally, there are the low countries to the west of the department which lead down to the Rhône valley. This area, which includes the Bas-Chablais, the Bas-Faucigny, la Semine, the Albanais and the vallée de l'Usses, makes up about 40 per cent of the department at an average height of about 500m. It is highly fertile with a gentle climate.

In the 1940s most of the active population in the department was involved in farming. As late as 1936, about 70,900 people were still employed in agriculture out of a total active population of about 131,600. Peasants still made up the largest part of the population, even if they no longer formed the majority of Haut-Savoyards. About 93 per cent of peasants owned their own land and were heavily involved in the dairy industry producing cheese and butter, as well as fresh milk in the low-lands. The best soil was to the west of the department where farmers had market gardens and vineyards. In the more mountainous areas, the geography dominated habitation patterns and agricultural practices. On south facing slopes were homes and most of the agricultural land, while on the north facing slopes, some of which receive hardly any sunlight during winter months, there were summer pastures and forests.

Haute-Savoie was one of the least urbanised departments in France during the 1940s. In 1936, at the last census before the war, the largest town was Annecy, with a population of only 20,965. The next largest town was Thonon on the shores

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2 Known in France as Lac Léman.


HAUTE-SAVOIE: 1936-45

Land over 1,000 metres
Haute-Savoie

of Lake Geneva with only 8,865 inhabitants. There were only nine agglomerations with a population above 2,000. Only 32,590 of the 131,600 people in the active population were employed in industry in 1936. Of these, about 20,000 were in heavy industry, and the remaining 12,000 were artisans. The heavy industry was concentrated in the principal valleys, and in particular the Vallée de l'Arve between Bonneville and Chedde, an area renowned for its precision engineering. Not all of those employed in industry worked in factories full-time. Many were peasants who continued to till smallholdings in the valleys.

Administratively, the department was divided into 315 communes, 28 cantons and four arrondissements whose capitals were Annecy, St. Julien, Thonon and Bonneville.

Politically, the department was intensely conservative. Early during the Third Republic, this was not reflected in election results, when right-wing candidates tended to receive few votes because of their royalist leanings. Haute-Savoie only became part of France in 1860 when it was annexed together with the department of Savoie and the area around Nice on the Côte d'Azur, following a referendum. Previously, it had belonged to the Kingdom of Savoy, and as a result the department was, on the whole, republican with little sympathy for either of the royalist movements. Consequently, during the early Third Republican elections, the department chose moderate radical deputies, rejecting the Bonapartist and royalist right-wing candidates. After the First World War, however, right-wing republican candidates appeared who were able to appeal to anti-communist Catholic sentiments. In the post-war elections, all four deputies were from the right-wing list which won 50 per cent of the votes. The left-wing list, excluding the socialists and communists, won only 22 per cent of the vote. By 1928, there was a further movement to the right, with all four right-wing candidates coming first in their constituencies in the first round of voting. By 1936, Haute-Savoie was one of the few departments in France to reject the Popular Front by registering fewer votes to the left than previously. The right-wing candidates reaped the rewards of painting the popular front as serving the interests of the Parti Communiste Français (PCF), and highlighting the dangers of Communism which they argued, were all too apparent in Spain where the civil war had just begun.

5 They were Annecy, Annemasse, Cluses, Evian-les-Bains, La Roche-sur-Foron, Rumilly, Sallanches, Thonon and Chamonix. Raymond, J., La Haute-Savoie sous la IIIe République, 2 Vols, Seyssel, 1983, II, p.510.

6 All of the candidates from the political right in the 1876 elections were monarchist or Bonapartist. They all lost. The best result of a royalist was that of the Baron d'Yvoire who received 12,915 votes. Raymond, J., La Haute-Savoie sous la IIIe République, 2 Vols, Seyssel, 1983, II, p.1027, n.1.

7 Admittedly, the socialist candidate, Dr Amédée Guy, was elected in Bonneville, but only by a margin of only 134 in the second round of the election. The right-wing candidate had only missed winning the vote outright in the first election by 248 votes. Dr Guy was one of the 80 deputies who refused to vote full powers for Pétain in July 1940. Raymond, J., La Haute-Savoie sous la IIIe République, 2 Vols, Seyssel, 1983, II, p.960-1; 1101-2.

the last election before the war, the right confirmed its domination of Haut-Savoyard politics: at the elections for the Conseil Général and the Conseil d'Arrondissement in October 1937, the right-wing Entente Républicain won 50 per cent of the vote, Radical-socialists 25 per cent, and the Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière (SFIO) 17 per cent while the PCF won only 8 per cent.

One of the reasons for the strength of the right in Haute-Savoie was that it remained one of the most religious departments in France. Catholicism was overwhelmingly the dominant faith, and in agricultural communities, the Catholic Church represented the most potent political force. The strength of that faith can be seen in the results of a study conducted by the diocese in 1957 which showed remarkable rates of attendance at Sunday mass and at Easter. As late as the 1950s, female attendance at Sunday mass was above 44 per cent in all but four cantons in low-land areas to the west of the department (Douvaine, Annemasse, Bonneville and Alby). In cantons such as Cruseilles, Thônes, Le Biot, Abondance and Evian the rate was above 75 per cent. Attendance rates of men were also high. Only three cantons registered rates under 25 per cent, and nine were over 44 per cent, including the canton of Thônes where more than 94 per cent of the male population still attended mass on Sundays. Another indication of the strength of Catholicism in the department was the large number of Haut-Savoyards who chose to take up a vocation in the priesthood. The department not only had little trouble recruiting priests locally, but was also a net exporter. Between 1860 and 1914 alone, 886 priests were ordained in the department, of whom 240 went to other dioceses and 266 became missionaries overseas. Catholicism was strongest in rural communities in the department and it was from peasant families in these areas that most of the priests came.

9 St François de Sales, who was to become the patron saint of the légion, had been responsible during the Counter-Reformation for dealing with the Protestantism which had seeped into the area from neighbouring Calvinist Geneva. One historian of the III Republic has argued that the department was a 'milieu déjà profondément catholique.' Raymond, J., La Haute-Savoie sous la IIIe République, 2 Vols, Seyssel, 1983, II, p.908.

10 Enquête diocésaine de sociologie religieuse de 1956-57, Annecy, 1957.

11 All three, St Gervais, Bonneville and Annemasse, were in the Vallée de l'Arve.

12 Most of these nine were concentrated in the Chablais. See map 3 based on maps in Callot, E-F., 'Géographie et sociologie électorale du département de la Haute-Savoie de 1956 à 1968', (Unpublished thesis for diplôme supérieur de recherches et d'études politiques, Paris, Science Politiques, 1969.) Attendance in the town of Annecy was studied separately from the canton of Annecy-Nord, and has been excluded for these figures.


14 See maps 3 and 4, based on maps in Callot, E-F., 'Géographie et sociologie électorale du département de la Haute-Savoie de 1956 à 1968' (Unpublished thesis for diplôme supérieur de recherches et d'études politiques, Paris, Science Politique, 1969.) It was into these traditional tight-knit Catholic communities that réfractaires from the towns would later need to seek shelter.
The Catholic Church was not only numerically strong in the department - it was also well organised and tightly integrated into the community through its involvement in social and welfare activities. In particular, the bishop of Annecy, Mgr. Florent-Michel-Marie du Bois de la Villerabel, encouraged the Church's involvement in both education and youth movements. By 1939, the Church still ran about 890 confessional schools in the department, and encouraged parents not to send their children to any of the 825-odd lay schools funded by the state. By the war, about 200 of the 315 communes in the department had branches of the Association Catholique de la Jeunesse Française (ACJF). With a membership of about 10,000, almost all of whom were peasants, the ACJF had substantial influence in the department. Its first president was François de Menthon, who was later to become a significant figure in the resistance.

Given the strength of Catholic religiosity in the department and the highly developed nature of the Church's activities, it is hardly surprising that the political influence of the Catholic Church in Haute-Savoie was considerable. Most of the priests in the department - about 73 per cent - had parents who had been peasants. These were men who understood the preoccupations of their flock and could hold considerable influence over it. Some parish priests became directly involved in pre-war politics, and there were accusations that on occasions some refused to give absolution to those who did not vote to the right. Many future deputies, such as François de Menthon, Charles Bosson, Pierre Mouchet, Louis

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15 See, for example, the importance of the Catholic Church in organising bands and fetes in the department: Barbier, C., 'Fanfares et Chorales en Haute-Savoie entre 1860 et 1940: le rôle de l'Eglise', in Vie Religieuse en Savoie: Mentalités - Associations (Actes du XXXIe Congrès des Sociétés Savantes de Savoie, 13-14 septembre 1986,) Annecy, 1988, p.17-23.

16 In 1903, the curé of La Clusaz refused to give absolution to parents sending children to lay schools. Raymond, J., La Haute-Savoie sous la IIe République, 2 Vols, Seyssel, 1983, II, p.890.

17 The ACJF was made up after 1935 by the Jeunesse Agricole Catholique (JAC), Jeunesse Ouvrière Catholique (JOC), Jeunesse Etudiante Catholique (JEC) and Jeunesse Indépendante Catholique (JIC).


20 The Prefect reported examples of this at Dingy St. Clair (Annecy-nord) and La Clusaz (Thônes) in 1902 and 1903. Quoted in Raymond, J., La Haute-Savoie sous la IIe République, 2 Vols, Seyssel, 1983, II, p.994, n.1.
HAUTE-SAVOIE: female attendance of Sunday Mass


Legend:
- 0-24%
- 25-44%
- 45-74%
- 75-100%
- Agglomeration D'Annecy
Haute-Savoie

Martel and Joseph Philippe were former members of the ACJF.

One further explanation of the conservative nature of pre-war Haut-Savoyard politics was the absence of an urban working class of any size which would have allowed the unions and left-wing parties to organise effectively within the department. The number of people employed in industry was not substantial. Moreover, not all salaried workers in the department worked in the towns for large employers. Justinien Raymond has estimated that a significant proportion of workers lived in small towns or even in rural communes and maintained close links with the countryside. As a result, syndicalism was slow to develop in the department. In 1930, there were 28 unions in Haute-Savoie with only 1,369 members. Most of the activity that existed was based in Annecy or in the vallée de l'Arve around Cluses, where there was a riot in 1904 leading to three deaths. What little activism that existed was ham-strung by the split between the Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT) and the communist-led Confédération Générale du Travail Unitaire (CGTU). The unions were further constrained in the pre-war period by increasing pressure from the Jocists (members of the Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne, JOC), organised by the Catholic Church. The result of the union's weakness was that the passion caused during 1936 by the Popular Front elsewhere in France hardly created a ripple in the department.

A reflection of the small urban working class in the department and the failure of the unions to organise themselves effectively was the consistently poor showing of the socialist and communist parties. On the left, the radicals were the dominant force, although in 1936, a socialist, Dr Amédée Guy was elected as deputy for Bonneville after the radical candidate stood down for the second round. The PCF was particularly weak. Its newspaper, the Travailleur Savoyard, had only 1,032 subscribers in 1922, most of whom were in Annecy. The weakness of the party's infrastructure - it had 260-odd members in 1934 - was reflected in its results at the 1936 elections, when it managed to assemble only 5,997 votes - about 7.5 per cent of votes cast. The following year, in elections for the Conseil Général, the party won 8 per cent of the vote.

Given the department's catholicism, conservatism and anti-communism, Haute-Savoie should have been ideal terrain for the seeds of Vichy's National Revolution to take hold.

HAUTE-SAVOIE: male attendance of Sunday Mass

PART ONE: UPHEAVAL
CHAPTER 1: THE PHONEY WAR AND DEBACLE

IT SHOULD come as no surprise that the population of Haute-Savoie fervently embraced the Vichy regime. A prime cause of that fervour was the trauma created by the rapidity of the defeat between May and June 1940.

Haute-Savoie, like much of France, had not been prepared psychologically for war. The declaration of war in September 1939 created little enthusiasm in the department.\(^1\) It had suffered heavy casualties during the First World War during which more than 10,000 men had been reported dead or missing.\(^2\) Each village had its monuments aux morts to remind the population of the horrors of war, and the authorities were aware that pacifism existed in both rural and urban areas, particularly among veterans. Although it is probable that the progressive demands of Hitler will have had an effect on opinion in Haute-Savoie, as it did elsewhere,\(^3\) pacifism probably retained many adherents. As late as September 1939, it was reported that workers at the SRO ball-bearing factory in Annecy were still strongly pacifist.\(^4\)

If there was little enthusiasm for the war among the peasants, it was welcomed no more spontaneously in the more privileged sections of society. Many feared that the conflict would exacerbate the social divisions which had been so obviously demonstrated during the Popular Front, and, that if France was defeated there would be a risk of social disorder, and even a possibility of civil war similar to that after the Franco-Prussian conflict. Events in Spain during the previous three years had demonstrated both the appalling levels of violence in civil

\(^1\) There are a number of difficulties in trying to piece together the state of opinion between the outbreak of war in September 1939 and the debacle during the summer of 1940. Although the Italians made little progress over the Alps after their opportunistic declaration of war on 10 June 1940, German troops from the north almost did reach the department's borders. The panic created by this advance forced the prefecture to burn a number of ciphers as well as a large quantity of confidential documents and dossiers. See: Prefect's report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 22 August 1940; the reports of the contrôlé postal in the prefecture were also burnt. In September, the cabinet asked for another copy of a report on 11 June sent by A., the departmental archivist who had been appointed both director of the centre départemental d'information and the prefect's representative on the commission de Contrôle Postal d'Annecy's report: undated handwritten note, Annecy, A.D., 1 M 108. However, the private notes and reports of A., provide a useful, if inevitably impressionistic picture of opinion in the department.

\(^2\) The population of the department in the census of 1911 was 255,137: Miquet, F., 'Les morts de la Grande Guerre en Haute-Savoie', Revue Savoisienne, 64 (1923), p.21-36.

\(^3\) See polls carried out by IFOP suggesting that in October 1938 57% of Frenchmen supported Munich, and that by July 1939, less than 20% would not be willing to fight for Danzig: quoted in, Laborie, P., Résistants, Vichysois et autres, Paris, 1980, p.62.

\(^4\) Report by B. to A., directeur du centre départemental d'information, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 337, 30 October 1940.
conflicts and the capacity of modern warfare for destruction. This spectre of civil war also haunted the government. The most important role of the Renseignements Généraux, the French internal security service, was to maintain lists of communists in the department who were to be rounded up if there was any sign of trouble. These fears were reflected in the letters intercepted by the Contrôle Postal. As early as September 1939 the service quoted extracts expressing concern about the ‘conséquence sociales’ if the war continued for any length of time.

If the declaration of hostilities in August 1914 had been met with ‘une morne stupeur’, as one report from Metz claimed, it was little wonder that the start of the Second World War in 1939 created still less enthusiasm. As hostilities began A... reported, ‘on accepte la guerre, mais sans enthousiasme.’ The following month he reported that morale was good, noting,

Comme éléments d’encouragement: la conduite prudente des hostilités du côté français, la légèreté des pertes en général et aussi le fait que jusqu’à présent, les unités du recrutement régional ne paraissent pas avoir participé aux opérations actives.

As the phoney war continued so the main preoccupation of the civilian population appeared to move from concern about the hostilities to day-to-day material problems and, in particular, the problems of obtaining enough to eat. Prices had begun to rise steeply even before September 1939. By December, A... reported that, ‘la hausse des prix, qui s’est accentuée pendant le mois de décembre engendre fatalement de la mauvaise humeur.’ Nearly all the correspondence intercepted by the Contrôle Postal made allusions to the difficulties.
The phoney war and the debacle

of finding food or finding the money to be able to pay for it. In January, A... reported that prices of essential foods had risen 'de façon chocante', commenting, 'la hausse des prix est beaucoup plus difficilement supportés par la population que ne le serait une politique de rationnement, avec répartition égale du denrées entre tous, selon les besoins de chacun.' As those with capital began to stockpile, so shortages of coffee, oil, soap, rice and sugar began to be reported. Demands for rationing became persistent: A... wrote, 'd'une façon générale les gens sont surtout effrayés de l'augmentation du coût de la vie, et préféreraient être rationnés et payer moins cher.' He also noted the bitterness ('amertume') caused by repeated promises in the press that prices would not go up.

These complaints about the press were part of a general disillusionment with the French media during the first year of the war. The newspapers contained little information and were so tightly censored that most Haut-Savoyards turned to the radio for their news. Although Frenchmen tuned in increasing numbers to the radio for their news, they did not tune to Radio Paris - French radio was as uninformative as the newspapers. The withdrawal from Norway, where the Chasseurs Alpins from Haute-Savoie were fighting, came as an immense shock to the population which blamed the Ministry of Information for not warning that the campaign was not progressing as had been expected. Instead of tuning to French stations, the population turned to foreign stations: the BBC, Radio Sottens, Radio Stuttgart, and even stations in Italy. These foreign stations were popular not because of any political allegiance, but rather because they either provided more adequate news coverage, or were easier to find on the wireless. Most of all, it was the failure of the home stations to keep the population informed that forced it elsewhere. It was Radio Stuttgart, in particular


14 Ibid.; also in February and March.

15 Report of A..., as the prefect's representative on the Contrôle Postal d'Annecy, Annecy, A.D., 1 M 108, 20 February 1940.

16 Production of radios at the factory of Ets E. Roch in Annecy increased by 70 per cent between 1938 and January 1942. See report of the Chambre Industrielle Haut-Savoyarde: Annecy, A.D., 12 W 9, 15 January 1942.

17 The increasing influence of the BBC was not confined to Haute-Savoie. See for example in the Lot: Laborie, P., Résistants, Vichysois et autres, Paris, 1980, p.81.
The phoney war and the debacle

that profited: on 5 June A... noted, 'quant au poste de Stuttgart, il semble malheureusement très écouté: les résultats de l'audition sont évidemment très mauvais.'18 A week later, as the German advance moved closer to Haute-Savoie and as opinion became increasingly disorientated, German propaganda reached a population ready to believe the wildest of rumours: the scale of success of German propaganda was such that A... reported some villages as being 'terrorisé' by Stuttgart's programmes.19 The success of foreign stations was not limited to Haute-Savoie. They were listened to throughout France.20 Joseph Goebbels was not exaggerating when he said that German radio had created a psychological Sedan.21

As the Germans swept across France, opinion became increasingly disorientated. Morale fluctuated wildly, swinging at one moment from unjustified optimism to the deepest pessimism, the next. On 19 May, nine days after the launch of the German offensive, opinion was already becoming unstable in Haute-Savoie, as rumours of spies and parachutists ran through the department. Defeatism became widespread: an intercepted letter from Cranves-Sales (Annemasse) read, 'il souffle en ce moment un vent de défaite extraordinaire. Pour un bobard lancé... tout le monde est pris de panique. A Annemasse tout le monde fait sa valise et la contagion monte jusqu'à Cranves.'22 A... was aware that morale had suffered initially, but believed,

Les dépressions consécutives aux douloureux événements récents: perte d'Amiens et Arras, trahison de Léopold III, n'ont pas duré. Dans l'ensemble le moral est excellent; haine profonde de l'ennemi, contre les traîtres. Ni défaite, ni lassitude.23

The population was ready to seize at straws. The arrival of Mandel, Weygand and Pétain brought immediate new hope and resulted in 'lettres enthousiastes.'24 A... quoted an intercepted letter from Annecy which read, 'Je suis un de ces vieux patriotes convaincus, j'ai foi en la victoire de la France, et je crois à l'écrasement de

19 Handwritten note, A.D., Annecy, 1 M 108, 12 June 1940.
22 Quoted by A..., Annecy, A.D., 1 M 108, 5 June 1940.
The phoney war and the debacle

As late as 12 June, five days before Pétain announced that it was necessary to seek an Armistice, A... wrote,

La gravité de la situation présente de la France n’a pas ébranlé la confiance de la population dans la victoire finale. Mais chacun mesure avec douleur l’étendue des sacrifices consentis et à consentir, en hommes, en biens, en ressources. Devant les successives désillusions du passage de la Meuse par l’ennemi, de l’occupation du nord de la France et des ports de la Manche, de la trahison de Léopold, l’opinion, un instant désorientée, s’est ressaisie vite.

Two days later, on 14 June, A... made one entry: ‘panique générale.’ Morale in Haute-Savoie, which had been increasingly erratic, collapsed. That collapse was made all the more profound by the belief that had existed right up to the end that France and the Allies would win. The end, when it came, came quickly. On 10 June, Italy declared war, causing ‘un immense dégoût’ among Savoyards. The prefecture had already lost contact with Paris in late May, and its last means of communications outside the department were broken on 12 June. As the Germans approached, the Headquarters of the Secteur Défensif du Rhône left Annecy, leaving behind large supplies of petrol. The prefect, Lucien Condor, complained bitterly,

Il semble qu’une grande confusion dans le commandement se soit produite [...] Ces désordres ayant été directement observés par la population annécienne, calme et ordonnée, le retour des États-Majors et des officiers 48 heures après l’armistice, a suscité un malaise profond.

Some Haut-Savoys fled with the army and joined the exodus. As the terms of the Armistice were finally being agreed, German troops arrived in Haute-Savoie, occupying Rumilly and the neighbouring cantons before

25 Quoted by A..., Annecy, A.D., 1 M 108, 5 June 1940.

26 Handwritten note, Annecy, A.D., 1 M 108, 12 June 1940. The full extent of the debacle had not sunk in: A... also noted: ‘les récents événements ont anéanti tout espoir d’une saison d’été pour l’industrie hôtelière du département.’

27 Handwritten note, Annecy, A.D., 1 M 108, 14 June 1940.


29 Report of prefect, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 22 August 1940.

30 Report of prefect, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 22 August 1940.

31 On 12 June, only 65% of children attended the Lycée des Garçons in Annecy: report of A..., directeur du centre départemental d’information, Annecy, A.D., 1 M 108, 12 June 1940.
eventually pulling back behind the Rhône to take charge of the five communes on the other side of the river until 1941 (Claraфонd, Chevrier, Arcine, Vuibens, and Eloise). France was defeated. The prefect commented,

La rapidité et l’ampleur de la défaite transportant notamment le combat sur le territoire même du département ne pouvaient valoir aux populations savoyardes que la plus douloureuse des déceptions.\textsuperscript{32}

\textsuperscript{32} Report of prefect, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 22 August 1940.
CHAPTER 2: THE TRIUMPH OF VICHY

GIVEN the rapidity and shock of France's defeat, it was hardly surprising that the Government which eventually installed itself in Vichy was not unpopular. There appeared to be little lamentation about the end of the Third Republic. The defeat of the summer of 1940 seemed to have completely undermined Republican Government in France: indeed the democratic system and its endless party politics were viewed as among the main causes for the collapse of the French armies. It was argued that France had lost the war not only on the field of battle - but also during the years of misgovernment in the 1930s. In an editorial, Luc Durtain explained in *Le Figaro*, 'Le jeu des multiples partis s'en réclamant, aboutissait à une division paralysante.' The result was, as André Rousseaux wrote, that France was, 'enervé[e] par la démocratie.' He argued that under the Third Republic France had been undermined morally as well as politically. Shortly after the debacle, the Bishop of Clermont explained,

L'état d'infortune où se trouve notre patrie... est l'aboutissement d'une longue suite de fautes et de revers... Le déclin des principes traditionnels, le manque de foi la préparaient... Quand je dis foi, j'entends l'adhésion de la sensibilité, l'attachement individuel à certaines valeurs morales, même d'essence terrestre.

André Billy was more blunt: 'chacun de nous est, pour sa propre part, responsable de ce qui s'est passé.'

In Haute-Savoie, the period of self-introspection caused by the defeat prevented any serious reaction to the disappearance of republican government. Given the strength of Catholicism in the department, it was not surprising that, in some circles the end of the Republic was welcomed. A correspondent of A... the chef du office départemental d'information, based in Thônes, the chef-lieu of a typical and traditionally catholic valley, wrote, 'avec une malicieuse satisfaction la disparition du Sénat et de la Chambre est approuvée. La non convocation des Conseils Généraux est passé presque inaperçue.' This attitude towards the Third Republic seemed to be confirmed by A... who wrote, 'indifférence absolue pour le monde parlementaire et même pour les conseillers généraux.' The anonymous report from Thônes continued:

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1 *Le Figaro*, 11 September 1940.
2 *Le Figaro*, 3 December 1941.
3 Quoted in *Le Figaro*, 4 July 1940.
4 *Le Figaro*, 5 July 1940.
5 Anonymous report from Thônes to A..., Annecy, A.D., 12 W 337, 7 September 1940.
6 Handwritten report of A..., Annecy, A.D., 12 W 337, undated, probably October or November.
The triumph of Vichy

Les récoltes étant bonnes et les greniers étant abondamment garnis, il s'en suit que le moral de la population, presque exclusivement terrienne, est très favorablement influencé. Une incidence semblable peut être attribuée aux mesures prises par le Gouvernement en matière confessionnelle, car les habitants de ce centre sont pour la quasi unanimité catholiques pratiquants très convaincus. L'action governmentale régissant contre une politique qui avait froissé les convictions n'a donc pu être que très appréciée et cela aussi bien aux champs qu'à l'usine.7

The same correspondent concluded:

Il est donc logique que dans notre région les dirigeants de l'Etat Nouveau soient sans conteste, unanimement approuvés. Très rares sont ceux qui le critiquent. J'ai pu voir des revirements extraordinaires d'opinions qui ont été provoqués par le déroulement des événements. Les seules critiques entendues (et elles sont rares) sont relatives à la position prise vis à vis de l'Allemagne.8

Although the Popular Front had not enjoyed mass support in the department - Haute-Savoie was one of the few which actually moved to the right in 1936 - the traditional right there does not seem to have used the installation of the Vichy Government to take revenge against the working class for the events of 1936.9 In his first report after the debacle, A... argued that the clergy in the department was not taking advantage of the situation. The priests were, he wrote, appealing to the faithful for the moral reconstruction of the country. He continued: 'Ils ne témoignent d'aucun esprit aggressif contre leurs anciens adversaires, n'essayant pas, dans les campagnes, de lutter contre les instituteurs.'10 He added,

D'une façon générale, la politique du Gouvernement continue à rencontrer l'adhésion sincère des agriculteurs de ce département... Milieux politiques: toujours une réserve calculée de la part du personnel d'anciens partis politiques, déçu de l'indifférence profonde du public à l'égard de la suspension de la vie parlementaire.11

7 Anonymous report from Thônes to A..., Annecy, A.D., 12 W 337, 7 September 1940.
8 Ibid.
9 If it did, it failed to leave any traces in the departmental archives.
The triumph of Vichy

If the regime was fully accepted by rural Savoyards, among the small number of workers in the valleys where the Catholic church had less of a hold and there was a stronger left-wing tradition, the situation was rather different. Although, B... in Annecy, reported to A... that syndicalism was more or less dead, others believed that the workers were far from seduced by the new regime. Possibly reflecting the expectation of urban revolution in Catholic circles, l'abbé G... wrote,

Mentalité des milieux ouvriers d'après rapports des JOC: indifférence absolue pour l'oeuvre du Gouvernement: 'les curés et la droite ; ils ont leur revanche du Front Populaire, obtenue par la guerre, voulue de concert avec le Pape!'... Pierre Laval est 'déstesté.' On ne dit rien contre le Maréchal, mais on est persuadé que d'autres agissent à sa place.

These suspicions were partly confirmed by an anonymous report in September 1940 from St. Gervais-les-Bains, at the end of the Vallée de l'Arve, which was one of the most industrialised areas of the department. The report hinted of trouble to come: 'Je crois pouvoir enregistrer maintenant un peu d'indifférence et même du scepticisme.' Among the bourgeois, the situation was far simpler, reported B..., 'Peur de révolution. Désir de l'ordre - à cause de ça grande majorité pour Pétain.'

The lack of distress about the end of the republican and democratic system among the predominantly rural and bourgeois population was assisted by the considerable enthusiasm that existed for the aims and principles of the regime and the Revolution National. In September 1940, the sous-préfet for Thonon reported candidly, 'Les mesures prises par le Gouvernement en politique ont été approuvées presque toutes' though he admitted, 'celles relatives à la politique extérieure ont recueilli moins de suffrages.' The Prefect confirmed this view, stressing the popularity of the new government in rural areas,

12 Vichy appears to have been most popular among agricultural communities in France. See for example the situation in the Hérault where Roger Austin argues that Vichy's credibility was far greater in the countryside than in urban areas. Austin, R.S.P., 'The Education and Youth policies of the Vichy Government in the Department of the Hérault, 1940-1944' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Manchester, 1981), p.330-1.

13 Report by l'abbé G. to A..., Annecy, A.D., 12 W 337, 22 October 1940; B... repeated the belief that it was a government of the Right and of the clergy: report by B... to A..., Annecy, A.D., 12 W 337, 30 October 1940.

14 Anonymous report from St. Gervais-les-Bains, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 337, 9 September 1940.

15 Report of B... to A..., Annecy, A.D., 12 W 337, 30 October 1940.

The triumph of Vichy

Mcs contacts personnels avec les représentants qualifiés de la paysannerie savoyarde m'ont convaincu de l'extrême attention avec laquelle nos paysans suivent les efforts que le Gouvernement déploie en leur faveur: organisation de la profession, équipement rural, amélioration de l'habitat (plus de 2,000 demandes dans mon département), remembrement foncier, artisanat, développement des propriétés paysannes et familiales, etc... La paysannerie comprend que la place de choix qui lui reviendra dans l'ordre nouveau lui crée dès à présent d'impérieux devoirs.17

A nationwide package for the peasants worth 46 billion francs announced by the Government in August 1940 also brought significant material benefits on a local level. The Prefect explained in his report that about 4,000 hectares had been drained in the communes of Machilly (Annemasse), Brens (Douvaine) and Epargny (Annecy-nord): 'Les agriculteurs intéressés, émerveillés par ce progrès auquel il ne croyaient pas, et encouragés par cette augmentation de leur patrimoine, se sont mis avec ardeur à la culture des nouveaux terrains.'18

Furthermore, other measures which might have affected peasants adversely were hardly implemented: the laws against alcoholism, including the end of the right for peasants to brew their own alcohol and gn61e (local fire water) tax-free, which the Sûreté Nationale believed would be particularly popular among women,19 were, in fact, for the most part ignored.

One of the most obvious indications of support for the Government in rural areas was the initial success of the Légion des Anciens Combattants, the movement set up by Vichy to unify the veterans associations and provide the bulwark for Pétain's National Revolution. Although, as will be demonstrated, there were later considerable problems in the organisation, the Légion in Haute-Savoie had one of the highest recruitment rates in the Zone Libre. Its creation 'a été accueillie avec une faveur particulière et dans tous les milieux,' wrote the sous-préfet of St. Julien in November 1940.20 And its weekly ceremonies around the Legion's flag-pole in each village were also well supported:21 the Contrôle Postal reported,

17 Report of Prefect, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 4 May 1941.
18 Ibid.
The triumph of Vichy

Approval de la Légion par un grand nombre de ses membres, ainsi que par des non légionnaires; confiance en elle pour le relèvement national et en particulier pour la lutte contre le communisme. Une manifestation de la Légion à Annecy, au cours de laquelle ont été hissés les couleurs, a provoqué un grand enthousiasme.22

Although the urban population was initially less enthusiastic about Vichy than the peasants in the countryside, it too benefited from a number of measures introduced by Vichy during the Spring of 1941, and as a result became more favourably disposed towards the government. The announcement which introduced the first state pensions in France created a strong impression according to the sous-préfet for Bonneville, who administered the semi-industrialised Vallée de l'Arve:

L'annonce de la retraite des vieux que le Front Populaire n'avait jamais su réaliser, a apporté dans de nombreux foyers, une lueur d'espoir et un réconfort certain. C'est le mesure gouvernementale qui a, sans conteste, rallié le plus de suffrages, et convaincu la population ouvrière de la réalité de la politique sociale du Gouvernement.23

A speech by Pétain at St. Etienne suggesting a new form of relationship between workers and factory owners also had considerable effect in creating at least the expectation of change. The sous-préfet noted that the broadcast 'a été vivement commenté, et le plus souvent, dans un sens très favorable, tant pour les patrons que pour les ouvriers.'24 On occasions, Vichy propaganda and ideals appeared successful: one intercepted letter described a scene in Lyon,

[Le] 1er mai patrons et ouvriers communiant dans le même idéal se sont amicalement réunis pour présenter leurs revendications contradictoires. C'était impressionnant de voir ce mariage de la chèvre et du loup. Nous avions connu le mariage du drapeau rouge et du tricolore; cela a mal fini... A la maison A..., le gérant a réuni son personnel, lui a fait un sermon de père de famille, ils a tous affectueusement embrassés. Il leur a dit que dès maintenant tout se partagerait entre le patron et le personnel. Bourses et pognon, chacun en toucherait, les premières pour les pensionnaires, le second pour le patron. Cela était si touchant que tous les employés pleuraient à en remplir les cuvettes.25


23 Report of sous-préfet de Bonneville, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 30 March 1941.

24 Ibid.; The sous-préfet for Thonon also noted, 'L'allocation aux ouvriers, ingénieurs et patrons, prononcée par le Maréchal à St. Etienne a été particulièrement retenue.' Report of sous-préfet de Thonon, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 30 March 1941.

The triumph of Vichy

By the first anniversary of the Armistice, Vichy could point to a number of significant achievements which gave the impression of a dynamic regime reconstructing France. The administration had been able to cope successfully with the return and feeding of the millions of refugees who had fled south during the last months of the summer campaign. This had been achieved despite the massive destruction of the communications infrastructure. Between 26 July and 15 August, nearly a million people passed through Paris. The regime could also point to measures such as the introduction of pensions, which had been introduced 24 times between 1936 and 1939 and failed each time. Pétain claimed in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* that Vichy kept its promises and even the promises of others. The atmosphere was such that Professor de Nesmes-Desmares could say, "The National Revolution has done in one year what the former failed lamentably to do in more than a century." In Haute-Savoie, the Contrôle Postal quoted one letter, 'Un an après l'armistice beaucoup font le bilan, mesurent le chemin parcouru, et disent leur foi dans le relèvement de la France.'

Yet if much of the population supported the aims and principles of the new regime, that did not mean that they necessarily supported the implementation of those policies when issued from Vichy at the centre. This implementation was dependent upon the local power structures in the periphery. Each measure was interpreted and implemented according to the interests of the localities.

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27 As many as 2,000 locomotives and 25,000 wagons were put out of service, according to François Piétri, Minister of Communications, in a speech reported in *Le Figaro*, 22 September 1940.

28 Ibid.


30 Report of Contrôle Postal d'Annecy, Annecy A.D., 12 W 257, 28 June 1941. Admittedly, after a year in power, there were also doubts about the regime. Vichy was, to some extent, a victim of its own propaganda. Its promise of national revolution created the expectation of change. There were, however, many interpretations of what that change should be: if the Government implemented measures some interests were pleased, but others were antagonised or disappointed; if the Government did not introduce policies to avoid antagonism, there were accusations that, 'la Révolution Nationale se limite à un simple verbalisme.' Report of Contrôle Postal d'Annecy, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 257, 29 May 1941.
The triumph of Vichy

The letters and telephone calls intercepted by the SCT reverberate with complaints about the implementation of policy. The Service reported in December 1941, "les principes généraux de la politique du Gouvernement sont unanimement approuvés. Toutefois, si la personnalité du Chef de l'Etat reste indiscutée, un certain mécontentement continue à se manifester sur le détail des relations politiques." The Contrôle Postal in Annecy agreed, "Principes d'ordre moral et politique du gouvernement approuvés unanimement, quelques réserves cependant sur "l'Etatisme exagéré" de certaines mesures... Les critiques s'adressent aux "métodes" et aux "exécutants". The following February, the Contrôle Postal noted succinctly, "Les critiques, qui restent très rares, visent moins les principes que les méthodes."

The extent to which Vichy was ever able to win over many of the urban workers must be questioned. Many workers had the perception that Vichy did represent the revenge of the Popular Front: an intercepted letter from Chedde (St. Gervais), explained: "Ce que l'on reproche ici au Maréchal c'est de faire une politique ramenant le parti clérical en vedette." During 1941, it was from the semi-industrialised valleys that most complaints emanated: the Contrôle Postal commented, "Enfin la révolution nationale est en marche, elle n'est qu'en son début. Mais on voit déjà des changements opérés... Malheureusement le point de vue n'est pas le même selon que l'on se trouve en haut de la montagne ou dans la plaine."

Much of the nascent opposition was centred on railway workers and customs officers who before the war had been more radicalised than many others. The sous-préfet for Bonneville, explained the reaction of the working community in his arrondissement to the announcement that the 1 May would be a holiday to celebrate national reconciliation,

L'annonce d'une manifestation du travail et de la réconciliation sociale, n'a pas été accueillie avec ferveur par la population ouvrière de mon arrondissement (Marnaz, Cluses, Scionzier, Magland). Les ouvriers se tiennent depuis la défaite sur une très grande réserve... Leur ralliement au Maréchal pourrait n'être que précaire,

31 Synthesis of reports by SCT, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 258, 5 December 1941.
34 Intercepted letter from Chedde to the Creuse dated 24 August 1941, synthesis prepared by the Service de Contrôle Technique, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 258, August 1941.
36 Report of Contrôle Téléphonique d'Annemasse, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 258, November 1941.
Admittedly, this hostile reaction was not universal. To the west of Bonneville, in the arrondissement of St. Julien, the sous-préfet reported: 'L'organisation de la journée du 1er mai a déterminé dans les milieux ouvriers des sentiments divers - les uns ont adhéré sans réserve à la formule de la Fête du Travail et de la Paix Sociale, les autres ont tendance à penser que cette journée a été "volée" aux ouvriers.'

Although it is clear that the urban population did not provide the context for Vichy's most ardent backing, in agricultural communities - which made up the vast majority of the department - the ideals and aims of the Vichy government, if not always their implementation, enjoyed widespread and often enthusiastic support.

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37 Report of sous-préfet de Bonneville, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 30 April 1941.

CHAPTER 3: PETAIN

VICHY’S initial success was helped considerably by the existence of one man - Marshal Pétain. In the autumn of 1940, the Marshal’s status as the saviour of France was uncontested. Based on that prestige existed a far from fragile consensus of support for the regime.¹

Pétain’s announcement of the 17 June, admitting that it was necessary to cease fighting was welcomed by much of the French population. The Marshal, who had a reputation for sparing soldiers’ lives during the First World War, was putting an end to a conflict which cost France 92,000 dead in five weeks and clearly appeared lost. In bringing the war to an end, he was also saving the fabric of France. Through the winter of 1940, commentators watched the bombing of London and could note that Pétain had saved Paris from a similar fate.²

Moreover, if Pétain had saved France from apparent military suicide, he also saved it from social destruction. Much of the administration fled to the south of the country during the exodus, leaving some areas of France virtually ungoverned.³ Soldiers were heard singing communist songs, such as Le Jeune Guide, and there were widespread fears about revolution.⁴ Little wonder that a year later, Wladimir d’Ormesson could write, ‘Pétain... grâce à lui, la France n’est pas tombée dans le chaos.’⁵


² Louis Rondin asked in Le Figaro, ‘les Anglais, veulent-ils faire de Londres le Verdun de la guerre aérienne?’ Le Figaro, 24 September 1941.

³ Haute-Savoie was not immune. As has been demonstrated much of the documentation in the Prefecture was destroyed. A number of fonctionnaires also fled the department, including the head of the commissaire spécial d’Annemasse who, during the exodus, went to his brother in Cahors. See Laborie, P., Résistants, Vichyssois et autres, Paris, 1980, p.149.

⁴ See for example, La Défense, ‘Je me demande, si de tout cela ne pourrait pas sortir une guerre civile, plus redoutable que celle de 1871, une révolution plus durable que celle de la Commune... Serrons-nous autour du chef et du père qui incarne aujourd’hui la France.’ Quoted in Laborie, P., Résistants, Vichyssois et autres. Paris, 1980, p.175.

⁵ Le Figaro, 28 June 1941. The sous-préfet de Roanne in the department of the Loire wrote in March 1941, that the Marshal was ‘le seul facteur de tranquillité morale et de stabilité politique de nos populations.’ Quoted in Luirard, M., La région stéphanoise dans la guerre et dans la paix: 1936-1951, St. Etienne, 1980, p.324.
The popularity of Pétain was not only based on the fact that he appeared to have saved France three times and would therefore defend French interests against the Germans. He also represented a break from the Republican past. Although he headed a government legally constituted, he was not tainted with the title of politician because of his army background.

In Haute-Savoie, Lucien Condor, the prefect, a Third Republican nominee who did remain in the department throughout the debacle, reported attitudes towards the new government and its leader. He wrote, 'une espoir sincère et tenace les [Savoyards] a animés dès que Monsieur le maréchal Pétain a pris en mains la direction du Gouvernement.' By December, his replacement, stated,

Le relèvement national est généralement considéré comme étant en bonne voie... L'approbation du Gouvernement et surtout de la personnalité de M. le Maréchal de France se manifeste fréquemment et ouvertement... Il est permis de dire en effet que l'action gouvernementale est suivie, par les uns avec un réel intérêt, par les autres avec une passion sincère.

These sentiments solidified during the winter of 1940 as echoes of the Marshal's triumphal progress filtered through to the department. His entry into Lyon, a city with 'une réputation froide', was likened by one commentator to the entry of Christ into Jerusalem and was favourably commented upon in Haute-Savoie.

The Contrôle Téléphonique stated,

L'espoir et la confiance s'expriment avec plus d'unanimité que précédemment. Les réceptions enthousiastes faites au Maréchal dans diverses villes semblent contribuer à ce renforcement de la confiance... Les risques d'émeute, de révolution, de banqueroute totale, de famine ont diminué grandement depuis six mois. Plus que jamais, le Maréchal Pétain apparaît donc l'homme 'providentiel,' le 'sauveur de la France,' le chef qui doit rallier l'adhésion de tout le pays. On le compare à Jeanne d'Arc.

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6 At Verdun, in 1917 during the mutinies and again in 1940 from Communist revolution.

7 His brief tenure of office under the Third Republic was, on the whole, quietly forgotten.

8 Report of Prefect, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 22 August 1940.

9 Lucien Condor had died in the autumn.

10 This was, moreover, after Pétain's meeting with Hitler at Montoire. Report of Prefect, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 2 December 1940.


12 Report of Prefect, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 2 December 1940.
It also stated that there was a similar reaction to the visits to Marseille and Toulon: 'De même que pour le voyage à Lyon, l'enthousiasme éclate dans toutes les lettres comme un écho de cette "réception triomphale."'13

Pétain's already substantial popularity was boosted yet further when he dismissed the unpopular Pierre Laval from the Government in December 1940.14 The sous-préfet for St. Julien reported, 'L'éloignement de M. Pierre Laval est bien accueilli, mais surtout le prestige du Maréchal sort grandi de cette période troublée de quelques heures... [les Français] avaient un chef qui commandait.'15 The depth of feeling among some Savoyards towards Pétain may be gauged from one telephone call quoted by the Contrôle Téléphonique in March 1941, 'Il représente pour moi, le Bon Dieu.'16 As for the extent of Pétain's prestige, reports from all sources during the Spring of 1941 consistently repeat the word, 'unanime' when describing attitudes to the Marshal. The report for April prepared by the Contrôle Postal d'Annecy was typical of its kind,

Confiance dans le Maréchal: elle est unanime. Le Maréchal n'est plus discuté par personne. Les derniers événements ont apporté à ceux qui hésitaient à se rallier à lui, la preuve de sa fermeté, de son patriotisme, et de son désintéressement absolu: Pétain a tenu bon, et a eu raison.17

Although concerns about some aspects of Government policy, and in particular, collaboration, grew during the summer of 1941, this did not affect Pétain's reputation. The Contrôle Postal d'Annecy stated that, 'la confiance dans le Maréchal Pétain et la Révolution Nationale demeure très grande, malgré l'opposition à la politique du collaboration.'18 Pétain's speeches continued to have considerable impact: one intercepted letter described


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the reaction to his broadcast of the 17 June 1941, ‘C'était très, très bien. Chez nous au restaurant, tout le monde était debout, pour La Marseillaise. C'est le bonheur pour nous de l'avoir.’ Indeed, the Sûreté Nationale reported that the only disappointment was that he had not, as yet visited the department - a symbolic gesture which would confirm Savoie's place within France. That disappointment was soon remedied.

When Pétain did arrive in Haute-Savoie on 23 September 1941, it was hardly surprising that the welcome was remarkable. Not only did it demonstrate to the department Vichy's determination that Haute-Savoie should remain part of France, but it also provided Savoyards the opportunity to show their support for Pétainism. From La Tournette, the largest visible mountain opposite Annecy, two huge flags flew, one the tricolour and the other the red and white flag of Savoie, both of which could be seen from the capital. The Service de Contrôle Technique compiled a special report on the visit, providing a large number of extracts to show support for the Marshal: "On est obligé de l'aimer quand on l'a vu," est l'opinion unanime. "La simplicité du Maréchal a conquis la foule." Another correspondent wrote of, "Une réception enthousiaste, un monde! Jamais Annecy n'avait connu un monde pareil... Tout le monde était descendu de la montagne - les Savoyards ont fait un symbole de cette visite - Ah oui, elle est symbolique, cette journée, très symbolique." The lack of any apparent security measures was also noticed, suggesting, according to one correspondent, how much confidence the Marshal had in his people.

The visit was not a complete success, however, and there were one or two doubts about its impact. The report stated,

Les uns on jugé l'enthousiasme 'délirant, indescriptible, très sincère.' Ils ont senti vibrer 'un commun amour de la France..' D'autres ne cachent pas leur déception: 'accueil très froid, pas d'ovation prolongées, pas de frémissement de foule.' Un correspondant de l'est déclare: 'Chez nous, ce serait autrement chaleureux.' On

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18 Synthesis of reports of the Service de Contrôle Technique, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 258, 4 July 1941.

19 Report of Sûreté Nationale, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 10 May 1941.

20 The reaction to his visit was equated to a second plebiscite, 80 years after 1860 when Savoyards voted to join France. Special report of Contrôle Postal d'Annecy, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 258, 1 October 1941.


22 Special report of Contrôle Postal d'Annecy, Annecy A.D., 12 W 258, 1 October 1941.

23 Ibid.

34
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...juge les Savoyards 'peu enthousiastes,' et on l'on se demande si la foule vint 'avec de la foi ou de la curiosité.'

Reasons for this apparent coldness were also given by the report. It blamed the traditional temperament of the Savoyards as well as 'ordres bizarres', which told people to shout 'Vive le Maréchal' and not, 'Vive Pétain' because it was vulgar. It was also suggested that the relative coldness was because it was unnecessary to have 'criis délirants' in order to show the love of the French people for the Chef de l'État. Finally, the report mentioned that there had been surprise that Darlan had been there. It quoted one letter, 'La foule aurait vibré davantage si le Maréchal avait été seul. On en voit la preuve dans le fait que le public, s'est dispersé aussitôt après le discours du chef de l'État et n'a pas attendu que la Légion défile devant l'Amiral.'

There was also criticism of the reaction of the crowds at Rumilly where one letter described the reaction of the public as similar to a football crowd. The report concluded, however, that criticisms of the whole event were very rare.

The visit was seen as a success, at least for Pétain. The Contrôle Postal opened 4,410 letters posted in Annecy after his arrival and, of these, 536 (12.1%) mentioned the Marshal. There was only one which did not approve of him, and the rest of them, if they were representative of opinion as a whole, demonstrated undoubted enthusiasm.

Moreover, the impact caused by the visit was not limited to the departmental capital. A full month after the visit, the sous-préfet for Thonon, could report, 'La population de mon arrondissement est restée sous l'impression causée par le voyage de M. le Maréchal à la fin du mois de septembre dernier,' and the sous-préfet for St. Julien noted a similar reaction.

There were few constants in public opinion in Haute-Savoie during the Vichy period. There was, however, the continuing depth of admiration and sympathy for Pétain. As has been shown, even during the early months of Vichy, the population disassociated the Marshal from his far less popular ministers. Later, as opinion began to turn against the government in response to the failure of its economic policies and in reaction to the policy of collaboration, Pétain's prestige remained isolated from Vichy's growing unpopularity. What is clear is that

24 Ibid.

25 All quotes from special report of Contrôle Postal d'Annecy, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 258, 1 October 1941.

26 The extracts were, however, less adulatory about Darlan: of the 76 letters posted in Annecy which mentioned him (1.7%), nine were hostile.


affirmation for one cause did not necessarily entail denial of another. Nor did negation of one leader necessarily imply affirmation of another. What allowed Pétain to retain much of his popularity was the ability of individuals to reject the implementation of Vichy's policies, such as collaboration, while at the same time reconciling such attitudes with their support for Pétain as a symbol of France. Similarly, for many, there was no contradiction between supporting de Gaulle while at the same time maintaining their admiration for the Marshal. Given the significance and prestige of Pétain, it is hardly surprising that early resisters have consistently reiterated the difficulties they had in undermining the prestige of the Pétain.

Even as the administration began to register the first criticisms of the Government, it continued to be reassured by the popularity of the Chef de l’Etat. In September 1941, the Sureté National noted, 'Le Maréchal conserve toujours la confiance d’une très large majorité des Français... Cette absolue confiance ne s’étend pas à tous les membres du Gouvernement en raison des sentiments trop favorables à la “collaboration” qu’on leur prête.’

He was very much seen in terms of a Medieval king who was surrounded by flattering and evil courtiers preventing him knowing what was really happening. One letter complained, 'Pétain est là, et il est grand, mais il est seul, épouvantablement seul.' Indeed the archives are full of letters which had been sent directly to the Marshal asking that he intervene in local affairs and had subsequently been sent to the Prefecture for action.

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30 See: Kedward, H.R., Resistance in Vichy France, Oxford, 1978, passim. There is little echo in the archives of post-war justifications for Vichy such as the idea that Pétain and de Gaulle were in league and the Marshal was playing a double game.

31 Though the report admitted some diminution of ardour for the Marshal because of his support for Darlan. Report of the Sureté National, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 29 September 1941.

32 Report of Contrôle Postal d’Annecy, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, January 1942. Even after the return of Laval and his speech announcing that he desired a German victory, both services of the Service de Contrôle Technique reported that the prestige of Pétain remained intact. Report of Contrôle Téléphonique d’Annemasse, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, July 1942; Synthesis of reports of SCT, Annecy A.D, 12 W 256, June 1942.

33 This seems to have been the position throughout the Zone Libre: in the Gard, one correspondent wrote, 'Le peuple aime le Maréchal, il le respecte et il l’admire. Quand une injustice se produit, on dit “J’écrirai au Maréchal” ou encore “Ah! Si le Maréchal savait.”' Quoted in Austin, R.S.P., 'The Education and Youth policies of the Vichy Government in the Department of the Hérault, 1940-1944' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Manchester, 1981), p.330.
CHAPTER 4: VICHY FOREIGN POLICY

ALTHOUGH Vichy's domestic policy was initially popular among most Haut-Savoyards, that was certainly not true of its foreign policy - and in particular, its policy of collaboration. Although mentalité is seldom easy to define, let alone explain, and public opinion in France during the occupation was highly unstable, there was one constant - widespread hostility towards the Germans.

The Government's decision to attempt to find a privileged position for France within a new European order dominated by Germany did not coincide with the attitudes of the majority of the population. It became apparent from Churchill's speeches in the late summer of 1940 that the war was not over, and whatever the reaction of the population to British attacks against French forces at Mers-el-Kébir and Dakar, very few Haut-Savoyards wanted to see a German victory. The Contrôle Postal in Annecy reported rumours to the effect that an invasion of Britain was expected in February 1941, and continued, 'nombreuses expressions de sentiments anti-allemands. On espère que la prophétie de Ste Odile se réalisera, qui fixe à février 1941 le commencement des déboires de l'Allemagne.'

As a result of this anti-Germanism, the vast majority of Haut-Savoyards during the early months of the Vichy regime found it difficult to adapt to the new policy of collaboration. The Contrôle Postal in Annecy quoted a number of extracts which demonstrated clear hostility towards the concept among much of the population. The intensity of feeling expressed in these letters could be considerable: 'Je trouve ça monstrueux,' wrote one correspondent. Another complained, 'le mot "collaboration" effraie.'

By the autumn of 1940, it was clear that the number of Germanophiles was limited. One report estimated that they formed about 10% of the population, mostly among the bourgeois community. This minority supporting the concept of collaboration was motivated at least in part by an admiration for the way in which Germany, after its defeat in 1918, had managed to take on and apparently defeat both Britain and France some twenty years later. Others appeared to adopt the Government's line. They were willing to accept the apparent realism of the situation and the need to carve out the privileged position for France within the new European order which appeared to have been promised by the Germans.

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1 Report of Contrôle Postal d'Annecy, A.D., Annecy, 12 W 257, 15 February 1941. This one of a number of references to Ste Odile in the reports.


3 Interview of B... by A..., centre départemental d'information, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 337, 30 October 1940.

Vichy's foreign policy

The most ardent support for collaboration in the department came from members of Jacques Doriot's Parti Populaire Français (PPF). Général L..., the commandant militaire of the department wrote to Vergain, president of the Legion, about attitudes in Haute-Savoie towards collaboration during the winter of 1941:

Dans le département, il ne me paraît pas que la propagande soit très active et sorte du cadre national, bien qu'à un moment donné les membres du PPF d'Annemasse se soient montrés violemment en faveur de la collaboration.6

However, Général L... concluded, 'Il ne paraît donc pas qu'il ait actuellement un réel danger dans cette activité.' The main reason why L... did not seem overly-concerned about the activity of the PPF was because the party never managed to gain widespread support in Haute-Savoie. Before the war, its position had been at best marginal. Although it had managed to create a federation, the only sections were in Annecy, Annemasse, Chamonix, Cluses, La Roche and Thonon. Moreover, party membership was as limited as its organisation. It was estimated by the police at between 160 and 180 members6 Geographically, the PPF's support was mainly concentrated in the towns. Although there was some activity in the countryside - there were, for example, a few groups of Action Paysanne Française in communes near Annecy such as Villaz (Thorens), Chavanod (Annecy-sud), Alex (Annecy-nord), Quintal (Annecy-sud) and Argonnex (Annecy-nord)7 - on the whole members appeared to be town-based professionals, commerçants and négociants.8 An analysis of membership from police reports suggests that support was geographically limited to the main towns.9 Only 13 per cent of membership was located outside the cantons of Annecy, Annemasse, Bonneville, La Roche-sur-Foron and Thonon. The Prefect believed the greatest concentration of support was around

5 Letter of Général L..., commandant-militaire du dept de la Haute-Savoie to M. Vergain, président de la Légion, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 211, 13 January 1941. The two main organisations being organised, according to L... were the Jeunesses Paysannes Françaises and l'Union des Jeunes Filles Françaises.

6 Undated police report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 211.

7 Undated police report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 211.

8 A post-war report by the Renseignements Généraux based in Annecy concerning 14 members of the PPF in the town, noted that six were négociants or commerçants, three were industriels, another three professionals, and the remainder clerks. Report of Renseignements Généraux to Secretary General for Police in Lyon, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 211, 4 January 1946. Other details about membership - this time in the Chablais around Thonon - may be found in a report by the sous-préfet of Thonon to the Prefect, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 25 October 1942.

9 Details about members have been taken from police investigations of attacks against the PPF, and intelligence reports. There is information on about 93 members: various reports of the Police and Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 211, 12 W 86-90, 12 W 7-11, and a list of those who lost the right to vote after the liberation, Annecy, A.D., 3 W 28.
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Annemasse where the number of party members was estimated to be about 40.\textsuperscript{10} Despite considerable propaganda during the spring and summer of 1942,\textsuperscript{11} the PPF failed to generate any enthusiasm in the towns\textsuperscript{12} and did not even start to penetrate the countryside where the vast majority of the population lived. Indeed, the PPF was so unpopular that the SOL began a campaign to rid itself of party members because it was giving the organisation a bad name.\textsuperscript{13}

The appeal of the collaborationist PPF in Haute-Savoie was then clearly limited. The concept of a new European order struck few chords among the population. Among many Catholic conservatives in the department - who might have been tempted by the anti-communism of nazism - there remained a belief that there was an inherent contradiction within the policy of collaboration: the interests of Germany could not correspond with those of France.\textsuperscript{14} Nor did the anti-semitism of the PPF draw much support.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{10} Prefect's Report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 7, 1 September 1942; 12 W 10bis, 7 August 1943.

\textsuperscript{11} Prefect's Report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 7, 2 June 1942.

\textsuperscript{12} Membership of the Union Populaire de la Jeunesse Française (UPJF), the PPF youth-movement, for example, was limited to about 20: report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 211.

\textsuperscript{13} Prefect's Report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 7, 7 September 1942. The conclusion that the PPF was mainly limited to urban areas is supported by Sweets, J.F., Choices in Vichy France: the French under Nazi occupation, Oxford, 1986, p.88.

\textsuperscript{14} The PPF did not attempt during the war to loosen its links with the Germans. The headquarters of the Légion des Volontaires Français (LVF), the French anti-bolshevik legion, was at 2 Rue de Pâquier, the same address as the PPF's headquarters for the Union Populaire de la Jeunesse Française (UPJF).

\textsuperscript{15} What is also of interest is that Services de Contrôle Technique, the police and the Renseignements Généraux kept almost as careful an eye on PPF as the PCF, monitoring the communication of members as well as both public and clandestine meetings of the organisation. For examples see Annecy, A.D., 12 W 211, passim. For similar distrust from the Vichy authorities see also Sweets, J.F., Choices in Vichy France: the French under Nazi occupation, Oxford, 1986, p.89. Despite its weakness, the PPF was the strongest far-right movement in the department. Other organisations, such as Colonel de la Rocque's Parti Social Français (PSF) and Déat's Rassemblement National Populaire (RNP) had little impact on opinion and are scarcely mentioned in the reports of the SCT. The police believed that although the PSF had a pre-war membership of between 180 and 200, since the Armistice there had been almost no activity. Police reports noted that a brief visit to Annecy by La Rocque with his two sons generated an audience of less than 20 people. Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 211, 13 November 1941. There is virtually nothing in the files about the Franciste movement of Marcel Bucard. The monarchist movement in the department was also weak, primarily because Savoy had been part of Italy until 1860, and there was little tradition linking the region to either the Bourbons or the Bonapartists.
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Haute-Savoie was one of the departments most politically receptive to Vichy ideas. Yet it was not one of the most natural areas for collaboration to take root or flourish. The department had no experience of German occupation, either during the Franco-Prussian conflict of 1870, or during the First World War. In 1940 it was freely admitted the department had suffered little and, in principle, its xenophobia was directed not towards the Germans but against the Italians who were making claims to annex Savoy and the area around Nice in the Alpes-Maritimes. Nevertheless, Haute-Savoie, as a predominantly Catholic and conservative department, naturally identified with the government newly installed in Vichy: if Pétain's administration was unable to sell its foreign policy to the Savoyards, then it would prove even more difficult elsewhere.

Doubts about the government's chosen foreign policy became apparent from the first reports that began to arrive in the prefecture in Annecy after the debacle in the summer of 1940. The sous-prefect for Thonon warned in September 1940 that, 'les mesures prises par le Gouvernement en politique intérieure ont été approuvées presque toutes, mais celles relatives à la politique extérieure ont recueilli moins de suffrages.' Nevertheless, although many remained doubtful about the concept, a small proportion of the population did appear willing to entertain the idea of collaboration, or at least wait to see what results could be gained. This decision to await the results of collaboration has been defined by Pierre Laborie in his study of the Lot, as 'collaboration conditionnelle.' The view that there were indeed a number of conditional collaborationists in Haute-Savoie appears to be supported by a series of reports during the spring and summer of 1941. In February 1941, the secrétaire général in the préfecture wrote 'la collaboration est toujours envisagée d'une manière statique. L'opinion semble attendre les premiers résultats avant de prendre position, tout en manifestant "a priori" dans l'ensemble une attitude méfiante.'

But by the summer of the same year, the size of this minority appeared to increase. The new Prefect reported,

"Depuis quelques semaines, les positions de l'opinion ont subi de profondes modifications: l'hostilité systématique et irraisonnée que certains manifestent à l'égard de toute collaboration franco-allemande n'est plus aujourd'hui le fait que d'une infime minorité.""19

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18 Prefect's report made out by the secrétaire général, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 8 February 1941.
19 Prefect's report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 19 May 1941.
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The sous-préfet for St. Julien concurred, reporting at the end of May 1941, 'le moindre incident peut la décider. On peut considérer, de ce point de vue, que nous sommes actuellement placés à un tournant de notre état d'esprit public'. His colleague in Bonneville agreed with his conclusions: 'de plus en plus, malgré l'anglophilie de certains, le sentiment devient général en Haute-Savoie que la France ne saurait pratiquer qu'une politique réaliste et libérée de toute sentimentalité qui ne serait pas conforme à l'intérêt national.'

Indeed, by June 1941, the Prefect could report, 'l'entrevue de Montoire [between Hitler and Pétain in October 1940] avait posé le principe de la collaboration qui était alors loin de recueillir l'unanimité.' But he continued, 'Aujourd'hui, l'opinion a évolué dans le sens gouvernemental.' The Contrôle Postal also noted a change in opinion at the start of the summer of 1941. Of the letters intercepted mentioning collaboration, 24% supported the policy, 16% expressed 'inquiétude', 20% 'attente et incertitude' and only 40% 'opposition.'

During the summer of 1941, there appeared to have been a clear movement away from outright hostility to collaboration towards a less transigent position. Assisted by the collapse of Allied resistance in the Balkans, the Anglo-Gaullist invasion of Syria during June and July 1941 and the hope that Darlan's negotiations during May and June might be able to guarantee some concessions, not least the guarantee that Savoy would not become part of Italy, there seemed to be some drift within the department towards the government's position.

However, although this swing towards the conditional acceptance of collaboration certainly existed, its scale may well have been less than these reports estimated. At very least, it was limited both socially and geographically. The weakness of the SCT, as the Service itself admitted, was that it tended to reflect the opinions of those who frequently used the telephone - mainly urban commerçants - and those who had time to write letters, in other words, sections of society which tended to be relatively privileged. It was in these sections of society, rather than

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20 Reports of sous-préfets of Bonneville and St. Julien, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, both 31 May 1941.
21 Prefect's report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 2 June 1941.
23 Report of Prefect, Annecy, A.D., 12 W bis, 2 December 1940.
24 This trend should not be generalised - there were obvious geographical differences. Compare these reports with those reflecting opinion in the Zone Occupé, where the Contrôle Téléphonique reported, 'tout le monde est nettement anglophile et gaulliste... personne ne suit le gouvernement': report of Contrôle Téléphonique, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 258, 3 November 1941.
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among the peasants and workers who made up the vast majority of the population of Haute-Savoie, where the government's policies appear to have been most acceptable.25

For instance, within this elite, it was clear that factory owners were initially less hostile to the idea of collaboration than some other sections of the community. While some will not have had ideological reasons to oppose working for the Germans, others also found that it was often profitable to do so.26 In 1940, 63 firms in the department had been working for the Ministère de la Défense Nationale et de la Guerre. Of these 27 had been involved in armaments.27 Many of these companies, such as SRO in Annecy,28 and the precision engineering firms in the Vallée de l'Arve around Bonneville and Cluses, were only able to continue to function with German orders and supplies of raw materials.29

But if collaboration was to some extent accepted in the towns, the prefect admitted that in June 1941 - probably the high point of ambivalence among the population - there had been little progress in the countryside,

J'ai dit, dans de précédents rapports combien la nécessité de la politique de collaboration tendait de plus en plus à s'imposer dans l'esprit de mes administrés. Mon sentiment à ce sujet ne fait que se confirmer. Malheureusement ses partisans ne constituent pas la grande majorité... Le public des villes, plus évolué, en a davantage conscience. Les populations des campagnes sont plus réfractaires.30

Moreover, even during the summer of 1941, when urban hostility towards collaboration was at its lowest, there was little enthusiasm for the concept even among those who conditionally accepted the policy. In May 1941,

25 As has been demonstrated, it was also in this section of the community that the collaborationist PPF had its strongest support.

26 Synthesis of reports of SCT, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 258, 9 August 1941.

27 List of factories working for the Ministère de la Défense Nationale et de la Guerre in Haute-Savoie among reports of A..., représentant de l'autorité préfectorale à la commission de contrôle postal à Annecy, Annecy, A.D., 1 M 108, 15 April 1940.

28 For a brief and tactfully edited account of events at this factory during the war, see: Monnet, J., De la SRO à la SNR, Annecy, 1984.

29 The economic interest of the patrons was nevertheless threatened by the introduction of the Relève and STO, which looked likely to deprive them of work-force. A number of factory owners were able to excuse their earlier apparent collaboration by pointing out their later protection of labour. See also: Vinen, R., 'The politics of French business' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge, 1989).

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the Contrôle Postal pointed out that there still remained little excitement about closer ties with the Germans. It quoted one letter, 'nous subissons la collaboration à contre-coeur.' It was, at best, as one correspondent argued, 'un mariage de raison, pas d'amour.'

At best, conditional collaboration was predicated on belief in a final Axis victory and the benefits that the policy might bring France. As 1941 progressed, however, there was increasing disillusionment about German sincerity. The rumours of incessant demands from the Germans for food, raw materials and finished products, incidentally apparently depriving the French population, irritated opinion and suggested that the German attitude was 'collaboration en sens unique.' One correspondent described collaboration as 'le mariage de la corde et du pendu.' At the end of 1941 and during the spring of 1942, attitudes towards collaboration in the department became increasingly hostile. In January 1942, the contrôle postal estimated that 86% of letters that mentioned collaboration were antipathetic.

Increasing hostility to collaboration was accelerated by the re-appointment of Pierre Laval to the government in April 1942. Laval had been widely disliked when previously in government, and his original dismissal in December 1940 had been almost universally welcomed. On his return in 1942, he proved no more popular than before and his policy of closer collaboration created considerable anxiety in the department. A report from the commissariat de police in Annecy commented, 'la thèse de la collaboration choque la majeure partie de la population,' while the sous-préfet for Thonon wrote, 'c'est la collaboration totale qui répugne de plus

33 Report of Contrôle Téléphonique d'Annemasse, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 258, 1 November 1941.
34 Extract from report of Contrôle Téléphonique d'Annecy, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, June 1942.
37 See for example: report of the Surété National, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 17 December 1940; report of commandant militaire du département de la Haute-Savoie, Ibid., 19 December 1940; Prefect's report, Ibid., 21 December 1940.
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en plus à l'opinion. There was widespread fear that his reinstatement would lead to 'une soumission inconditionnelle à l’Allemagne,' and there were even rumours that France would be drawn into the war on the side of the Axis.

Admittedly, the reaction to Laval's reappointment was not completely unambiguous. In agricultural areas, among the relations of prisoners of war in Germany, it was reported that there were hopes that his arrival would accelerate the unification of their families. In the towns, some workers apparently still remembered Laval's pre-war socialist leanings and believed that his arrival might presage renewed interest from the government in the plight of the urban poor. The sous-prefect for St. Julien noted that in his arrondissement Laval's speech of June 1942 was most appreciated in the commune of Beaumont (St. Julien), which had been socialist before the war. More generally, there was the belief that even if he and his policies were not in tune with the majority of the population, as Chef du Gouvernement, he was at least preferable to one of the Paris-based collaborators such as Deat or Doriot.

However, any residual popularity for Laval was quickly dissipated by his announcement, in probably the most famous speech of his career, that 'je souhaite la victoire de l’Allemagne, parce que sans elle, demain, la bolchévisme s’installerait partout'. Even though Haute-Savoie was traditionalist and catholicism still played an important role in the formation of opinion, the success of Vichy's appeal to anti-bolshevism was limited. The Légion des Volontaires Français contre le Bolchévisme (LVF), the legion formed to fight with the Germans against communism, had little success in the department, and by April 1942 had recruited only eighty

42 Prefect's report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 9, 30 December 1942.
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Indeed, there was so little recruitment that a captain at the recruitment centre of the LVF in Annecy complained, that it was likely the centre at 3 rue de Nemours would be closed. Attempts to recruit for the LVF (or for its other manifestations, Légion anti-bolchéviste and the Légion Tricolore) were met with hostility from the population. The windows of the main recruiting office in Annecy were regularly broken. And when..., a Savoyard veteran of the LVF came to the department to encourage others to join he received an unfavourable reception. The police noted, 'Cet homme a été très mal reçu par la population. Il aurait même reçu une correction de la part de certains habitants,' [from Marin (Thonon), the commune where he was supposed to be making a speech].

Certainly, Haut-Savoys appeared to be less concerned about bolshevism than about the Germans: the Renseignements Généraux reported,

la population croit moins à l'installation en France du marxisme. D'autre part elle considère que le péril de l'histrésisme et de l'hégémonie allemande doit être redouté autant, si ce n'est plus, que le péril bolchéviste.

Moreover, the other major announcement in Laval's speech, which also introduced the Relève, alienated the population still further. It shocked much of the community, causing 'une grande sensation,' 'une surprise générale' and 'une impression plutôt défavorable parmi la majorité de la population.' The Contrôle Postal agreed, though it was rather more frank in its assessment,
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L'effet produit est 'pénible', 'lamentable' et le nombre des adversaires du Gouvernement semble considérablement accru. En particulier, les mots par lesquels Monsieur Laval formule ouvertement des vœux pour une victoire de l'Allemagne sont commentés avec indignation et stupeur: 'ce salaud a osé souhaiter une chose pareille', 'c'est dire à la face du monde: je souhaite la mort de ma patrie'... 'on sait désormais à quoi s'en tenir: il faut être Français ou Allemand.52

Although the authorities reported that the immediate reaction was not completely unfavourable, the speech signalled the start of the final death tremor of any popular support for collaboration. Admittedly, the honesty of the statement, the subsequent apparent endorsement for the policy from the Marshal together with the possibility of a return of some of the prisoners of war, did temporarily did win over a few, according to the administration's reports. But by July, the Contrôle Postal estimated that of the letters mentioning collaboration only 27% were not hostile to the policy - a month later the figure was down to 15%.53

The reasons given by government officials for this final decision to reject collaboration included traditional factors such as the impossibility of rapprochement between hereditary enemies, the belief that collaboration was not in the national interest and that nazi ideology was contrary to the basic principles of christianity.54 Other more immediate factors given were the control of the economy by the Germans, the apparently one-way traffic of collaboration, the series of executions and reprisals in the occupied zone,55 and, a new factor, 'les traitements inhumains infligés aux Juifs.'56

By November 1942, it did not need the invasion of the non-occupied zone to turn the population against the Axis. The concept of collaboration had already been rejected by the vast majority of Haut-Savoyards.57


55 There had been executions in Nantes and Bordeaux. These were also referred to by the sous-préfet for St. Julien: report to the Prefect, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 31 October 1941.


57 For a very similar series of reactions to the policy of collaboration around St. Etienne, also in the Rhône-Alps, see: Luirard, M., La région stéphanoise dans la guerre et dans la paix: 1936-1951, St. Etienne, 1980, p.472-278; also Austin, R.S.P., 'The Education and Youth policies of the Vichy Government in the
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Month after the complete occupation of the country by Axis forces, the Renseignements Généraux admitted ‘anti-germanisme presque général de l’opinion publique.’ The eventual failure of government to implement the Relève and STO effectively was, in part, a reflection of this anti-germanism. Only the presence of the Italians in Haute-Savoie until September 1943 prevented attitudes to the Germans hardening still further.

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58 Report of the commissaire principal, to the director of the Renseignements Généraux à Vichy, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 9, 21 December 1942. Even the PPF were having problems retaining members and ensuring that party subscriptions were maintained. Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 211, 14 December 1943.

59 One side-effect of the final rejection of collaboration by Haut-Savoyards during the winter of 1942 was the collapse of the PPF. In April 1943, the police noted that only 60 people turned up for a meeting at the Cinema Rex for a lecture on ‘La France, face au bolchévisme.’ Report by Police to Renseignements Généraux in Annemasse, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 211, 18 April 1943. By August the Renseignements Généraux reported, ‘On déclare que le groupement d’Annecy serait actuellement en voie de désagrégation. La section qui comprenait 110 membres en compte aujourd’hui une trentaine vraiment actifs... La section de Annemasse est tombée de 40 à 15. Le manque de fonds se ferait sentir également dans cette dernière. La consigne actuelle du PPF est de ne manifester pendant quelques temps d’aucune activité.’ Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy A.D. 12 W 211, 7 August 1943. The lack of activity was also assisted by the activities of resistance groups which were beginning to attack members of the PPF. The Renseignements Généraux pointed out, ‘On observe une grande prudence et vont même jusqu’à affirmer qu’ils ont abandonné le parti depuis plusieurs mois.’ Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy A.D., 12 W 211, 24 September 1943. These were strange and confusing times. One of the leading members of the PPF, Charles F..., was imprisoned by the Swiss authorities after being caught helping Jews to cross the frontier illegally. Report on murder on 6 September 1943 of Jean D..., a member of the PPF, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 211, 6 September 1943.
CHAPTER 5: ATTITUDES TO THE BRITISH 1940-44

'It you are -phil something or other you have got to be -phobe
something else. It is all wrong.'

IT SHOULD not be thought that a rejection of Vichy's policy of collaboration necessarily entailed a rejection of Vichy's other policies, nor that anti-Germanism naturally led to pro-British sentiment. Opinion during the Vichy period was unusually confused and disoriented, and, from the perspective of the late twentieth century, often contradictory. What is clear is that although few people in Haute-Savoie desired a German victory, paradoxically, that did not necessarily mean that the vast majority wanted the British to win. To be -phobe one nation did not mean that you had to be -phile another. The popularity or unpopularity of any one nation acted independently of the others.

Admittedly, there were good reasons for the French to dislike the British as much as the Germans in 1940 and 1941. The aftertaste of Dunkirk was rather different for the French than the British. The way Allied troops behaved during the May offensive left behind considerable bitterness in French public opinion; indeed, the British were perceived to have left France to her own fate. In Annecy, the Sûreté Nationale reported, 'Au lendemain de l'Armistice, il y eût en France un très net courant d'Anglophobie,' and argued that there was no doubt about the one of the reasons for this hate - the retreat of Allied troops from the north.

There were other significant reasons for French antagonism towards the British in the early years of the war. Probably more traumatic for Anglo-French relations than the defeat in 1940 were the events at Mers-el-Kébir, when the French fleet was attacked and largely sunk by the British. The Prefect reported:

L'attitude à l'égard de l'Angleterre a reçu l'approbation d'une forte majorité de la population. Certains ont pu penser qu'il eût été utile de ne pas rompre complètement avec nos anciens alliés, tout en conservant notre flotte intacte... mais la plupart des membres de cette minorité ont sensiblement diminué l'ardeur déjà timide de leur opposition depuis la tragique et traîtresse attaque de notre flotte à Mers-el-Kébir.

1 John Buchan, The Three Hostages, Leicester, 1972, p.60.

2 Report of Prefect, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 7 March 1941.

3 Report of Sûreté National, Commissariat Spécial d'Annemasse, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 19 September 1940.

4 Prefect to Secrétaire d'Etat à l'Intérieur, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 22 August 1940.

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The attack on the French colony of Dakar by Gaullist and British forces in September 1940 did little for the popularity of the Allies:

L’annonce de l’attaque de Dakar par les troupes de de Gaulle et par la marine anglaise a été accueillie avec effarement par la population qui n’arrive pas à réaliser comment il se peut que nos anciens alliés se comportent de cette façon avec leurs anciens alliés.5

Further friction was created by the introduction of the blockade of the French coast by the Royal Navy. In March 1941, the Contrôle Postal in Annecy reported 'protestation contre les Anglais qui nous affament.'6 Later in the year, the SCT reported, 'Indignation de certains sur l'arraisonnement des cargos Français par les navires Britanniques. On se demande pourquoi on ne fait pas escorter nos bateaux par des navires de guerre.'7

Another cause for antagonism in the spring of 1941- one which later was to create a serious strain in Franco-Allied relations - was the bombing of French towns. The Prefect in Annecy reported, 'Le souvenir des attaques de Mers-el-Kébir, de Dakar et de Brazzaville a été ravivé par la révélation du bombardement récent de Marseille et, de ce fait, les sentiments favorables à l’Angleterre n’ont pas trouvé de raison de s’intensifier.8

However, despite all these apparent provocations which could have justified Anglophobia during the autumn of 1940, the population did not turn against the British. Certainly, it is true that immediately after incidents such as Mers-el-Kébir, Dakar, and the boarding of French cargo boats, Haut-Savoyard attitudes appeared to harden, but the reaction was transitory. Even if the Allies were less popular than they might have been during the early years of the Vichy period, British actions did not prevent the population desiring an Axis defeat. The following month, A., the departmental archivist who was monitoring opinion for the Prefect, was more emphatic, 'L’opinion publique... connait bien les manquements de l’Angleterre à l’Alliance, mais... malgré Mers-el-Kébir, malgré le blocus, l’immense majorité du public vit encore dans l’espoir d’une victoire anglaise.'9 One of A.’s correspondents in the Thônes valley explained,

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5 Report of sous-préfet de Thonon to Prefect, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 30 September 1940.
8 Report of Prefect, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 2 December 1940.
9 Hand-written draft of monthly report by A., to Prefect, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 337, November 1940.
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In late 1940, then, the majority of the population continued to desire a British victory. The Sûreté National in Annemasse estimated that, 'Toute objectivité gardée, on peut dire que le [peuple] Français, dans sa grande majorité, souhaite la victoire anglaise.'\(^{11}\) When interviewed by A..., D... explained the reasons for such sentiment: 'On trouve des excuses aux Anglais pour Dakar,' and argued that supporters of the British were to be found among the Left, and 'parmi [les] patriotes sincères irréductibles, ennemis de l'Allemagne, qui désirent [la] victoire anglaise pour ne pas voir surtout [les] Allemands l'emporter.'\(^{12}\) Some also managed to forgive the Allied blockade of France.\(^{13}\) A report by the Contrôle Postal in Annecy for the whole of the Zone Libre argued that only 31 per cent of letters in May 1941 which expressed an opinion did not want a British victory, compared to 69 per cent, which did.\(^{14}\) British policy during the autumn of 1940 and spring of 1941 did not then turn Savenard or French opinion against the British.

There were doubts, however - doubts that turned to confusion during the course of 1941. The rejection of collaboration as a long term policy was dependent upon the belief that there was a possibility of British victory. That belief, however, was dependent upon Allied successes in the field - successes, which during 1941, were all too rare. As Allied troops continued to be defeated across the world, so attitudes to the British and the concept of collaboration appeared to change.

After the Armistice in June 1940 and before the fall of Greece in the summer of 1941, Allied successes against the Axis kept alive the hope that the Allies could win the war. As early as September 1940 the sous-préfet was

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11 Report of Sûreté National, Commissariat Special d'Annemasse, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 19 September 1940.

12 Interview with D..., Annecy, A.D., 12 W 337, 2 October 1940.


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reporting that the population was talking about 'la résistance anglaise.' The progress of the Greeks and Albanians against the Italians through the winter of 1940 and spring of 1941 was followed closely by the population. Reporting for the whole of the Zone Libre, the Contrôle Postal stated:

Les partisans des Anglais sont bien plus nombreux que leurs adversaires. Ceux qui ne les aiment pas les préfèrent cependant aux Allemands et aux Italiens. Beaucoup oublient Mers-el-Kébir et Dakar pour se réjouir des défaites infligées aux 'laches Italiens' et pour souhaiter la libération de la France ainsi que le retour aux temps meilleurs d'autrefois.

However, Haut-Savoie opinion became disoriented and confused by the series of military defeats suffered by the Allies through 1941, culminating in the fall of Hong Kong and Singapore in 1942. The sous-préfet for Bonneville explained the reaction of his arrondissement to the fall of Greece in the following terms: 'Les événements militaires qui viennent de se dérouler ont frappé de stupeur la plupart de mes administrés qui avaient déjà oublié, semble-t-il, la rapidité de l'avance allemande en France, en mai et juin dernier.' The sous-préfet for St. Julien also noted effects caused by events in Greece: 'Certains anglophiles - j'ai pu le constater personnellement - tout en conservant leurs sentiments, sembleraient se rendre compte que le Gouvernement du Maréchal avait de sérieuses raisons pour agir comme il l'a fait.

The population in Haute-Savoie was further disoriented by the fall of Singapore in February 1942 and the reports of German ships which managed to sail unscathed up the Channel in the same month. The Contrôle Téléphonique d'Annemasse reported: 'La chute rapide de Singapour a causé une vive sensation: [les] commentaires sont peu favorables aux Anglais.' In Annecy, the Contrôle Postal was more blunt: 'La prise de Singapour apparait comme "la fin du monde"... On croit le plus souvent que la domination britannique en

16 'Dans leur immense majorité, les populations manifestent des sentiments de réel sympathie à l'égard de la Grèce.' Report of the Prefect, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 16 November 1940; 'l'opinion se range unanimement des côté des Grecs'. Report of Prefect, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 2 December 1940.
18 Report of the sous-préfet de Bonneville, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 30 April 1941.
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Extrême-Orient est terminée."21 As late as June 1942, when the Africa Korps was within striking distance of Alexandria, the sous-préfet for St. Julien explained: 'la victoire de Rommel en Lybie a fait abandonner l'espoir d'un effondrement de l'Allemagne.' Though he added, 'Mais on n'a pas abandonné l'espoir de la défaite du Reich.'22

Given the context of doubts which had been created by British policy during the autumn of 1940 and spring of 1941, the coincidence of Allied military defeat and the invasion of the French colony in Syria by Anglo-Gaullist forces had serious repercussions for Haut-Savoyard opinion. However, the scale of these repercussions varied according to social status, geography and, to some extent, the authors of reports to the Prefect. The SCT, essentially reporting the views of the more literate and wealthy elements of society, stated that after the start of the invasion of Syria there had been a significant shift in opinion. As has been mentioned, its memoranda to the Prefect in June 1941 pointed out that there was a possibility that the concept of collaboration might be accepted. The Contrôle Postal in Annecy which was part of the Service and fed information to it, agreed, arguing:

Parmi les opinions exprimées, net progrès de l'idée de collaboration, auquel l'attaque de la Syrie n'est pas étrangère: partisans 50%, adversaires 50%.... [and in its report of interceptions in the whole of the Zone Libre continued:] L'attaque de la Syrie par les anglo-gaullistes provoque une indignation presque générale, très violente au début. La cote des Anglais diminue sensiblement. Sur 100 opinions, 21 sont favorables, 79 sont hostiles.23

Although the report went on to admit that many anglophiles abstained from talking about their beliefs, it concluded: 'Néanmoins, revirement certain à l'encontre des Anglais qui semble plus profond que lors des événements de Mers-el-Kébir et de Dakar: 'Ces salauds d'Anglais finiront par nous faire prier pour les Allemands.'24 The following month, the Contrôle Postal in Annecy reported that 75% of letters mentioning the British were unfavourable and concluded, 'L'opinion est presque unanime à flétrir l'agression anglo-gaulliste et à admirer la résistance française. Les Anglais se sont 'deshonorés pour toujours.'25 By August, the correspondents expressing a preference in the Zone Libre were reported to be - pro British 33%, pro German

24 Ibid.
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8%, and pro Russian 31%, leaving the respective rates of those hostile at 67%, 92% and 69%. At this stage, the part of the population monitored by the SCT appears to have been against everybody.26

However, the reports of the sous-préfets and a number of other correspondents suggest that reactions of Haut-Savoyards to the events in Syria were more nuanced, both socially and geographically, than suggested by the SCT. According to the sous-préfet of St. Julien, reactions to the Syrian offensive were mixed. He continued: 'Dans la région de St. Julien, les événements de Syrie, pour si regrettable que le fait puisse paraître, n'ont pas soulevé, dans l'ensemble une émotion considérable.27 The reasons given by the sous-préfet included the fact that there were few Savoyard troops in the fighting in the Middle East, and that those living close to Geneva on the border tended to be more pro-British than elsewhere. The sous-préfet for Bonneville concurred with his colleague: 'Il y a bien lieu de souligner que la lutte fratricide qui s'est engagé en Syrie depuis quelques temps n'est pas condamnée par l'opinion publique dans sa totalité.'28 This view was also confirmed by the Commissariat Special d'Annemasse.29 Vergain, the head of the Legion in Haute-Savoie was also convinced that Syria had changed little:

La sympathie va aux Anglais qui ... le combattent [l'ennemi héréditaire]. On n'admet pas la collaboration; on approuve de Gaulle; Mers-el-Kébir, Dakar, la Syrie même, où les forces françaises sont directement dressées les unes contre les autres, n'ont pas ouvert les yeux.30

It appears that the reaction varied geographically. In the arrondissement of Thonon, the northern-most part of the department, the sous-préfet reported that the population had a somewhat different opinion about events in the French colony. He maintained that in this district, 'Depuis l'entrée des troupes anglaises et gaulistes en Syrie, l'opinion semble avoir nettement évolué dans le sens d'une meilleure compréhension de la politique poursuivie par le Gouvernement.'31

26 Though the Contrôle Postal did conclude: 'Peu d'opinion. On souhaite la victoire anglaise, jugée préférable à l'allemande': report of Contrôle Postal d'Annecy, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 257, 28 August 1941.

27 Special report on reactions to Syria from the sous-préfet de St. Julien to the Prefect, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 17 June 1941.

28 Special report of sous-préfet de Bonneville, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 14 June 1941.

29 Special report, Commissariat Special d'Annemasse, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 14 June 1941.

30 Report of Vergain to the Prefect, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 1 July 1941.


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What is clear is that although both the Germans and the policy of collaboration were seldom popular in the department, a pro-British consensus was not initially as monolithic as might have been thought, and that the confusion in opinion which was to later to saturate French society at all levels existed as early as 1941.
PART II: REACTION TO VICHY
CHAPTER 6: EARLY SIGNS OF THE END OF CONSENSUS

WHILE Pétain continued to enjoy the respect of much of the population, that was not the case for most of his entourage.

As has been shown, even in its earliest days, the Marshal himself tended to be disassociated from unpopular measures. Complaints about the government's activities were directed partly towards the local administration and the Germans, but mainly towards Pétain's ministers. During the first six months of Vichy, Pierre Laval provided a particular focus for hostility. His position was closely identified with the Vichy's loathed policy of collaboration, and as a consequence proved incapable of generating either respect or affection in the department. As early as October 1940, l'abbé G... wrote to A... 'Pierre Laval est "détesté." On ne dit rien contre le Maréchal, mais on est persuadé que d'autres agissent à sa place.' Even after Pétain dismissed him in December, Laval remained highly unpopular. The report of the Contrôle Postal in Annecy was not untypical: 'M. Laval est toujours aussi détesté. "C'est l'homme le plus méprisable de France, le chef actuel de la cinquième colonne."' In spite of Laval's dismissal, Vichy ministers never generated much admiration. The Contrôle Téléphonique d'Annecy noted, after reporting the standard 'éloges' for the Marshal, 'Par contre, critiques de l'entourage du Maréchal,' and quoted some telephone calls, 'C'est le seul type propre de toute la bande... Dommage qu'il y ait encore quelques brebis galeuses de l'ancien régime.' In March 1941, the Contrôle Postal stated, 'Constatation que le Maréchal mis à part, aucun "homme de Vichy" n'a d'echo profond dans les coeurs populaires.' The following September, the Contrôle Postal referred to the apparent paradox that, 'Personne ne discute la personne du Maréchal: admiration et confiance totales, sans réserves,' while at the same time, 'les membres du Gouvernement donnent lieu à d'assez fréquentes critiques, toujours imprécises et générales: [on

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1 He was seen as the personification of much of evil of the old Third Republic: 'On se méfie de Laval et de ses "mascinations."' Report of Contrôle Postal d'Annecy, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 257, 15 February 1941.

2 Report of l'abbé G... to A..., Annecy, A.D., 12 W 337, 22 October 1940.

3 Report of Contrôle Postal d'Annecy, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 257, 1 March 1941.

4 Report of Contrôle Téléphonique d'Annecy, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 257, 1 April 1941.

5 It added that the Ministry of the Interior was known as the Société Protectrice des Amiraux." Report of Contrôle Postal d'Annecy, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 257, 15 March 1941.
Early signs of the end of consensus

[a] tendance à rejeter sur la politique gouvernementale la responsabilité de tout ce qui ne va pas.' The report added, however, 'Il est tout à fait exagéré de parler de "non-adhésion unanime."'

Laval's successor, Admiral Darlan also invested heavily in closer collaboration with the Axis, a policy which did little to endear him to most Haut-Savoyards. Although occasional reports did attempt, from time to time, to suggest the possibility that Darlan's prestige was improving, most were frank about the Admiral's unpopularity.

A few ministers could, however, generate some enthusiasm. It was noted that Georges Lamirand, the Catholic secretary-general in charge of youth affairs and part of the traditionalist wing of Vichy, inspired some warmth: 'Eloge de M. Lamirand de qui la simplicité a conquis les coeurs. On insistence sur la nécessité de donner à la jeunesse des chefs dynamiques tels que lui.' When he visited the department the SCT picked a number of comments about his talents: 'Un homme extraordinaire'... 'Quel dynamisme'... 'Il a gonflé la foule,' and the synthesis concluded, 'Le voyage de M. Lamirand en Haute-Savoie a suscité un réel enthousiasme.' Such ardour was exceptional, however.

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7 The SCT pointed out in a report sent directly to Darlan that he was a particular target for complaints, and blamed this on the fact that he was seen as responsible for the continued policy of collaboration. Synthesis of reports of the Service de Contrôle Technique, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 258, second fortnight May 1941; see also report of Contrôle Postal, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 257, 1 March 1941.

8 See for example, report of Contrôle Téléphonique d'Annemasse, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 257, 30 June 1941, and a number of memos sent to Darlan by the cabinet du Préfet made up of syntheses of reports by the SCT. The cabinet's conclusions, on this subject anyway, were rarely supported by the documents on which it was based: syntheses by the cabinet of reports of the SCT, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 258, 9 August 1941 and 5 September 1941.


12 Synthesis of reports of the SCT, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 258, 9 August 1941.

13 Nevertheless, when Laval returned there were suggestions of some nostalgia for Darlan. Synthesis of reports of the SCT, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, 19 April 1942.
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Nevertheless, if the population was at best indifferent towards Darlan's administration, it was certainly more popular than that installed by Laval on his return to government in April 1942. As before, Laval's reinstatement was disliked primarily because it appeared to preface closer ties with Germany. In a candid report after Laval's return, the Contrôle Postal explained why the vast majority of the population of Haute-Savoie did not support the new government. It argued that Haut-Savoyards were resolutely hostile to the principle, let alone actuality, of collaboration because of their hatred of the Germans. They were also worried about the consequences of collaboration and feared that it could lead to mobilisation of French forces in support of the Axis.14 Finally, many believed that Laval's return had been a humiliation for Pétain who was no longer in charge of events.15 A report by the Contrôle Téléphonique in Annecy quoted one call, 'ce n'est plus Pétain qui commande.'16

Laval's administration was also faced with growing social and economic problems which channelled hostility towards both the Government and administration. A growing dissatisfaction among the peasants about the increasing role of the state in agricultural affairs was matched by the hostility of many of the urban workers who were experiencing the effects of the government's failure to supply the towns effectively. At the same time, what early consensus might have existed among the workers was becoming dissipated as industrial relations began to deteriorate. Those who did support the government were particularly disappointed, when the Charte de Travail, Vichy's blueprint for industrial relations, was eventually published in October 1941. Many of the reports mention that workers were waiting for its arrival with keen expectations - expectations which were not matched by the final reality. The SCT admitted, 'La Charte du Travail ne semble pas inspirer confiance. Elle apparaît trop conforme à la tradition du paternalisme, à un moment où l'hostilité des ouvriers contre la classe dirigeante trouve un puissant aliment dans la carence trop évidente de la bourgeoisie.'17 In its following report, the SCT added, 'L'application de la Charte du Travail est accueillie avec méfiance dans les milieux ouvriers, qui y voient un escamotage du syndicalisme au profit des organisations patronales.'18 Though the

14 This reason was also given by the Contrôle Téléphonique d'Annemasse, report of Contrôle Téléphonique d'Annemasse, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, April 1942.


16 Report of Contrôle Téléphonique d'Annecy, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, 30 April 1942. Others, however, were still prepared to follow, because the Marshal was still there: report of Contrôle Postal, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, 28 April 1942.

17 Synthesis of reports of Service de Contrôle Technique, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, 10 May 1942.

18 Ibid., 2 March 1942.
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ideals of Vichy's policy of social reconciliation might have been laudable, the reality was very different: the Contrôle Postal stated, 'Les milieux patronaux auraient accueilli avec méfiance la Charte du Travail; on déplore le peu de progrès fait en France par l'esprit social.' By February 1942, the Prefect was complaining, 'les décisions du Gouvernement sont souvent discutées et ne sont pas toujours suivies avec toute la foi et la discipline désirables.' While the ideals of Vichy policy were broadly welcomed, their application caused undoubted friction.

By the spring of 1942, the choice of ministers in Vichy appeared for most Haut-Savoyards to be becoming increasingly irrelevant. Although a number were interested in the concessions that Laval might be able to obtain through collaboration, the vast majority of the population appears to have been indifferent to Laval's return in April 1942. The Contrôle Postal recorded, 'La population française serait devenue amorphe et ne réagit plus aux événements.' It added that many believed that the possibility of realising the Révolution National was limited: 'On souligne l'apathie de la masse qui n'a visiblement qu'une seule préoccupation: manger.' The sous-préfet for Bonneville concurred, 'Il convient de noter enfin que dès maintenant les commentaires se font plus rares et l'on peut escompter que d'ici quelques jours, sauf événements nouveaux, les masses seront retombeés dans leur apathie habituelle.'

21 In particular families with husbands or fathers in prisoner of war camps.
CHAPTER 7: THE LEGION

THE MOST obvious example of the decline in Vichy's fortunes in Haute-Savoie was that of the Légion Francaise des Combattants. By 1941, Haute-Savoie had one of the most impressive examples of a departmental Légion: the Prefect wrote in September that its membership was more than 20,000. Its authority, he added, was undisputed. The following year, he revised his estimates to a figure of just under 25,000 men - making it one of the largest organisations in the country and the most successful in relation to the size of the department's population. The Légion was 'particulièrement dynamique' dans la Haute-Savoie,' he wrote, able to muster, on occasions, more than 12,000 men, as it did at the end of August 1941 to hear a speech in Annecy given by General Emile Laure, Pétain's secrétaire général.4

As late as the spring of 1942, the Legion remained a successful and powerful organisation in the department. Membership statistics for the period are all the more impressive because, by this time, there had been a significant number of resignations and those remaining in the organisation will have had to pay a second annual subscription. In the 14 cantons which reported, an average of 77.5% of veterans had decided to remain within the Légion. At cantonal level, the most impressive result was in the rural canton of Rumilly to the west of

1 Report of Prefect, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 8 September 1941; other departments with particularly strong Légions were the Alpes Maritimes, the Rhône, the Dordogne, and Savoie: see: Cointet, J-P., 'Les anciens combattants: la légion française des combattants,' in Bourdin, J., Le Gouvernement de Vichy 1940-42, Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, Paris, 1972, p.123-143.

2 Report of Prefect, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 7, 4 May 1942; for a vitriolic account of the Légion by a member of the resistance, see, Viret, P., L'Affaire François de Menthon, Annecy, 1945.


4 Report of Prefect, A.D., Annecy, 12 W 8bis, 8 September 1941. The best method for tracking the rise and fall of the Légion in Haute-Savoie would have been to use the Fonds de la Légion in the Archives Départementales in Annecy: Fonds de l'Union Départementale de la Légion Française des Combattants 1940-44. Series 23 J. Unfortunately, this series is still unavailable for research (a dérogation to the Prefect was to no avail). However, some statistics, misplaced in another series, do provide an informative snap-shot of the Légion in a number of cantons in the Department. The file is made up of reports on the state of the Légion at communal level during the Spring of 1942; there are also a few statistics dating from 1943. Unfortunately, even the reports for 1942 only cover 14 of the 28 cantons: Annecy, A.D., 3 W 40.

5 The cantons were Alby (76%), Rumilly (96.7%), Taninges (77.2%), Cruseilles (69.4%), Seyssel (85%), Boëge (64%), Chamonix (83.4%), Douvaine (77%), La Roche (78.2%), Reignier (70.1%), St. Gervais (70.8%), St. Jorio (78.9%), Cluses (87.8%), Sallanches (78.9%), Annemasse (79.6%). There appears to be no obvious division here between town and country. Cf. Clermont-Ferrand, which had a population of 110,000, yet a membership of only 2,500. Sweets states that in the Puy-de-Dôme only half the veterans joined: Sweets, J.F., Choices in Vichy France: the French under Nazi occupation, Oxford, 1986, p.66-7. In the Loire, the Légion was capable of mobilising 25,000 men in February 1941. See: Luirard, M., La région stéphanoise dans la guerre et dans la paix: 1936-1951, St. Etienne, 1980, p.352, 255. Membership may well have depended a great deal on the local leadership.
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Annecy, where 96.7% of veterans joined the Légion. In one, Allèves, the report stated that all 50 veterans had joined the organisation. In the commune of Bons (Douvaine) 130 of the 135 veterans decided to join. The figures in the report also bear out comments from a number of sources that the Légion was more popular among those victorious veterans of the First World War than among those defeated in the conflict of 1939 and 1940: in commune of Chamonix, for example, 212 of the 220 veterans in the Great War joined, compared with only 230 of the 280 soldiers from the Second.6

Nevertheless, when these reports were prepared in the spring of 1942, the Légion in Haute-Savoie was in considerable difficulties. There had been hopes that the veterans would play an important role in uniting communities and so avoid the factional problems that traditionally beset rural France. An anonymous report in January 1941 from Thonon addressed to the Prefect described the dangers of such infighting:

L'opinion instruite et de bon esprit ne s'explique pas comment le Gouvernement pourrait songer à maintenir les élections pour les communes au-dessous de 2,000 habitants. Nous avons entendu dire, 'Voilà, encore des Parisiens qui ne connaissent rien à la vie publique de la nation.' Mais c'est précisément dans les petites communes que sève la politique avec ses âpres divisions, ses inégalités de traitement, ses injustices, ses exclusions et ses persécutions, du fait du Maire, du Secrétaire de Mairie, du Garde-Champêtre, du Cantonnier, etc.7

However, despite hopes that the Légion might be able to transcend such faction-fighting, it soon became clear that, as in so many other areas, the theories of the Révolution Nationale could not be transformed into action. Even as the Légion was being assembled, there were complaints about the choice of leaders at both communal and cantonal level. The sous-préfet of Bonneville observed,

Il y a bien lieu, toutefois, de signaler un arêt d'intéressement qui commence à se manifester dans les rangs des Légionnaires. Le premier enthousiasme est passé, et déjà l'esprit critique qui caractérise le Francais, fait son œuvre. Les chefs communaux de Légion ont été, peut-être, choisis avec trop de précipitation. Des clans se forment dans les villages qui s'opposent, non pas à la Légion, mais au chef, et le plus souvent pour des raisons personnelles. A l'heure actuelle le mouvement légionnaire n'en pâtit pas encore, mais dans quelques mois c'est la

6 The sous-préfet de St. Julien wrote, 'Les éléments jeunes, anciens combattants de la guerre 39-40 paraissent encore un peu réticents.' Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 1 October 1941; see also: synthesis of reports by the Service de Contrôle Technique, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 258. This appears to have been generalised. There was a similar reaction among younger veterans in the Puy-de-Dôme: Sweets, J.F., Choices in Vichy France: the French under Nazi occupation, Oxford, 1986, p.67; also in the department of the Loire: Luirard, M., La region stéphanoise dans la guerre et dans la paix: 1936-1951, St. Etienne, 1980, p.353.

7 Anonymous report from Thonon to the Prefect, with black mourning margins, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 23 January 1941.
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Légion elle-même qui sera rendue responsable de l'assouvissement de rancunes personnelles qui caractérise quelques chefs locaux.8

Complaints about the choice of leaders were also picked up by the Contrôle Postal. It noted, 'On regrette que ses chefs soient ceux qui, malgré leur conduite militaire, sont "les responsables de nos malheurs actuels," pour "n'avoir pas su maintenir le pays au rang qui lui était dû."' The report added, 'Enfin, reproche à la Légion de proférer contre les individus des accusations calomnieuses qui ne sont pas dans les directives du Maréchal.'9

A further problem facing the Légion was its ambiguous role. Admiral Darlan never strictly defined its role or powers, although he did state that there should be intimate collaboration between it and the public authorities.10 At municipal level, the organisation was soon at odds with local government. As early as February 1941, the Prefect was regularly recording difficulties between the mayors and local sections of the Légion: 'Grande activité de la Légion dans tous les domaines avec le désir évident de bien faire. Parfois cependant des initiatives de quelques chefs locaux de la Légion amènent à des conflits d'autorité avec les Municipalités.'11

By the end of 1941, even the Prefect believed the Légion was over-reaching its role: 'Certains de ses membres particulièrement actifs auraient trop tendance à vouloir supplanter les maires, et même d'une manière plus générale toute autorité existante.'12 These conflicts appear never to have been resolved: as late as August 1942, the agent administratif de Reignier et Annemasse revealed that the antagonistic power struggles between the Légion and local mayors in Ambilly, Monnetier-Mornex and Fillinges were still dragging on: 'En toute impartialité,' he wrote, 'les torts semblent être du côté de ces chefs légionnaires qui comprennent mal leur rôle

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8 Report of sous-préfet de Bonneville, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 30 March 1941.
9 Report of Contrôle Postal d'Annecy, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 257, 15 February 1941; see also Ibid. 1 April 1941; and report of Contrôle Téléphonique d'Annemasse, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 257, August 1941.
11 Report of the Prefect, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 8 February 1941.
12 Report of Prefect, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 2 November 1941. Interestingly, the Contrôle Téléphonique was monitoring Vergain, the head of the Légion in Annecy: extract of call from Vergain to M... , a sous-chef de la Légion dated 16 May, in report of Contrôle Téléphonique, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, Synthesis of reports of Service de Contrôle Technique, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, first fortnight May 1942.
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et surtout leurs obligations.'13 There were even allegations that the Légion was becoming a state within a state.14

The Légion antagonised not only the mayors and their secretaries, but also general members of the population. The Légion was seen to use its powers to serve the interests of its own members. The Contrôle Téléphonique noted: 'Critiques sévères des cadres locaux de la Légion. Il y faudrait des hommes modèles à tous points de vue et ce ne serait pas le cas... La politique des amis n'est pas morte.'15 There were rumours that members received preferential treatment for job applications, and that some jobs were only available to Légionnaires.16

Ironically, given the hostile attitude of the Government to freemasons, the Légion was even accused of being 'une franc-masonerie d'un nouveau genre.'17 The self-righteous elitism of some Légionnaires also antagonised non-members: the contrôle postal quoted one letter from Nice, 'Jeunes de la Légion mal élevés et insolents... Ces petits voyous insultent ceux qui ne portent pas l'insigne... La Légion semble vouloir s'arroger le monopole du patriotisme.'18

That self-righteousness could even run to denunciation - an activity which antagonised the population still further and led to accusations that the movement was becoming a second Gestapo. Some of the criticisms were violent. The Contrôle Postal d'Annecy wrote,

Nombreuses critiques: 'organisation collaborant avec l'ennemi,' 'analoge à la Gestapo,' 'faisant de la propagande pro-boche,' Les reproches les plus fréquents adressés à la Légion sont le manque de tenue, de discipline, l'absence


16 This may well have provided an additional incentive to join. Report of Contrôle Postal d'Annecy, Annecy A.D., 12 W 258, September 1941. In the Dordogne it appears that in some areas it was virtually obligatory to be a member, on risk of losing one's job: intercepted letter quoted in report of contrôle postal d'Annecy, Annecy A.D., 27 September 1941.


18 Quoted in report of Contrôle Postal d'Annecy, Annecy A.D., 12 W 257, 27 September 1941.

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d'enthousiasme... et surtout l'instauration des dénonciations. En fait, des dénonciations, souvent basses et puériles, sont adressées à la Légion. 19

The Contrôle Postal d'Annecy commented: 'Assez fréquentes marques d'hostilité envers la Légion, "pourvoyeuse de camps de concentration," "Gestapo du gouvernement," "collaborant avec l'ennemi." 20

In a number of communes, the bitter clashes between the local authorities and the new power structure provided by the Légion, as well as the increasingly divisive nature of the organisation, led by the summer of 1941 to a slow-down in activity in some areas. This dissipation of enthusiasm was not universal, however. While the sous-préfet for Bonneville, an area traditionally more to the left than most of the department was reporting less activity, the sous-préfet for Thonon argued that the Légion in his area was still flourishing. 21

As early as 1941, in some communes a number of veterans were reported to have either resigned or failed to pay their annual subscriptions. The Contrôle Postal d'Annecy quoted one letter, 'Les vrais, les purs, les combattants qui sont entrés à la Légion se lassent - on gaffe trop à la direction. 22 On occasions there were mass resignations, although these were usually at communal level and dependant upon obscure local politics, of which few details have survived. The consequences of such squabbles, though, can be seen in occasional reports: at Saint Gingolph (Evian), on the shores of Lake Geneva, there were more than 100 resignations during 1941, while in the commune of Boëge, where 123 of the 150 veterans had joined, there were only 40 members by March 1942. 23

Although the Légion remained numerically strong well into 1942, enthusiasm was nevertheless waning. The Contrôle Postal d'Annecy cited one intercepted letter complaining,

Composition, mentalité et directives morales de la Légion semblent à certains encore bien flottantes; les mots d'ordre du Maréchal seraient déformés à tous les échelons. Manque d'organisation dans les groupements où le recrutement


21 Reports of sous-préfets, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 28 and 29 June 1941.


23 Misplaced report on state of the Légion, A.D., Annecy, 3 W 40.

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laisserait en général à désirer; à Annecy 'gaulards et communards authentiques vont au Salut au Drapeau.'²⁴

The Renseignements Généraux stated simply, 'l'enthousiasme qu'avait provoqué cette organisation... n'a pas répondu aux espoirs et aux souhaits de réalisation qu'ils avaient mis en elle.'²⁵ Around Bonneville, the sous-préfet noted that the Légion was experiencing a slow-down in activity.²⁶ In Thonon, the sous-préfet revealed, 'L'activité de la Légion également marque un temps d'arrêt. Beaucoup des Légionnaires qui n'ont pas renouvelé leur cotisations attendent le Gouvernement actuel à ses actes pour prendre une décision.'²⁷ With superb understatement the synthesis of the reports of the SCT announced, 'La Légion Française des Combattants ne semble pas gagner en popularité.'²⁸


²⁶ Sous-préfet de Bonneville, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 7, 21 April 1942.


²⁸ Synthesis of reports of SCT, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, 18 March 1942.
Evidence for fading ardour of most Légionnaires can be seen in the failure of the Service d'Ordre Légionnaire (SOL). Recruitment for the SOL, a paramilitary organisation formed in 1942 to serve as the vanguard of the National Revolution, did not progress well, although it fared better in Haute-Savoie than many departments. The Prefect estimated its eventual numbers at around 1,200 - a rate of about 4.8% of total membership of the Légion.

The SOL's poor recruitment rate did not necessarily imply that the Légionnaires had lost their belief in Pétain's ideal, but reflected their belief that Vichy itself had changed. Its creation did not occur at an auspicious time. Pierre Laval had taken over the reins of Government in April 1942 promising closer collaboration with the Germans. Many Légionnaires were put off by the SOL's activities which appeared to contain clear fascist influences: according to one intercepted letter its pagents had 'hitlerian overtones.' Observers also pointed out that much of Mussolini's original support had come from veterans' associations. The synthesis of SCT reports in March 1942 commented: 'L'organisation du Service d'Ordre Légionnaire est vivement critiquée, même chez les partisans du régime. On y voit généralement l'embryon d'un organisme comparable aux 'Sections d'assaut' hitlériennes.'

The Contrôle Postal observed that the creation of the SOL had initially created mixed emotions: 'sentiments de crainte et de rancœur chez certains, ironie des autres.' Nor did the behaviour of the members of the SOL, once it was actually formed, do much to endear them to the population. In April 1942, the report suggested, 'L'impopularité déjà considérable du groupement SOL ne peut qu'en être accrue.'

29 See introduction to the Fonds de la Légion, written by Robert Gabion of the Archives Départementales, who wrote: 'Pourtant le SOL haut-savoyard dont Darnand lui-même disait, le 20 mai 1942, qu'il venait "en tête des départements aussi bien pour la formation physique et politique de ses hommes que par la foi révolutionnaire de ses chefs," a eu une existence bien réelle et des effectifs nombreux.'

30 Report of Prefect to the Regional prefect in Lyon, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 76, 29 April 1943. The slow recruitment of the SOL appears to have been also affected by the efficacy of the local chef de la Légion. Where he did not enjoy the confidence of the population there was apparently little recruitment. Sous-préfet de Bonneville, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 7, 21 April 1942.

31 The report added that there was considerable friction between the SOL and the catholic youth movements, including the scouts and confessional youth organisations. Synthesis of reports of the SCT, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, 2 April 1942.

32 Enthusiasm was there little. Report of Contrôle Postal d'Annecy, Annecy A.D., 12 W 256, 28 March 1942.

33 Synthesis of reports of the SCT, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, 19 April 1942. Sweets argues that the creation of the SOL was particularly important in the Puy-de-Dôme, Sweets, J.F., Choices in Vichy France: the French under Nazi occupation, Oxford, 1986, p.74. Roger Austin states that the SOL was also unpopular in the Hérault. It was made up of the most doubtful elements of the Légion and its membership contained a high
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Maréchal, poursuivre son œuvre de Restauration nationale dans la Concorde et l'Union de tous les Français. 

By July, the Prefect warned there was a strong possibility that the whole of the Légion in the Thônes valley might resign. The reaction was not limited to this one valley. The Prefect wrote, 'l'effervescence produite à Annecy par ces incidents (de Menthon) s'est rapidement étendue à tout le département et s'est faite particulièrement dans les communes urbaines. In Rumilly, which had one of the most successful organisations in the department, the chef cantonal and the whole of his committee resigned. The Prefect concluded, 'L'unité de la Légion est menacée.'

In Annecy itself, General Cartier, the mayor of the town, resigned as président d'honneur de la Légion de la Haute-Savoie in protest at the incident and the use of his signature. In a hostile response to Cartier's gesture, the Légion's eight conseillers municipaux in Annecy resigned from the municipal council headed by the general. In the power struggle that ensued, Cartier was eventually summoned to Vichy and forced from his position as mayor of the town. The authorities were clearly perturbed by the turn of events: the SCT could not decide the reaction of Annécien. It wrote, 'le changement de municipalité à Annecy est considéré comme le triomphe d'un parti,' which in the draft was crossed out and replaced with, 'Le changement de municipalité n'a provoqué aucune réaction.' It then added, 'Depuis les incidents du 1er mai à Annecy, le Général Cartier, ancien maire, a regagné à Annecy une certaine popularité.'

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36 Full text given in Challamel, J-B. (ed.), La vallée de Thônes et Glières pendant la 2e Guerre Mondiale, 2 vols., Thônes, 1984, p.32-3. The letter was distributed throughout the department, and eventually, on 17 August, the whole document was read out on the BBC.

37 Report of Prefect, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 7, 4 July 1942. There are unfortunately no figures available for the eventual number who decided to do so.

38 Ibid.

39 Of the veterans in the commune of Rumilly, 520 of the 556 joined the Légion (93.5%). In the canton, the figure was 96.7%.

40 Ibid.

41 Prefect's report to Regional prefect, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 7, 2 June 1942; synthesis of reports by the SCT, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, first fortnight May 1942.

42 It had originally put 'grande popularité.' Synthesis of reports of SCT, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 258, July 1942.
Other Government agencies had no doubts about the reaction of the population to the whole affair. The Contrôle Postal argued that Annécians, of all opinions, had been shocked by the vandalism on the sapling and statue, but added, "L'affaire de Menthon," a pris première place dans l'esprit. Le geste des membres du SOL a été fort mal jugé par l'immense majorité... On accuse le SOL de créer une atmosphère de guerre civile."43 The Contrôle Téléphonique d'Annecy was unequivocal:

Les esprits sont passionnés par le conflit qui sévit entre la Légion et une partie de la Municipalité à propos d'incidents dont a été victime une personnalité de la ville soupçonnée d'activité gaulliste. L'opinion est unanimement dressée contre les SOL dont les agissements sont qualifiés de 'méthodes de nazi-assassins' ou 'contraires à l'esprit de la Révolution Nationale.'44

Adverse remarks were also directed towards the Legion: the Contrôle Postal d'Annecy noted,

Hostilité fréquente à la Légion dans la Haute-Savoie; on lui reproche de susciter des scissions et des luttes intestines par un 'zèle maladroit' et de ne pas tenir compte des opinion individuelles; l'activité légionnaire se réduirait à apposer des affiches contre l'Angleterre. Critiques nombreuses du SOL, accusé d'avoir déclenché les bagarres lors des manifestations silencieuses du 14 juillet; on compare généralement cette organisation aux SS ou aux chemise brunes et elle recueille peu de sympathie, le récent discours de son Chef Daran (sic) en faveur de l' enrôlement dans les rangs de la Légion Tricolore a causé une impression nettement défavorable.45

The population began to express its opinion of the Legion in public. On 23 August, during a parade before the war memorial in Annecy, the Renseignements Généraux remarked that while there were cheers from the crowd for the local regiment of Chasseurs Alpins, the 27e BCA, the detachment of Légionnaires received a cold welcome.46 Similarly, at the celebrations for the second anniversary of the Legion, the Renseignements Généraux reported that, in some villages, attendance had been poor and enthusiasm limited.47

Many Légionnaires shared the rest of the population's concerns about the turn of events which marked the end of any remaining consensus. The sous-préfet for Thonon reported that the population in his arrondissement

46 Special report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 7, 31 August 1942.
47 The report added, 'L'incident de Menthon - SOL n'est pas étranger à cet état d'esprit.' Ibid.
The end of consensus: the SOL

had viewed the Legion's role in the affair poorly and that even the Légionnaires felt that the organisation was in the wrong.48 Attendances of both spectators and Légionnaires at Legion rallies began to dwindle: 'A Annemasse, malgré la présence de M. Lamirand et la réunion de délégations de toutes les communes du canton, je n'avais jamais assisté à une assemblée aussi restreinte,' wrote the sous-préfet for St. Julien.49

Many of the Légionnaires began to demonstrate their hostility towards the SOL. An intercepted letter to Vergain, departmental head of the Legion from D..., a Légionnaire in St. Pierre de Rumilly (la Roche) who had decided to leave the Legion explained his reasons. While willing to spill his blood against any foreign invader, he explained he believed the SOL had been created to carry weapons against other Frenchmen. He continued:

J'estime qu'aucune cause de politique extérieure, quelle qu'elle soit ne mérite qu'on verse du sang français. Dans sa constitution, j'ai adhéré de tout cœur à la Légion dans l'espoir qu'elle servirait à établir l'Union des Français; ce serait, à mon avis, nier cette possibilité que de prévoir des troubles... Notre Grand Chef, le Maréchal Pétain lui-même a dit: 'on ne gouvernera pas sans l'assentiment du peuple.'50

The actual creation of the SOL was publicly snubbed by many Légionnaires. When Darnand arrived on 13 June to hand over the colours of the SOL, only a quarter of Annecy's 3,700 Légionnaires decided to turn up. There were about 2,000 spectators. As for the SOL at the ceremony, they numbered 850, some of whom were from other departments.51 The SOL elite seems to have revelled in its unpopularity: the Prefect pointed out that, 'il est juste de dire que ses dirigeants ne font rien pour gagner la sympathie de la population, qui tourna en dérision ses tendances spectaculaires.'52 Their popularity was not assisted by their role in helping to round up Jews.53

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50 Extract of letter from D... to Vergain, synthesis of reports of the Service de Contrôle Technique, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, first fortnight, May 1942.


52 Report of Prefect, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 7, 4 July 1942. Though it does appear that they did make efforts to rid themselves of members of the similarly unpopular PPF: report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 7, 7 September 1942.

53 This occurred in Sallanches: report of sous-préfet de Bonnville, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 7, 25 August 1942.
The end of consensus: the SOL

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\begin{itemize}
\item \footnote{48} Report of sous-préfet de Thonon, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 7, 1 June 1942.
\item \footnote{49} Report of sous-préfet de St. Julien, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 7, 29 August 1942. In Annecy, a rally on 30 August gathered about 4,000 people: Report of Prefect, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 7, 1 September 1942.
\item \footnote{50} Extract of letter from D... to Vergain, synthesis of reports of the Service de Contrôle Technique, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, first fortnight, May 1942.
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\end{itemize}
The end of consensus: the SOL

One of the most serious consequences for the Légion de la de Menthon affair was that it lost the support of certain sections of the Catholic Church in the department - an important factor in Haute-Savoie which continued to have a high proportion of practising catholics. Although there was no official statement by the Bishop about the incident, he refused to attend the ceremony handing over the colours of the SOL. In the vallée de Thônes, where the local curés still had considerable influence, both l'abbé Jean Truffy in Petit-Bornand (Bonneville), near Thônes and l'abbé Maurice Greffier in the town of Thônes itself recommended youths thinking of joining the SOL not to do so.

In September 1942, Vichy reports for the whole of the Zone Libre began to notice that membership of the Légion was beginning to fritter away particularly in the countryside. Haute-Savoie was no exception. The divisive factionalism of the Légion, the creation of the apparently fascist SOL, and the replacement of François Valentin, the popular national head of the Légion all combined to create a crisis of confidence during the autumn of 1942 - a crisis which accelerated during the spring of 1943 after the occupation of the department by the Italians and the introduction of the Releve and Service du Travail Obligatoire. By May 1943, the Renseignements Généraux reported that, 'La Légion Française perd de plus en plus de son prestige et le nombre de ses adherents va en diminuant. L'enthousiasme dont faisaient preuve un grand nombre de Légionnaires, il y a un an encore, fait place à de l'indifférence.' By June the sous-préfet for St. Julien noted that the Légion and the Milice were both 'actuellement en période d'asphyxie.'

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55 ed: Challamel, J-B. (ed.), La vallée de Thônes et Glières pendant la 2e Guerre Mondiale, 2 vols., Thônes, 1984, p.96; and Truffy, J., Mémoires du Curé du Maquis de Glières, Paris, 1979, p.20: Truffy explains: 'Lorsqu'il fut question de la création des SOL, le Curé et l'Institeur Monsieur Pinget s'entendirent pour déconseiller aux Jeunes d'en faire partie. On peut dire qu'à la fin de 1942, tout en continuant d'exister sur le papier, la Légion avait en fait cessé d'exister au Petit Bornand.' The reaction of the local priests, however, was varied. As will be seen many of the curés in the Chablais continued to support Vichy and even encouraged people to join the Milice.

56 Though there were still some areas where it continued strongly, such as Marseille, Aveyron, Lozère and the Rhône: Synthesis of Prefects' reports, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 7, 18 September 1942. In the Loire membership fell from 10,000 in 1941 to 6,000 in 1943 and finally to 4,500 in 1944. See: Luirard, M., La région stephanoise dans la guerre et dans la paie: 1936-1951, St. Etienne, 1980, p.359.

57 For the reaction in Haute-Savoie to the replacement of Valentin see: report of Agent administratif de Reignier et Annemasse, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 7, 19 June 1942.


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The lack of enthusiasm was matched by a decline in membership of the Légion. The Renseignements Généraux estimated that the number of Légionnaires had fallen by about a third by the end of 1942 compared with 1941 and by nearly half by August 1943.60 This was, moreover, despite the creation of the 'Amis de la Légion' which allowed non-veterans to join the Légion and later became 'Volontaires de la Révolution Nationale'. At times the decline in membership could be substantial. The Légion in Arthaz-Pont Notre-Dame (Annemasse), dropped from 105 (of a total 110 veterans) to 65 by 13 July 1943.61 At Boêge in the Chablais, the number Légionnaires dropped from 123 in 1942 to 40 by March 1943.62 The most dramatic fall was in Arbusigny (Reignier), where all 85 Légionnaires had left the organisation by July 1943.63 Many of those leaving were section heads, at both cantonal and communal level.64

By the end of 1942, the activities of the Légion, as opposed to the SOL, were reduced to raising funds and sending packages to French prisoners of war and soup kitchens for those in the towns who were unable to feed themselves.65 Otherwise, as the Renseignements Généraux argued, 'La Légion manque de plus en plus de vitalité et ses membres semblent actuellement atteints d’une “paralysie” presque totale.'66 It was a sad end for a movement that had played a significant role in briefly uniting the French people. The lasting divisiveness of French municipal politics which Vichy had sought to overcome but failed to heal, had by December 1942 broken the Légion.

60 The Renseignements Généraux believed that this last figure was an under-estimate. In this report the strength of the Légion in 1941 was put at 45,000, which appears far too high. Until the Fonds de l’Union Départementale de la Légion Française des Combattants 1940-1944 are available, the actual size of the Légion must remain obscure. Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 6 August 1943.

61 Report on Arthaz-Pont Notre-Dame, Annecy, A.D., 3 W 40, 13 July 1943. In the commune of Douvaine, where there had been 120 Légionnaires, membership halved between March 1942 and October 1943.

62 Report on commune of Boêge (Boêge), Annecy, A.D., Annecy, 3 W 40, 13 March 1943.


64 See for example the resignation of the chef communal at Annemasse, report of Agent administratif de Reignier et Annemasse, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 7, 20 August 1942.


However, French society was being ripped apart by other centrifugal forces, in particular those created by the demands of the French war economy.
CHAPTER 9: MATERIAL CONDITIONS AND POPULAR OPINION

Car, s'il est un enseignement qui se dégage de l'histoire du dernier quart de siècle, n'est ce pas la capacité de souffrir et de se résigner des masses humaines est en quelque sorte infinie? 1

WHEN examining the nature of public opinion towards a government during 'total' war, it is necessary to establish the extent to which that government was able meet the needs and expectations of the civilian and military populations by harnessing and effectively administrating the economy. Other studies have shown that the inability of governments to create efficient war-time economies can lead to considerable social discontent, political radicalization and, it has been argued, even revolution.2 Although France was not actually in a state of war after Marshal Pétain signed the Armistice in July 1940, for the purposes of running the economy such a state might as well have existed. The destruction of much of the nation’s infrastructure during the exodus of May and June 1940, the British blockade and the eventual complete isolation of France from her Empire after November 1942,3 threw France on to her own resources at the same time that she was obliged to supply a substantial proportion of her produce to the German war-economy.4

The way in which Vichy managed the economy was vital to the regime. Support for Vichy and the administration, as well as the government’s prestige and eventual legitimacy depended to a great extent upon its ability to mobilize the economy. If it was to fulfil the demands and expectations of the population it needed to distribute the nation’s produce, and in particular, its agricultural produce, equitably, both geographically and

1 Intercepted letter from Combloux (Canton of Sallanches), Haute-Savoie, January 1940. Report of A..., directeur du centre départemental d'information, Annecy, Archives Départementales (A.D.), 1 M 108, 5 February 1940.

2 See: Kocka, J., Facing Total War: German Society 1914-18, Leamington Spa, 1984, p.155, who argues that the class antagonisms exacerbated by war in Wilhelmine Germany were increasingly focused towards a state and administration overburdened by new problems and incapable of fulfilling the expectations of the population. See too: Burchardt, L., 'The impact of the war economy on the civilian population of Germany during the First and Second World Wars', in ed.: Deist, W., The German Military Machine in the age of Total War, Leamington Spa, 1985, p.46, who argues that the inability of the German government in the First World War to administrate efficiently was one of the primary causes for the collapse of the wartime economy which led to political radicalization and the November Revolution of 1918. See also: Lee, J., 'Administrators and agriculture: aspects of German agricultural policy in the First World War', in Winter, J.M., (ed.), War and economic development, Cambridge, 1975, p.229-238; Offer, A., The First World War: an agrarian interpretation, Oxford, 1989.

3 It has been estimated that 21% of agricultural produce consumed in metropolitan France in 1938 came from the colonies and abroad. Sauvy, A., La vie économique des Français de 1939-45, Paris, 1978, p.137.

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socially. It was clear that shortages were going to occur, but these were much more likely to be accepted by the population if resources were seen to be fairly distributed.

The perception by contemporaries of health and nutritional standards was that France was suffering during the war. Paul Rivet, the director of the Musée de l'Homme in Paris wrote during February 1944, in France Libre that the French people were suffering physically and were starving. Immediate post-war accounts did not differ: in his study of the black market, Debû-Bridal wrote in 1947, 'tous les Français étaient condamnés à un déficit alimentaire quotidien de 1,000 calories, à un mort lente de faim'. More recently, Albert Chambon has reaffirmed the claims of the French representative at the Nuremberg tribunal that, 'la sous-alimentation fut la cause immédiate de la mort de près de 150,000 Français et la cause indirecte de millier d'autres décès.' This view, in part, reflected the need to demonstrate that if all Frenchmen had not actually fought against the Germans between 1940 and 1944, they had, at least, suffered at their hands. It also reflected a genuine belief that the conditions in France during the occupation had caused a deterioration in mortality rates.

Throughout France there undoubtedly was hardship during the war. An indication of that suffering and the effects of the war on civilian health standards can be seen in the deterioration of the national combined sex mortality rates for the period. However, while the years between 1940 and 1944 witnessed a regression in mortality rates compared to the pre or post-war periods, this deterioration, as Sauvy has pointed out, was overall less than might have been expected. The increase in mortality rates during Vichy was considerably less than that reached in France immediately after the liberation, and certainly never attained the levels of the Dutch Hunger Winter of 1944-45. Yet in spite of the relatively small rise in national mortality rates between 1938 and 1943, the situation was far more serious than might be expected from these averages because of the

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6 Chambon, A., Quand la France était occupée 1940-1944, Breteuil-sur-Iton, 1988, p.19. Milward surely confuses rations with consumption when he states: 'The reduction in food consumption in France during the war was more drastic than in other western occupied territories. The consumption of every main category of foodstuffs was reduced by more than a third.' Milward, A.S., The new order and the French economy, Oxford, 1970, p.288.

7 See table 1. Cepède states that mortality in the whole of France increased on average by 11.6 per cent. It should be remembered that the population was suddenly and artificially aged by the absence of 1,600,000 prisoners of war. Cepède, M., 'Intervention', in La libération de la France, actes du colloque international tenu à Paris du 28-31 October 1974, Paris, 1976, p.315-18, p.315.


Material conditions and popular opinion

regional and local nature of that deterioration: while many rural departments witnessed improving mortality
rates, some areas, and in particular the cities, experienced severe difficulties in maintaining civilian health
standards.

MORTALITY RATES: FRANCE - 1938-46

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<tr>
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<th>1938</th>
<th>1939</th>
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<th>1941</th>
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<td>.02148</td>
<td>.02015</td>
<td>.02334</td>
<td>.01999</td>
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Table 1

Paradoxically, thirty-nine predominantly rural departments actually experienced an improvement in mortality
rates between 1941 and 1943 when compared to the period between 1936 and 1938; three others retained their
rates at much the same level. At times improvements could be dramatic, as in Haute-Savoie, which achieved
the fourth lowest rate in France during 1942. This despite the fact that Haute-Savoie traditionally had one
of the worst mortality rates in France: its mortality rate was below average between 1912 and the start of the
war.

The improvement in mortality rates in Haute-Savoie indicates that it is unlikely that there was a serious
deterioration in health and nutritional standards in the department before 1944. Aggregate mortality rates
between 1940 and 1943 remained well below the figures for either 1938 or 1944 and 1945. Moreover, if the
accidents category is excluded - to avoid distortions caused by the activity of the resistance, Government and
Axis forces between 1943 and 1945 - the rates in 1944, when there was an undoubted deterioration in mortality,
still remain marginally lower than 1938.


11 Cepède, M., 'Intervention', in La libération de la France, actes du colloque international tenu à Paris du

12 The department had a rate of .01420 compared to the Ardennes (.01320), Finistère (.01330), and Cantal


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADULT MORTALITY RATES HAUTE SAVOIE 1938-45</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Respiratory TB</td>
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<td>2. Infectious</td>
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<td>3. Cancer</td>
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<td>11. Accidents</td>
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<td>12. Others</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>Less 11.</td>
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</tbody>
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14 Figures have been taken to seven decimal points and then rounded to five. Figures for 1938-42 are taken from Annecy, A.D., 808 W 4; for 1943-45 from: Statistique du mouvement de la population: les causes de décès: 1940-49, Paris, 1945. These figures are inevitably only crude indications and, like all statistics, are neither infallible nor definitive. There are fundamental problems in comparing annual mortality rates when there is no indication of the age structure of the population.

15 Percentage of overall decrease 1938-43.

16 Pregnancy, Birth injuries, and Motor Injuries included in Others.
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This amelioration in adult mortality in Haute-Savoie between 1940 and 1943 also coincided with improvements in the rates of infant mortality and still-birth. (see Table 3.) Moreover, although there was an increase in infant mortality in 1943, its scale was relatively small compared to the increase after the liberation in 1945. The still-birth rate did not increase at all during the Vichy period. The notion of a population which was on the whole sufficiently nourished is supported by the stability of the rate of deaths caused by digestive diseases, which should have increased had there been a significant level of malnutrition. The rate for digestive diseases only attained a level worse than that reached in 1938 after the liberation (See Table 2.) It is unlikely that these phenomena could have occurred in populations which were malnourished. The paradox of how these improvements could occur at a time when war was creating apparent serious shortages of food and services must be explained.18

While the reduction in consumption of alcohol forced on the population by rationing will have played a role in the significant decline in degenerative diseases,19 it is also clear that in remote rural areas the production and consumption of the local eau de vie, gnôle, continued unabated.20 Of importance too, was the reduction in the consumption of sugar which will undoubtedly have contributed to the decline in diabetes mortality during

17 Jay Winter has argued that this rate is 'a very sensitive indicator of nutritional levels': Winter, J., The Great War and the British people, London, 1986, p.123.

18 Report of Ravitaillement Général, Annecy, A.D., 808 W 4, 8 November 1943. For a tragic example of the problems of food supply in mental institutions in Lyon, see: Lafont, M., L'extermination douce, Lyon, 1987. It is unlikely that the amelioration in infant and adult mortality in Haute-Savoie for the Vichy period can be explained in terms of improvements in health care: sanatoria and hospitals experienced considerable difficulties in obtaining both medical and food supplies - there were frequent complaints that they received their rations after the rest of the population, if at all. All institutions had difficulties in guaranteeing nutritional intake and if there was any section of French society in which deaths were actually caused by starvation it was in locations such as mental asylums.

19 The decline in the number of deaths caused by degenerative diseases made up 25% of the overall improvement in the department between 1938 and 1943. It has been noted that there was a marked increase in the number of deaths caused by cirrhosis of the liver in post-war France: Aubenque, et al. 'La mortalité par cause en France de 1925 à 1975', Journal de la Société de statistique de Paris, 1978, p.276-295, p.280.

20 Peasants in 1942 were reported to be keeping fruit back from market to make alcohol which was selling for 200 francs a litre: report of Contrôle Postal d’Annecy, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, June 1942. The author can attest to both the potency of gnôle and the ability of peasants to consume it in large quantities. In the towns the situation may have been different and the reduction in alcohol consumption may have played a role in increasing disposable income in low income families, much as it did in Britain during the First World War. See: Winter, J., The Great War and the British People, London, 1986.
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the war throughout France.\textsuperscript{21} Nevertheless, although these two factors will have played some part in the decline in mortality rates, in themselves they cannot have been to create an improvement on such a scale.

INFANT MORTALITY AND STILL BIRTH RATES HAUTE-SAVOIE 1939-45\textsuperscript{22}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1938</th>
<th>1939</th>
<th>1940</th>
<th>1941</th>
<th>1942</th>
<th>1943</th>
<th>1944</th>
<th>1945</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deaths under 1 / 1,000 births in Haute-Savoie</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td>63.2</td>
<td>60.5</td>
<td>60.7</td>
<td>57.0</td>
<td>67.0</td>
<td>65.4</td>
<td>96.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deaths under 1 / 1,000 births in France</td>
<td>65.0</td>
<td>63.0</td>
<td>91.0</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>77.0</td>
<td>81.0</td>
<td>82.0</td>
<td>114.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Still births / 1,000 live births in Haute-Savoie</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3

Paradoxically, the most important factor in the amelioration in mortality rates in departments such as Haute-Savoie was probably the improvement in the standards of nutrition. As will be seen, both quantitative and qualitative evidence suggests that nutritional standards in these predominantly rural regions were maintained and often actually improved until the end of 1943.

In Haute-Savoie, the introduction of rationing by Vichy had the paradoxical effect of increasing consumption, particularly in agricultural areas. A report from the director of the Ravitaillement Général noted:


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Il est à noter que le rationnement des denrées alimentaires a abouti, dans certains cas, à un accroissement de la consommation. Il a été signalé au Ravitaillement Général que la consommation de la viande dans les cantons ruraux s'est sensiblement accrue.\textsuperscript{22}

The report went on to remark that consumption of non-rationed products had also grown. Sales of skimmed milk, which was relatively cheap and at that time unrationed, had increased, as had the consumption of bread. The total sales of flour to bakeries and individuals for the department had also increased to 19,000 quintaux from a normal level of some 14,000. As will be demonstrated, in those cantons which were essentially rural, this increased level of consumption was maintained throughout the Vichy period. The scale of auto-consumption of produce became increasingly significant as peasants refused, for various reasons, to hand over food to the administration. This increase in consumption must have been one of the factors contributing to the relatively low mortality rates in rural cantons. As can be seen from figure 1, rates in these areas were consistently the lowest in the department, and well below average nationally.

Contemporary reports suggested that the section of the population in Haute-Savoie most at risk were those living in the towns. Here there were some signs of deterioration in health standards. The reports of doctors following medical visits to schools in Annecy suggested that as early as 1941 there was evidence of malnutrition: in some cases children had lost weight and falls between 2.6 kg and 1.8 kg were not rare. It was noted that other children were not growing sufficiently for their age.\textsuperscript{24} The following year, a report from the Inspection Générale des Ecoles Maternelles stated that about 20 per cent of young children were under-nourished.\textsuperscript{25} However, throughout the period under study, doctors also reported that the state of health in the towns did not decline as much as might have been expected. In 1941, the medical reports for schools in Annecy, the departmental capital, advised that recent supplies of milk from America and an extra 50 grams of bread distributed during the spring had prevented serious problems. They concluded: 'en dépit des signes de sous-alimentation présentés par de nombreux enfants, l'état sanitaire ne fut pas trop mauvais dans

\textsuperscript{22} Report of director of Ravitaillement Général, Annecy, A.D., 808 W 4, 2 December 1940.

\textsuperscript{24} Report of chef des Services Municipaux d'Hygiène, Annecy, A.D., 5 Mb 11, 3 November 1941.

\textsuperscript{25} Mentioned in prefect's report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 4 January 1941. This seems to mirror the situation in other towns in the Zone Libre. The synthesis of Prefects' reports in September 1942 noted: 'Dans certaines régions, la moyenne de ceux qui sont tombés par un amaigrissement prononcé, s'élèverait à 75%.' Synthesis of Prefects' reports, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 7, 18 September 1942.
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MORTALITY HAUTE SAVOIE:
Geographical variation 1941-45

0.028 Deaths per 100,000

0.026

0.024

0.022

0.020

0.018

0.016

0.014

0.012

0.010

1941 1942 1943 1944 1945

---

Data from Annecy, A.D., 5 Mb 48. These include accidents which will have distorted the figures in both Haute-Savoie and France during 1943 and 1944. The figures were calculated to seven decimal places and rounded to nearest five. Aggregates for deaths vary slightly from Annecy, A.D., 12 M 66, so that the departmental average varies slightly from Table 3. Vallin, J., and Meslé, F., Les causes de décès en France de 1925 à 1978, Paris, 1988, p.145-7.
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l'ensemble. An indication of the relative success in maintaining the situation in urban areas was provided by a report in 1942 which argued that children in the towns were actually in a better state of health than those from the countryside, where, as has been seen, mortality rates were low. The report in 1943 for the whole department argued:

Nous avons remarqué, aussi paradoxal que cela puisse paraître, que les enfants des villes jouissent d'une meilleure santé que ceux des campagnes, car si, à la campagne les enfants ont du 'bon air', le soleil et les produits en abondance, ils vivent souvent dans des maisons insalubres, humides et sales, avec des parents qui leur donnent une nourriture non appropriée à leur age.

The view of doctors that the state of health of the urban population was better than in some parts of the countryside is supported by the comparison of adult mortality rates (see figure 1). Although the mortality rates in the industrialised cantons were not as good as those in the completely rural areas, they were significantly better than those in the semi-urban and semi-rural cantons. An explanation of this phenomenon may be that the large towns appear to have benefitted significantly from the greater availability of welfare provisions and medical facilities together with superior public health provisions such as water supply, sewerage and refuse disposal. Housing conditions in the towns were also more healthy in the country. What is clear is that the deterioration in the food supply in urban areas was not sufficient to seriously affect mortality rates.

In contrast the semi-urban and semi-rural areas benefitted neither from the welfare and health systems in the towns, nor directly from the higher levels of auto-consumption in the countryside. It was these cantons that suffered the highest rates in the department. Moreover, the nutrition of both adults and children in these non-urban communes was undoubtedly affected as much by poor diet balance, which was a widespread problem, than by insufficient intake. Even in rural cantons, nutritional intake was not always as good as it should have been. Although there was more than adequate food for agricultural producers and their families, and there was little problem of inadequate calorie intake, unsuitable diet played an important role in preventing rural mortality rates falling further than they did. Doctors' reports noted that rickets, caused by deficiency in

27 Report of Chef des Services Municipaux d'Hygiène, Annecy, A.D., 5 Mb 11, 3 November 1941.

28 Report from deputy inspector of health, Annecy, A.D., 5 Mb 12, 9 September 1943.

29 Both public and those provided privately by factory owners.

30 Cicely Watson points out that France entered the Second World War with a serious housing problem, particularly in rural areas. Even after the war, 70 per cent of habitable rooms in rural homes had earthen floors in the department of Ille-et-Vilaine. Watson, C., 'Housing policy and population problems in France', Population Studies, 7 (1953), 14-45, p.16, 20.
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vitamin D - found mainly in fresh green vegetables - were more widespread in the countryside than the towns. The prevalence of this condition indicated that the health of the peasant population did not improve as much as it might, because of an unbalanced rather than insufficient diet. It was a point taken up towards the end of the report for 1945:

Si dans l'ensemble l'état sanitaire des enfant s'avère bon, certains médecins ont remarqué, dans plusieurs communes, des déficiences pondérales sensibles sans que toutefois le régime des restrictions alimentaires puisse être évoqué; ces communes étant rurales, seules des fautes d'hygiène peuvent être mise en cause.
Il ne faut pas oublier que, bien souvent, malgré toutes les campagnes que l'on a pu mener, les parents donnent au goûter ou au petit déjeuner, du pain trempé dans de l'eau de vie.31

Objectively therefore, the urban population of Haute-Savoie did not suffer as might have been expected. That is not to say that life was not difficult, nor that contemporaries did not perceive the situation to be precarious for some parts of society. As early as September 1941 René Dépollier, a local printer and newspaper publisher, recorded in his diary that he had to wait in a queue in Annecy for two hours to purchase some potatoes. The following December he wrote:

Le ravitaillement devient de plus en plus difficile...On trouve sur le marché du mardi et du vendredi des poires à environ dix francs le kilo, mais il faut faire la queue pendant une demie heure, et par une température de moins cinq, ce qui n'est pas agréable.32

One of the main difficulties for Savoyards attempting to maintain their nutritional levels was the severe inflation that afflicted food prices in France during the war years. The largest part of the urban population was dependent upon wages which had been fixed by the government, and although in theory prices were also fixed, even official prices, let alone alternative market prices, increased during Vichy at a rate far faster than wages.

The inflationary movement in food prices began well before the debacle of 1940. During the Third Republic local police monitored prices at markets in the department and the prefect communicated monthly with the Ministère de l'Economie Nationale about prices of a wide range of products from bread to olive oil. After the outbreak of war in September 1939, the government continued to monitor increases. These, at times, could

31 Report by deputy inspector of health, Annecy, A.D., 5 Mb 12, undated.
32 Diary entry of Louis Dépollier (henceforth Dépollier), Annecy, A.D., 1 mi 162, 13 December 1941.
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be considerable: the price of gruyère, one of the local cheeses, was, for instance, reported to have doubled in La Roche-sur-Foron between September 1939 and January 1940.\footnote{Report by A..., the prefect’s representative at the Contrôle Postal, Annecy, A.D. 1 M 108, 20 January 1940.}

After the collapse of the Third Republic, Vichy was faced with similar inflationary pressure, and was forced to concede significant rises in food prices between August 1940 and the same month in 1944. Even at official rates, between these dates the price of butter increased 158\%, margarine 41\%, cheese (gruyère) 136\%, unskimmed milk (in Annecy) 137\%, pasta 42\%, potatoes 142\%, sugar 100\%, lentils 60\%, chick peas 43\%, dried beans 44\%, eggs 192\%, fillet steak 171\%, pork chops 152\%, ham 305\%, and wine 123\%.\footnote{Recueil des actes administratifs, Annecy, 1940-44. The price of bread increased only 26 per cent, but the quality deteriorated markedly. For a comparison of prices between April 139 and April 1945, see: Boussard, L, 'Principaux aspects de la politique agricole française pendant la Ile Guerre Mondiale', RHDGM, 134 (1984), p.1-32, p.32.}

Moreover, even in Haute-Savoie, a predominantly agricultural area, products whose prices had been fixed by the Government were not always available in the shops or in the market-place. When peasants believed that levels fixed by the government or local administration were insufficiently remunerative, they reacted by failing to bring the product to the towns. Faced by the complete absence of certain products consumers were then forced to seek a substitute, or attempt to find the commodity on the black or other alternative markets. The prices of goods on these parallel markets could be many times greater than official prices (see table 4). In the face of these inflationary pressures, wage increments under Vichy failed not only to match the spectacular increases that occurred for some products on the black market, but also the increases in official prices. Given that some products were often unavailable in the open market, and that consumers were obliged at times to use the alternative markets to ensure sufficient food, it is evident that the poorer sections of society will have had severe problems in maintaining nutritional levels if they did not have alternative or additional sources of food and income.\footnote{As can be seen from Table 6, the prices on the black market proper will have been beyond their means.} Vichy was well aware that wages were not keeping pace with inflation. It also knew of the difficulties that those on fixed wages were having in maintaining their standard of living: as early as May 1941, the sous-préfet for St. Julien reported that, 'la seule question d’ordre interieur qui paraisse actuellement intéresser nettement la foule est le réajustement des salaires.'\footnote{Report of sous-préfet de St. Julien to prefect, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 31 May 1941.} As the war progressed the situation for those on fixed wages became increasingly precarious, and in September 1942, the prefect, during his monthly
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COMPARISON OF FIXED AND BLACK MARKET PRICES IN 1943

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Fixed price (francs)</th>
<th>Black market price (francs)</th>
<th>Percentage black market over fixed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Butter (kilo)</td>
<td>50.00</td>
<td>600.00</td>
<td>1,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk (litre)</td>
<td>5.20</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eggs (dozen)</td>
<td>30.00</td>
<td>120.00</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potatoes (kilo)</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>7.50</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veal (kilo)</td>
<td>12.50</td>
<td>80.00</td>
<td>540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beef (kilo)</td>
<td>23.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4

communication to the regional authorities, repeated the warnings in the reports of the sous-préfets for Bonneville and St. Julien that it was absolutely imperative to improve wage levels. An indication of the importance of the issue may be seen in a report of the Renseignements Généraux noting that even immediately after the invasion of North Africa and the complete occupation of France by Axis forces, 'la question des salaires est toujours au premier plan des préoccupations.'

By 1942, the administration realised that public pressure demanding wage rises to meet inflation would have to be dealt with if serious disturbances were to be avoided. The Ministère de l'Intérieur acknowledged that:

Les évaluations les moins pessimistes fixent à 60% l'élévation du coût de la vie par rapport à la période d'avant-guerre, alors que l'augmentation des traitements et

37 Recueil des Actes Administratif, Annecy, 1943; reports of Renseignements Général, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10, 12 W 10bis, and information provided by Mlle. Evalyne Beronzier of the Archives Départementales in Annecy: series 808 W, and 807 W which at present are not available to the public.


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salaires n’est que de l’ordre de 20% [...] Cette différence entre la hausse du coût de la vie et celle des traitements est génératrice d’une misère qui se glisse peu à peu dans les foyers des travailleurs salariés (ouvriers, employés, fonctionnaires).40

The following year, Pierre Lamy, the Inspecteur du Travail in the department, argued that a substantial increase in wages was necessary. He supported his case by giving the example of the Compagnie Général du Lait in Rumilly. He pointed out that relations between workers and management at this factory had been previously excellent and there had been no strikes or occupations there during the Popular Front in 1936. However, in 1943, the workers were threatening to strike unless they received an increase of some 50 per cent. In February 1942, unskilled workers at the factory had been receiving 6.30 francs an hour, and skilled workers up to 7.45, which at forty-four hours a week provided a weekly wage respectively of 277.20 and 327.80 francs.41 This rate had been increased to 6.80 and 7.80 by December 1942, but because the working week had been reduced to 40 hours, take home weekly pay for the least skilled actually dropped from 277.20 to 272.00 francs. Although Lamy eventually negotiated a compromise in December 1943, so that the workers received increases between 0.60 and 2.15 an hour, backdated to that June, the improvement meant only an extra 24.00 francs a week for unskilled and 86.00 francs for skilled workers. This was clearly inadequate for the increases in prices of food, clothes, accommodation and fuel since the outbreak of the war.42 The departmental administration became increasingly aware of the political dangers of an imbalance between prices and wages, confident that there was a direct link between urban poverty and political dissent. In 1943, a special report was commissioned from the Renseignements Généraux on the attitudes of railway workers in the department, who formed one of the most militant sections of the community. Most of the report consisted of details about difficulties guaranteeing their standard of living. The report concluded that ‘environ 90% des cheminots sont hostiles à la politique du gouvernement’. Yet if the railway workers, with special rights under Vichy, continued to have difficulties in maintaining their living standards, then the ability of those within the towns, who did not have those advantages, to maintain their health must be explained.

40 Synthesis of prefects’ reports from the Zone Libre by the Ministère de l’Intérieur, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 7, April 1942.

41 This compared with 150 francs a day which had been paid to woodcutters in Faverges during the summer of 1941. Woodcutters’ wages were not controlled. Agricultural wages were later reported to have been as high as 250 francs a day. Synthesis of reports from the Service de Contrôle Technique, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 258, 18 June 1941.

THE OFFICIAL rations offered by Vichy probably provided insufficient nutrition on a long term basis. Although the ability of the human body to adapt is remarkable, the requirements of a man doing light manual work have been estimated at around 2,400 calories a day, and official rations under Vichy provided only about 1,200 calories, well under half of the pre-war level. Moreover, if the rations theoretically available were insufficient, those meagre sources of calories were not always available: on occasions shops proved incapable of honouring tickets. Even in Haute-Savoie there were local shortages. Although the meat ration was honoured as normal in Annecy during November 1942 and there were even exceptional supplies of pasta and boudin offered without the need for tickets, in Thonon to the north, on the shores of lake Geneva, hardly any meat was distributed at all. In Haute-Savoie, then, official rationing could not guarantee sufficient nutrition and official rations were not always available. Unable to grow its own agricultural farm produce, a substantial minority of the population was forced to supplement its intake through the alternative markets, as best their means would allow.

For those of relatively modest income who were not agriculturally based, the option of using the black market on any scale was not available. As has been demonstrated, prices were well beyond their means. Even prices in the ordinary market place were beyond the budgets of many: the cabinet du préfet acknowledged that, 'les poissons, les légumes, les pommes de terre, atteignent des prix tels que le pouvoir d'achat des ménages modestes devient notoirement insuffisant'. While averages are meaningless in this context - it is after all those with below average incomes that suffer the most - Sauvy has estimated that, on average, an unmarried worker needing to supplement his rations from the alternative market would need to spend about 82% of his income on food, which left little for accommodation, heating and clothes. The plight of those married, with children and without access to their own garden was precarious. About 100,000 people in Haute-Savoie were either not agricultural producers or lived in an urban environment. The non-producing rural population which had neither the advantages of Vichy's social measures, nor those of worker gardens, had particular problems and it is possible that these factors account for the relatively high levels of mortality in semi-rural and semi-industrial

1 Sauvy gives an interesting example of a magistrate who did not have a jardin ouvrier and because of his position refused to use parallel markets: in 1942, he was diagnosed as suffering from malnutrition. This and other relating material in: Sauvy, A., La vie économique des Français de 1939-45, Paris, 1978, p.110 and 122-3.

2 Report of Chef d'Escadron, C..., Commandant le Compagnie de la Haute-Savoie to Prefect, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 9, November 1942.

3 Synthesis of reports of the Contrôle Technique by the cabinet du préfet, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 258, 5 September 1941.

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areas. However, despite the inability of much of the poorer strata of society to supplement their official rations, which were clearly insufficient, through the black market, one of the most remarkable consequences of the period is that mortality rates between 1940 and 1943 in the urban areas of Haute-Savoie did not deteriorate as might have been expected (see figure 1).

One of the reasons for the relatively low mortality in the towns in Haute-Savoie during the war was the diet that rationing imposed on the urban population. The control of alcohol consumption which was much more strict in the towns, together with the decline in the availability of both sugar and fat will have had beneficial effects on nutritional standards. Other changes in diet also helped: fresh vegetables were consumed in greater quantities than before, at least during the summer months, as meat became increasingly difficult to find from 1942 onwards. Wholemeal bread, with its greater nutritional value was increasingly produced in bakeries rather than the usual refined white baguette. Admittedly, the quality of this bread often caused digestion problems.

The difficulties of maintaining nutritional levels caused by inflation also changed spending habits, not all of which were detrimental to health. Cigarettes were not only strictly rationed, but many stopped smoking so that they could use their allowance in the barter system which became increasingly prevalent as the war progressed. Since a packet of cigarettes could be sold on the black market for 90 francs, the financial pressure not to smoke


6 The mortality caused by cirrhosis of the liver and alcoholism fell throughout France during the war, and rose sharply until the mid-1950s. See: Vallin, J., and Meslé, F., Les causes de décès en France de 1925 à 1978, Paris, 1988, p.190-1.

7 The levels of mortality caused by diabetes - which is linked to the richness of the food - fell markedly throughout France during the war. This trend continued until 1948 when rationing came to an end. See: Vallin, J., and Meslé, F., Les causes de décès en France de 1925 à 1978, Paris, 1988, p.188.

8 Reports of directeur départemental du Service du Ravitaillement Général, Annecy, A.D., 808 W 4, undated, probably September 1942. By October 1943, the butchers in Annemasse failed to open because they had nothing to sell. Ibid., 8 November 1943.

9 The memory of wholemeal bread that remained after the war was not a good one: the author’s landlady refused to eat the pain complet he used to purchase because it reminded her of the war.
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was that much greater.\(^9\) There were other changes in expenditure that helped nutritional levels: the price of clothes accelerated much faster than incomes,\(^1\) and an important proportion of the resources saved on clothes and shoes was used to supplement official rations either in the market place, or on the alternative markets.

The scale of these alternative markets is difficult to estimate. Sauvy has argued that the black market was never as extensive as contemporaries believed at the time, and that supply could never cope with demand.\(^1\) Certainly the extent of a professional wholesale black market was limited: the Prefect argued towards the end of 1941 that,

Le marché noir sévit ici comme ailleurs - mais c'est un marché individuel. Il n'y a pas d'organisation collective. De ce fait il est difficile à réprimer. Les paysans reçoivent à domicile la visite des citadins qui rafleят à de hauts prix des denrées faciles à dissimuler, comme les œufs, les volailles, le beurre, le fromage etc... il faudrait un gendarme dans chaque ferme.\(^13\)

This view was confirmed in a report of the Contrôle Postal which pointed out, 'Il n'y a toujours pas, à proprement parler, de marché noir dans le département, mais l'achat à la ferme, en petite quantité, par des particuliers pour les besoins de leur famille.'\(^14\)

\(^9\) The rapid increase in respiratory diseases in France between 1936 and 1940 was halted and declined between 1941 and 1943: Statistique du mouvement de la population: les causes de décès: 1943, Paris, 1947, p. xxx. For price of cigarettes on black market: extract of telephone call from Evian to Nice intercepted by the Service de Contrôle Technique, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 258. Incidentally, women did not have the right to a tobacco ration.

\(^1\) The Prefect reported in 1941 that the price of ordinary clothes had recently risen some 5 to 10%, and that of work clothes some 50% making them almost unaffordable for most working-class families to purchase them: prefect's monthly report to Ministry of the Interior, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 8 September 1941.

\(^1\) However, it should be noted that if supply had been able to meet demand then there would have been no reason for the parallel markets to exist. Sauvy, A., La vie économique des Français de 1939-45, Paris, 1978, p.128.


\(^14\) Handwritten synthesis of reports by the SCT, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 258, 18 August 1941. Some individuals did, however, make large sums - a telephone interception in September 1943 by the Contrôle Téléphonique provided the following transcription: 'depuis juin je me suis fait plus de 70,000 francs, seulement je suis pompé'. Annecy, A.D., 12 W 258, September 1943.
The black market proper tended to supply those who owned sufficient funds and goods to make use of it: it was particularly available to commerçants, industriels and, as will be shown, tourists. The sous-préfet de Thonon argued that the life of commerçants and industriels was 'relativement facile en raison des échanges qu'ils peuvent effectuer dans le domaine alimentaire'. The power of money allowed those with capital to ensure more than adequate nutrition: one report from the SCT complained that, 'le marché noir deviendrait un véritable scandale' and quoted one conversation, "Dans les villes c'est quelque chose de monstreux, il n'y a que l'argent qui permette un ravitaillement convenable." However, although the option of turning to the black market was not available to the poor, the other alternative markets, both grey and pink, were highly developed in Haute-Savoie and the probability is that much of the failure of the official system to supply food for the poorer sections of society was made up through them.

The scale of these parallel markets was probably much greater than the black market itself. Louis Baudin, writing in 1945, explained the system:

Personal arrangements were carried out between city-dwellers and country folk, who varied their prices according to the quality of the customer - relation, neighbour, summer resident, 'foreigner' and the highest of such prices were sometimes triple or quadruple the lowest.

Many Haut-Savoards located in urban conglomerations had been living in such an environment for only a single generation and had maintained contacts with the countryside: through relations, friends and contacts they were able to gain access to the grey and pink markets in the agricultural areas where prices were less exorbitant. These contacts were essential: the Contrôle Téléphonique quoted an intercepted telephone call from the Hôtel Splendide in Evian, 'Ici c'est comme partout, quand on a des relations on trouve, autrement, non.'

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17 The grey and pink markets, which involved people selling goods to friends at prices lower than those of the black market, were also called 'le marché aimable'.


Sureté concurred with this view, stating in 1942 that rabbits and chickens were impossible to find except for those with relations in the country.  

The shortfall in nutrition in the urban population was also made up by special measures created by the government. Extra rations were provided for pregnant women and those still breast-feeding children, as well as those in strenuous employment, known as travailleurs de force. Other measures initiated by the government to help the children, the old and those on low incomes who were at risk of malnutrition, included setting up canteens and restaurants which supplemented the 'soupes populaires' and 'restaurants à prix réduits' created by the Legion in towns like Annemasse.

For others, one of the most important measures was the creation of jARDIN OUVRIERS - worker gardens. The government believed these to be extremely important: during its first year, the Direction du Service Agricole spent 270,000 francs in the department to help set up 1,200 workers' gardens, making up an area of forty hectares. It was hoped that those on low incomes would be able to grow their own vegetables, and thereby avoid expenditure in the market place. The urban based population also took them seriously: the sous-préfet for Bonneville reported in the spring of 1941 that they were particularly popular in communes such as Cluses, Seillonier, Sallanches and the Vallée du Giffre which had larger than usual urban working-class communities. The following spring the Contrôle Téléphonique commented that 'l'activité de la plus grande partie des travailleurs de notre région est retenue par les soins à donner au jardin familial.' Factory owners also played a role in alleviating suffering by setting up canteens and providing extra allowances, possibly through altruism, though also through self-interest in the need to retain staff who would otherwise have been tempted elsewhere. Some businessmen also provided subsidised food for their workers by purchasing products well

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21 Report of Sous-Préfet de St. Julien to Prefect, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 30 November 1941. Such measures were not, of course, available in smaller towns in the semi-rural areas.

22 Prefect's report to Ministry of the Interior, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 8 September, 1941.

23 Report of sous-préfet de Bonneville, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 30 April 1941.

24 Contrôle Téléphonique d'Annemasse, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, April 1942.

25 Some factories, such as Zuccolo, Rochet et Cie which employed 430 people, were complaining by December 1942 of shortages of labour. Production was double pre-war levels. Report of Chambre Industrielle Haut-Savoyarde, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 9, 15 December 1942.
Survival in Haut-Savoyard towns: 1940-43

above fixed levels and then selling them to their employees at the official prices, at a loss. Although far from conclusive, a possible indication of the relative success of social measures undertaken by the government and employers was the lower mortality rates in the towns than in the semi-rural areas, which did not have the advantage of jardins ouvriers, soup kitchens and other special measures.

The widespread use of the alternative markets together with the various social measures implemented by the government and other institutions permitted the department to remain privileged throughout the Vichy period compared to the rest of France - they also protected the urban population in the department from serious malnutrition. There was, of course, suffering, of which the administration was well aware. The Contrôle Téléphonique reported,

La misère grandit parmi la classe ouvrière, les salaires ne suffisent plus à assurer le minimum vital, et beaucoup hésitent par fierté à profiter des organisations d'entraide. Nombreux sont ceux qui souffrent sans se plaindre, cette situation ne saurait cependant durer longtemps sans changer.

However, despite this suffering, the urban working-class population in Haute-Savoie made up but a small part of the population, and although certain sections of the urban community and non-producing rural population did suffer between 1940 and 1944, mortality rates in the whole department overall were among the lowest in the country. The administration recognized at the time that, generally, the department was better supplied than much of France, and attempted to explain the situation:

Le ravitaillement demeure la principale préoccupation de la population. Il est actuellement suffisant dans mon arrondissement, et je m'emploie à démontrer au cours de mes tournées, que ce coin de Savoie est particulièrement privilégié par rapport au reste de la France, et même de l'Europe.

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26 The sous-préfet de St. Julien gave the example of factory owners from Lyon who purchased potatoes in his arrondissement and then sold them to their workers. Report of sous-préfet de St. Julien, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 9, 30 November 1942.

27 Vichy was aware that the situation in semi-rural areas was at least inferior to that in completely rural regions: report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 9 September 1943.


Survival in Haut-Savoyard towns: 1940-43

Certainly the situation in the towns in Haute-Savoie was far superior than that in the larger conglomerations elsewhere. Louis Dépollier described in his diary the reaction of the wife of a policeman, mother of six children, whose husband had been posted from Lyon to Annecy,

[Elle] a déclaré qu’ici, elle se trouve en paradis. Il lui est arrivé, à Lyon, de faire la queue quatre heures pour obtenir un demi kilo d'épinards et le lait manquait totalement. Ici les enfants ont leur lait. Aujourd’hui la femme est revenue du marché avec un panier de légumes... et avec le sourire.30

30 Unpublished diary of Louis Dépollier, Annecy, A.D., 1 mi 162, 13 October 1942.
CHAPTER 11: TOWN AND COUNTRY IN WARTIME FRANCE

YET although some departments like Haute-Savoie managed to maintain or even improve health standards, other regions suffered near crises of mortality. The vast bulk of the deterioration was concentrated in a few areas in the south and especially in the large cities. Compared with the period between 1936 and 1938, mortality rates between 1941 and 1943 in the cities increase markedly: Marseilles (Bouches du Rhône - 57%), Lyons (Rhône - 29%) and Paris (Seine - 24% and Seine-et-Oise - 23%) all suffered serious deteriorations in mortality.\(^1\) Even within these essentially urban departments, there were local variations: it was, for example, the inner cities that experienced the worst problems, rather than the suburbs. In Lyons, for instance, growth of children within the city was affected by malnutrition, while in the suburbs there was little evidence of children being underweight.\(^2\) This was not the case in Marseilles where the situation was far more serious and resulted in significant urban depopulation.\(^3\)

Some of the deterioration in health standards in these urban conglomerations elsewhere in France will have been caused by factors other than poor nutrition which were inevitable in time of war. The increase in the T.B. rate, while to some extent exaggerated in the statistics was, in fact, all too real, though not necessarily completely due, by any means, only to declining levels of nutrition. In the UK, a report during 1942 by the Medical Research Council argued that,

Modern war tends to intensify the various social and environmental factors that are generally considered to affect the level of tuberculosis in a community. These include overcrowding, nutritional deficiencies, the nature of industrial employment and the greater prevalence of sources of tuberculosis infection.\(^4\)

It was probably the greater prevalence of sources of infection that accounted for much of the increased incidence of T.B which occurred in France during the war. D'Arcy Hart, in his study of Britain during the First World War, has argued that factors in poverty, such as nutrition, seemed to be of less importance in determining the levels of mortality of respiratory tuberculosis, which is accounted for by the human rather than bovine bacillus and is spread through cough spray and expectoration, than closeness of personal contact caused by overcrowding.\(^5\)

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3 According to census returns, the population of Marseille fell from 914,000 to 626,000 between 1936 and 1946: see Beauquier, J-P., 'Problèmes du Ravitaillement dans la Région Marseillaise: 1940-1944', RHDGM, 113 (1979), p.5-43, p.6. One paradoxical effect of Vichy's maladministration of the economy may have been to reverse rural depopulation for a brief time.


5 Between 98 and 99 per cent of pulmonary Tuberculosis in England and Wales was caused by human bacillus: D'Arcy Hart, P., et al., Tuberculosis and Social Conditions in England, London, 1939, p.36.
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France entered the Second World War with a serious, though partly concealed housing problem.6 The country’s homes were on average older and in a worse state of repair than those of other major western nations. Moreover, standards of housing and overcrowding deteriorated in war-time France: the destruction of residential accommodation by both the débâcle in 1940 and subsequent Allied bombing exacerbated an already acute problem. Vichy was unable to alleviate the situation. Although the Government passed housing legislation in every year between 1940 and 1943,7 other economic preoccupations and more urgent matters such as security tended to take priority. By the end of the war, less than 37% of French dwellings had running water in the flat or house.8 Given this sort of housing stock and the overcrowding caused by bombing, it was little wonder that the war period saw a deterioration in T.B. rates.

The war increased the number of other opportunities for infection and re-infection of T.B. The enforced migration caused by the débâcle, together with evacuation from cities at risk from Allied air raids, often sent people from healthy homes to infected, and from infected homes to healthy ones. The rapid expansion of camps de vacances which attempted to provide children from cities with a more healthy environment also exposed them for the first time to rural raw milk and the bovine bacillus. Finally, many sanatoria were closed to provide German recuperation centres, and their patients, many of whom were still suffering from the disease, were forced home to their families when they were still infectious.9 As a result, many latent cases became active; many active ones became terminal.

Nevertheless, while social factors, such as these10 will have contributed to the severe deterioration in mortality rates within these urban conglomerations, insufficient nutrition was one of the most important agents in creating the near crises of mortality in the cities. Vichy was, quite simply, unable to provide adequate supplies of food for these areas and prevent serious malnutrition in certain sections of society. However, it was not that there were inadequate resources available in France at the time, rather that the government was unable to reach and distribute them.11

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7 Le Courbusier said in 1941 that housing was ‘the very key to the renaissance of the family and the spirit, the key to the renaissance of the nation.’ This quote and other information see, Watson, C. ‘Housing policy and population problems in France’, Population Studies, 7 (1953), p.14-45.

8 The situation in rural France was no better. A post-war study of the rural department of Ille-et-Vilaine showed that 70% of habitable rooms in rural farm houses still had earthen floors. The situation was probably little better in Haute-Savoie.

9 In Haute-Savoie, 6,500 wounded German soldiers arrived in October 1943 who were placed in Annecy, Chamonix, St. Gervais, Thonon and Evian: report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10, 25 October 1943.

10 The importance of inadequate heating caused by lack of fuel should not be underestimated.

Both Sauvy and Cépède have argued that agricultural production dropped during the period because of lack of work-force, fertilizers, live-stock and machinery parts. In fact, although there was a decline in production, its size was considerably less than was estimated at the time. The effect of shortages of chemical fertilizers in France was minimal: before 1939 utilization had been amongst the lowest in Europe: when pre-war Dutch farmers were using an average 270kg per hectare, French paysans were using only 35kg. Similarly, shortages of parts for tractors were not as serious as elsewhere because so few tractors were in use. In the case of livestock, as will be demonstrated, the decline was much less than was believed at the time, because statistics were deliberately falsified at local and administrative level.

Much more critical was the shortage in the workforce: around 55,000 peasants were killed during the campaign in 1940, and an estimated 683,000 captured by the Germans. In commune of Manigod, in the mountains above Thônes, 32 of the 80 men mobilised were taken prisoner. Nevertheless, in Haute-Savoie, where official production fell substantially, most of land-holdings were family based, and even before the war women had performed much of the farm-work. Until the subject is properly researched, it is difficult to speculate, but the likelihood is that the role of women on French farms changed during the war to take on new, traditionally masculine roles and that, together with a number of réfractaires from the Service du Travail Obligatoire, they absorbed much of the work previously performed by their absent husbands, fathers and sons.

Although labour shortages will have played some part in the fall in official agricultural production, much of this official decline can be explained in terms of the falsification of the official statistics. The very agencies of central government responsible for estimates in production systematically distorted results so that German demands...
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for French production would be less onerous. Furthermore, the original data with which Vichy statisticians were dealing were far from accurate because so many farmers falsified their declarations to the authorities. The administration was dependent upon the cooperation and consent of the farmers, the syndics and the mayors for estimates of harvest yields. When, as increasingly happened, that consent and cooperation was withdrawn, it became almost impossible for the Ravitaillement Général to be sure how much they should requisition. Savoyard farmers were helped in their efforts to defraud the administration by the dispersed nature of peasant holdings in the department. Fraud was easier for peasants with larger farms who were able to distort declarations of their holdings, the areas sown and amounts harvested with less difficulty than those with smaller areas cultivated. For example, the agent administratif for Reignier and Annemasse complained to the prefect during the summer of 1942 that farmers with small holdings were being forced to hand over as many potatoes as had large farmers who had lied about the size of their crops. The French agricultural historian, Michel Augé-Laribé, explained the problem of official statistics in 1945:

Il n'y a pas de bonnes statistiques agricoles. Il serait naïf de s'en étonner. Les faits agricoles humains et économiques sont d'une extrême complication. Une enquête ne portant que sur les plus importants de ces faits nécessiterait un travail énorme, un personnel compétent très nombreux, la bonne volonté et la sincérité de tous les producteurs.

Many peasants also provided inaccurate information about their herds of livestock. The authorities were aware that estimates of numbers of livestock were often inaccurate and that a substantial proportion of farm animals escaped their control. As early as June 1941, the sous-préfet de Bonneville warned the prefect that animals were being taken up into the mountains to avoid being counted by the Ravitaillement Général. The situation was similar in other departments. An indication of the possible scale of dissimulation can be gauged from the discovery in the Pas de Calais that the official pre-liberation estimate for milking-cows of 80,000 undershot the true figure by more than a third.

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19 Syndics were presidents of the Commissions communales d'évaluation, the local bodies which decided who should provide the produce required to fulfil the quota set by the Ravitaillement Général.


24 Report of sous-préfet de Bonneville to Prefect, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 29 June 1941.

By failing to declare their produce, there was for the peasants a happy coincidence of patriotism and economic self-interest which appealed to what the prefect called the 'deux sentiments fondamentaux dominant l'opinion: un égoïsme aveugle et une haine irrefletchie - de l’Allemande.'\textsuperscript{26} Patriotism, because, as the prefect's reports suggested, many agricultural producers justified obstructing Vichy's collection of their produce in order to prevent their crops serving the German war effort. The policy of collaboration was never popular: a report from the sous-préfet for Thonon in May 1942 argued that 'c'est la collaboration totale qui repugne de plus en plus à l'opinion, en raison des événements de zone occupée et des prélèvements toujours croissants sur notre production nationale.'\textsuperscript{27} As early as March 1941 reports to the prefect in Annecy from the localities were consistently reiterating that the population believed that agricultural produce collected by the government did not benefit other parts of France but rather went to Germany.\textsuperscript{28} This belief did not diminish after the occupation of the south zone by Axis forces in November 1942. In November 1942, the weekly report of the Renseignements Généraux advised,

\begin{quote}
Pour ce qui a trait au ravitaillement, en ce qui concerne notamment le lait, les inquiétudes et même le ressentiment de la population se font très vifs... Bien que l'on ait affirmé que tout ce lait condensé serait réservé à la consommation des enfants, nul n'y croit. La population craint que cet aliment de première nécessité soit livré à l'exportation et naturellement à l'Allemagne.\textsuperscript{29}
\end{quote}

The following year, in 1943, the Ravitaillement Général had considerable difficulties in collecting in the eggs that it required. By September only 60% of the quota had been collected. The Ravitaillement Général suggested,

\begin{quote}
En outre il y aurait bien lieu de faire connaître aux cultivateurs par voie de presse l'emploi qui est fait des œufs collectés. La grande majorité des personnes imposées prétendent en effet que ces œufs seraient destinés aux groupes d'occupation.\textsuperscript{30}
\end{quote}

It would be wrong, however, to make moral judgements about the attitudes of the peasants. The situation was confused. Immediately after the liberation, Louis Baudin attempted to explain the increasingly difficult moral dilemma that existed during the occupation: 'the situation was a strange one: a man's duty might require him to evade the law, and sloth could masquerade as patriotism. As a result of this confusion in the elementary

\begin{footnotes}
\item[26] Synthesis of reports of the SCT by cabinet du préfet, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, 19 April 1942.
\item[27] Special report of sous-préfet de Thonon explaining the reaction of the population to the reappointment of Laval, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 7, 27 April 1942, dated in error 27 May 1942.
\item[28] Report of Contrôle Postal d'Annecy, Annecy A.D., 12 W 257, 15 March 1941.
\item[29] Weekly report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 9, 9 November 1942. Laval's subsequent attempts to persuade the population that shortages were not caused by German demands on the French economy were futile: report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 9 May 1943. So too was an appeal to the peasants by the Bishop of Annecy: report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 25 February 1943.
\end{footnotes}
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notions of right and wrong, a certain degree of moral chaos could scarcely be avoided.\textsuperscript{31} Baudin argued that the widespread prevalence of the black market in France in comparison with the UK could be explained by the belief that in France by supporting the black market you were acting patriotically, whereas the situation in Britain was the reverse.\textsuperscript{32} The Renseignements Généraux agreed with Baudin that well-publicised German demands for produce provided considerable motivation for the non-delivery of supplies:

\begin{quote}
D'ailleurs, c'est cette idée qui a peu à peu fait perdre au marché clandestin tout caractère immoral dans l'esprit de la population. 'Ce qui va au marché noir,' entend-on dire couramment, 'est ainsi soustrait aux occupants.'\textsuperscript{33}
\end{quote}

There was a coincidence not only patriotism, but also self-interest, partly because of an increase in auto-consumption, but much more importantly because of the vast profits to be made on the alternative markets through the sale of non-declared produce.\textsuperscript{34} Much of the demand for agricultural produce came not only from the friends or relations to whom the peasants sold at reduced prices, together with the more wealthy sections of the local population who were able to afford black market prices, but also from holiday-makers who flocked to the department during the winter and summer tourist seasons throughout the war.\textsuperscript{35}

While some came for winter sports and the undoubted attractions of the department during the summer, most came to eat. Haute-Savoie had a reputation for being a region with a plentiful supply of food for those who could afford to pay. The Contrôle Téléphonique reported one conversation: 'on ne va pas à La Clusaz (one of the ski stations in the department) pour faire du ski, mais pour bien manger.'\textsuperscript{36} Food dominated the existence of the tourists: the Contrôle Postal argued that, 'la satisfaction des besoins matériels est la

\begin{footnotes}
\item[32] Little work seems to have been done on the black market in Britain during the war: it would be interesting to know if it did permeate British society less than it did in France, and if so why. One study has argued that rationing only works if authority is accepted and the regulations are seen to be real and to work. Furthermore, it is necessary to separate those involved in supplying the produce from those administrating the system, otherwise the producers subvert the system and breaking the law becomes institutionalised. See Hancock, W.K., and Gowing, M.M, The British war economy, London, 1949.
\item[33] Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 9 June 1943.
\item[34] For an admission that large profits were made by some peasants, see: Challamel, J-B. (ed.), La vallée de Thônes et Glières pendant la 2e Guerre Mondiale, 2 vols., Thônes, 1984, I, p.95.
\item[35] Challamel gives an interesting definition of the different prices available at the time: 'A cette époque, dans la région, trois prix étaient donc pratiqués: - le prix de "la taxe" pour les produits requisitionnés, - le prix du "marché noir", le plus élevé, - le prix raisonnable pratiqué entre des personnes se connaissant, et par celles qui, par honnêteté, ne voulaient pas tirer profit de la situation.' Challamel, J-B. (ed.), La vallée de Thônes et Glières pendant la 2e Guerre Mondiale, 2 vols., Thônes, 1984, I, p.95.
\end{footnotes}
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préoccupation dominante', and quoted a letter from a visitor to the department: 'on ne vit que pour son ventre...et les gens ne pensent qu'à le remplir le mieux possible: le reste laisse plus ou moins indifférent.'

These tourists, who in great part sustained the black market in Haute-Savoie, purchased both for themselves and others, sending home large numbers of food parcels to their relatives and friends at home: the Midi, Var, Rhône, and Bouches des Rhône were particularly popular destinations. In August 1941, before such parcels were made legal, the police attempted to clamp down on this traffic, and in one day searched 79 parcels at the main sorting office in Annecy: nine were discovered to contain food, which included 9.5 kg butter, 2.6 kg cheese and 28 eggs, seven of which were broken. Government agencies stated that the tourists were visiting farms and buying 'systématiquement'. The scale of this illicit trade was not inconsiderable. In June 1942, the Renseignements Généraux reported that hotels throughout the department were fully booked for the following two months. An intercepted letter revealed: 'Annecy et toute la région est boursé à craquer. On ripaille et godaille dans tous les coins. Tout se file à des lieux aux alentours et à des prix frisant la catastrophe.'

Vichy proved powerless to control direct sales at farms. The black market in Haute-Savoie was one of the most lucrative in France, not only because of its size, but also because of the level of prices. According to the agent administratif for Annemasse and Reignier, the high cost of living in the department was caused by both the proximity of Switzerland with which there was a flourishing black market and the large number of tourists who flocked to the department. 'La Haute-Savoie est devenue une des régions de France où les prix sont les plus exorbitants,' he noted. The Renseignements Généraux agreed that prices in the department were high. It compared the department to the Beaujolais, where it was possible to find butter at 150 francs per kilo and eggs only a little above the fixed rate; in Haute-Savoie, the Renseignements Généraux complained, butter cost between 400 and 500 francs, and a dozen eggs between 90 and 120 francs.

If there was more than sufficient demand for black market produce, the peasants were given every justification - in financial terms - to meet that demand. The prices offered for their quota by the Government were much lower than those the peasants could expect to receive on the parallel markets and offered little incentive for the farmers to deliver their produce. For example, the Ravitaillement Général would only offer 12,50 francs per kilo for veal, when peasants were could easily sell their calves at prices ranging between 85 and 100 francs a kilo. The Renseignements Généraux admitted, 'les prix de la taxe, non seulement ne sont pas

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37 Report of Contrôle Postal d'Annecy, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, August 1942.
38 Report of Ravitaillement Général, Annecy, A.D., 808 W 4, August 1941.
40 Extract from synthesis of postal interceptions, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 258, 5 September 1941.
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rémunérateurs, mais ne permettent pas toujours de couvrir le prix de revient. The temptation for farmers to keep back their output was enormous. As one report compiler commented - a peasant would have to be a saint to refuse 80 francs for a dozen eggs when the official collectors only offered 30 francs.

The profits to be made by the main beneficiaries of the tourist trade - hoteliers, restaurateurs and peasants - could be considerable. In 1941, the prices of hotel rooms with full board were between 100 and 270 francs a night; by 1943 tariffs as high as 1,000 francs for a single night were recorded. The restaurateurs and hoteliers went for their supplies directly to the peasants who did not miss the opportunity to profit from the situation. In 1943, the Contrôle Postal advised that there was another influx of tourists in the department, où les hôtels saisonniers raffinent tout à n'importe quel prix. Le peu qu'il y a va aux restaurants et hôtels qui regorgent de clients. Il fallait en Savoie beaucoup de touristes, on les a! Tant pis si les indigènes n'ont rien à manger!

The previous year, the prefect noted caustically, that the situation for the peasants was, Très supportable. Je signale notamment qu'ils ont, au cours de la saison d'été, drainé la majeure partie des sommes dépensées par quelque cent mille estivants ayant résidé dans mon département au cours des mois de juillet et août.

This deluge of money was repeated every summer and winter between 1941 and 1943, and although its impact on the incomes of Savoyard peasants is impossible to estimate accurately there are indications that the profits reaped were considerable. Certainly, the rural parts of the department were not in financial difficulty: the Trésorerie Générale noted in November 1941 that if the department had the tendency to pay its taxes


44 Report of Contrôle Téléphonique d'Annemasse, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 257, August 1941. One final justification for peasants to charge customers from the towns black market prices may have been revenge for the Popular Front in 1936.

45 Report of Contrôle Téléphonique d'Annemasse, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 257, July 1941; report of Contrôle Postal d'Annecy, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 258, July 1941; report of Service de Contrôle Technique, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, January 1943. In 1943, the weekly wage for a skilled worker at the Compagnie Général du Lait in Rumilly was just 327.80 francs.


47 He also marvelled at the ability of the department to house and feed them. Prefect's report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 7, 1 September 1942.

48 In the Vallée de Thônes, renowned for its Reblochon cheese, large profits were to be made during the Vichy period on the black market. The area was not atypical. See: Challamel, J-B. (ed.), La vallée de Thônes et Glières pendant la 2e Guerre Mondiale, 2 vols., Thônes, 1984, I, p.95.
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punctually, agricultural areas were much more prompt than elsewhere. 49 As early as 1941, it became clear from sales of treasury bonds and deposits in the savings accounts (at the Caisse d'Epargne) that there was plenty of liquidity in the department, much of it located in the rural sections of society. 50 The monthly prefect's report in February 1942 suggested that of the sales of treasury bonds during the previous year, 18% had been purchased by commerçants and industriels, 28% by the classes moyennes, 11% by wage earners, and 49% by peasants. 51 The Prefect noted that these figures,

permettent d'établir que la classe paysanne possède des disponibilités très importantes. Il semble donc que, malgré les difficultés actuelles, elle connaît une prospérité certaine. Cette constatation confirme la réputation que l'on fait communément au paysan de dissimuler l'état réel de sa fortune et permet de penser que le mécontentement qui s'exprime parfois dans les propos de la classe paysanne est de surface et ne traduit pas sa situation réelle. 52

Many of the peasants continued to be prosperous throughout the pre-liberation period - a prosperity essentially financed by selling non-declared produce on the alternative market. In September 1942, towards the end of the tourist season, the Trésorerie Générale commented that the increase in deposits over withdrawals had continued at a high level, and that 'il semble dû, en grande partie, à l'abondance de capitaux à la disposition des agriculteurs. 53 The following year the Renseignements Généraux reported,

En ce qui concerne le producteur, on peut dire que, quoique lésé pour certaines impositions, sa situation reste en général assez prospère, car tous plus ou moins se livrent à des ventes hors cours, et réalisent de cette façon de notables bénéfices. La campagne n'a jamais tant brassé d'argent. 54

In 1944, those profits did not appear to be diminishing:

Il n'est pas douteux que les campagnards ont érigé, depuis l'Armistice, des fortunes considérées comme scandaleuses. La récolte a été, en 1943, d'une façon générale, exceptionnellement bonne; il est établi que la vente des fruits tels que les

49 Report of Trésorerie Générale to prefect, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8, 24 November 1941. It is also of interest that there was never any question of a tax revolt in the department, and that even in 1944, Savoyards were paying their taxes more or less normally and on time.

50 This increase occurred elsewhere in France: in the region of Marseilles, the number of accounts at the Caisse d'Epargne increased from 704,200 in December 1938 to 837,500 in December 1946. The amounts held in the accounts also increased, from 2,267m Francs to 10,916m Francs - well above the rate of inflation. See: Beauquier, J-P., 'Problèmes du Ravitaillement dans la Région Marseillaise: 1940-1944', RHIDGM, 113 (1979), p.5-43, p.27 n.12.

51 Though it should be noted that the Trésorerie Générale's mathematics may have been slightly at fault. The figures make up 106%. Savoyard peasants did make up the major part of the department's population, but it should not have been supplying the major part of its wealth. Prefect's report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 9, 3 February 1942.

52 Prefect's report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 9, 3 February 1942.

53 Report of Trésorerie Générale, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 7, 25 September 1942; large purchases of bonds were also reported by the Contrôle Téléphonique: report of Contrôle Téléphonique d'Annecy, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, February 1942.

The efforts of the peasants to invest their gains incidentally gave some indication of what they had profits generated. Some, worried about inflation, attempted to invest their money in land and other valuables: the SCT reported 'une véritable chasse à l'achat de terrains, propriétés, objets rares ou collections diverses.' Others increasingly bought treasury bonds: in 1942, the Trésorerie Générale commented, 'la progression des placements en Bons du Trésor atteint des proportions remarquables [...] L'importance des résultats obtenus ne saurait être trop fortement soulignée.' Yet although the Trésorerie considered the results in 1942 'remarkable', they were well under half what they were to be in January 1944. As both resistance groups and independent armed bands began to requisition goods and money from the peasants towards the end of 1943, and the peasants sought to protect their savings through the purchase of treasury bonds, so the extent of the profits that had been made over the previous years became apparent: in the single month of January 1944 192,000,000 francs of treasury bonds were purchased: a staggering figure for a single department.

Given the profits that were to be made through the alternative market, it was hardly surprising that there were shortages of meat, fresh vegetables and fruit in many towns in Haute-Savoie.

While the Contrôle Postal found that holiday-makers' letters during the summer of 1942 enthused about 'l'abondance et la richesse' of the food to be found in restaurants, local people wrote of shortages at the market place of eggs, fish, meat, and potatoes. The sous-préfet for Bonneville summed up the situation when he commented,

Il ressort des conversations avec les estivants venant d'autres régions de la France que si la Haute-Savoie est un pays où l'on peut trouver des denrées en abondance, il est également celui où ces denrées sont les plus chères et où le marché noir sévit avec le plus d'intensité.
IN NOVEMBER 1942, after the invasion of North Africa by the Americans and the total occupation of the Zone Libre by Axis forces, the Ravitaillement Général found itself in an increasingly difficult position. Now that metropolitan France was completely cut off from the resources of her Empire, it became necessary for the government in Vichy to find still greater quantities of food from the countryside if the cities were to be adequately fed. As a result, the cities began to make increasing demands upon the surrounding hinterland and obliged the departmental administrations to make ever increasing claims upon the agricultural communities. The peasants reacted to these ever growing demands by proving more and more reluctant to hand over their produce. Their unwillingness was assisted by the total occupation of France by the Axis which gave still more support to those who held the view that food supplied to the government went straight to the Germans.

Unable to motivate the peasants through profit, the prefect and administration attempted to appeal directly to the loyalty and patriotism of the peasants, together with their mayors and syndics, on behalf of their urban compatriots. Advertisements and slogans were placed in both newspapers and the Recueil des actes administratifs:

- Des ouvriers des villes s'expatrient chaque jour pour assurer le retour à la ferme des prisonniers. Pour que le pain ne manque pas à leurs femmes et à leurs enfants, Cultivateurs, livrez votre blé!
- Cultivateur, ton grand devoir de l'heure présente, c'est d'abord d'aider la France à gagner la bataille du pain.
- Cultivateur, pense à ton frère citadin qui, bien plus que toi, souffre des restrictions. Pour éviter que sa ration de pain ne soit diminuée, livre, jusqu'au dernier grain, tout le blé dont tu disposes encore.
- La sourdure de la campagne du blé s'avère difficile. Pour que le pain des Français soit assuré jusqu'aux prochaines moissons, cultivateurs livrez votre blé.

But despite such efforts, and appeals by the Bishop of Annecy, the administration was persistently disappointed by the results of such campaigns: in April 1942, the new sous-préfet for Bonneville wrote rather optimistically,

- Malgré l'égoïsme dont fait généralement preuve le monde rural en matière de réquisitions, j'ai eu le sentiment, à l'occasion des prises de contact que j'ai pu avoir dans mes tournées en vue de la livraison du blé, que la gravité de la situation

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1 In Haute-Savoie, for example, the Ravitaillement Général found itself in a position where, initially, it was unable to respond: in December 1942 the service was able to find only 100 of the 500 cattle required that month by the department of the Rhône (which contains Lyon).

2 Slogans in Recueil des actes administratifs, Number 3bis, Annecy, 1943.
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n'échappait pas aux agriculteurs et qu'ils feraient, cette fois du moins, l'effort que l'on réclame d'eux.

By August, his hopes were dashed. He complained of,

Le paysan: principal travailleur dans un pays à économie dirigée; après au gain, il demeure en défiance à l'égard de toute réglementation.3

The inertia and egotism of the peasants became a consistent lament in reports: some noted 'systematic opposition,'4 and even went as far as to describe opposition to attempts to extract produce from them as 'résistance paysanne.'5

Faced with the economic pragmatism of the peasants, Vichy was forced from the autumn of 1942 onwards to accelerate the trend of moving from consensus to coercion in its attempt to guarantee the supply of food for the cities. In shifting from a participating system to a control system, the Government appeared willing both to sacrifice what remained of its popularity in rural areas and to compromise the food supply of Haute-Savoie itself.

It soon became apparent that the attempts to guarantee nutritional levels in other departments would accelerate the deterioration in the prefecture's relationship with the department's municipal authorities. The implementation of much of Vichy's legislation concerning agricultural economy fell on the often unwilling shoulders of the commune's mayor and his secretary. In part, the reluctance was caused by the sheer scale of the work involved. This was not a new problem: as early as August 1941, the prefect noted that some municipalities were having difficulties in recruiting secretaries because of the increasing burdens involved with the function.6 At a meeting with mayors from the arrondissement of Thonon, the prefect was told frankly that,

3 Reports of sous-prefect of Bonneville to Prefect, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 7, 21 April and 25 August 1942.


5 Report of Ravitaillement Général, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 808 W 4, November 1943. Whether this résistance was much linked to patriotic motives must be questioned: a post-liberation report from the Ravitaillement Général complained that the situation in the department had worsened since the liberation in August 1944. Amongst others, it blamed the peasants: 'La situation du ravitaillement ne va pas en s'améliorant, bien au contraire. Ceci est dû, pour une grande part, à la carence totale des responsables, de mairies en particulier et à l' esprit égoïste et partiel du producteur et des consommateurs.' Undated report of Ravitaillement Général, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 808 W 4, certainly autumn 1944.

6 Prefect's report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 4 August 1941.
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'les secrétaires de Mairie sont débordés', and mayors were having to help them out. The result of such pressures on the secretaries was such that, by July 1942, the prefect admitted that there was a significant risk that many of the primary school teachers, who traditionally fulfilled the role of secretary to the mayors and who were finding their role in the village mairie no longer allowed them to prepare their lessons adequately, would soon begin to hand in their resignations. He continued, 'J'estime qu'il y a là un problème grave.'

After the full occupation of the country in November and as Vichy increasingly sought methods to extract food from the countryside, so the burden on the mayors, secretaries and syndics became progressively greater and unrewarding. The rapid expansion in the role of central government and the increase in the amount of information required by civil servants placed a strain on the relationship between the government and the localities. In December 1942, the agent administratif for Reignier and Annemasse complained:

Bien que signalé déjà dans mes précédents rapports, je crois utile de revenir sur le mécontentement que provoque chez les Maires consciencieux le ton cavalier dont usent à leur endroit certaines administrations de fraîche date... Il est vrai que ces services nouveaux semblent ignorer ce qu'est un Maire, dont pourtant le rôle primordial a été maintes fois signalé par le Gouvernement du Maréchal.

The role of the mayor became increasingly unpleasant. By 1943, in addition to his role in administrating rationing and ensuring compliance with government quota for agricultural output, the mayor was also obliged to implement the census for the STO. Municipalities were often placed in a difficult position: one in which the stated interests of the government and those of their community often appeared to conflict. If they chose to remain in office - and many escaped from the predicament by resigning - it was increasingly the latter that took precedence. In his report for May 1943, the director of the Service du Ravitaillement Général complained of 'la carence de nombreux maires, syndics et commissions communales d'évaluation des resources.' The Contrôle Téléphonique was more blunt, accusing the municipal authorities of 'mauvaise volonté flagrante.'

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7 Prefect's report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 4 January 1942.
8 Prefect's report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 7, 4 July 1942.
11 Report of Contrôle Téléphonique d'Annemasse, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, March 1943; also report of Ravitaillement Général, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 808 W 4, 22 June 1943.
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The scope and extent of that 'mauvaise volonté' could be broad. On occasions the local officers simply refused to cooperate: in September 1943, the director reported that many of the commissions communales were now quite simply refusing to work out their quota for individual farmers, leaving the job to the Ravitaillement Général. By January 1944, only 20 communes (out of a total of 315) had bothered to reply to the Services Agricoles with the details necessary for the collection of the quota of eggs. Many municipalities found that they could look after the interests of their community, and incidentally block the government, merely by interpreting or deflecting their instructions. Five communes, as required, collected the potato crop for the winter of 1942/3 but then promptly distributed it to those in need within the locality. Similarly, the town hall in Annecy distributed 23 tonnes of potatoes to those in need, subsequently claiming that it had received 'une communication téléphonique anonyme' from the prefecture giving it permission to do so.

Without the support of the municipalities, the departmental administration found it increasingly difficult to carry out government policies in the localities and was forced from a policy of cooperation to one of coercion. From the spring of 1943, as the situation in the cities became more acute, the stick was much more in evidence than the carrot. To enforce the collection of the 1942/3 potato harvest, a series of letters were sent out to 2,090 individual farmers threatening them with fines and confiscations if they did not supply their quota. Mayors and syndics were, in some cases, informed that they had been made personally liable for

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14 They were St. Maurice-de-Rumilly (La Roche), St. Pierre-de-Rumilly (La Roche), Challonges (Seyssel), Chêne-en-Semine (Seyssel) and St. Gingolph (Evian): report of Ravitaillement Général, Annecy, A.D., 808 W 4, 23 March 1943.
15 Ibid.
16 Some municipalities and syndics were obliged to withdraw cooperation because of threats from the resistance: report of Ravitaillement Général, Annecy, A.D., 808 W 4, 22 October 1943; 10 January 1944; 30 January 1944; report of sous-préfet de Bonneville which also mentioned pressure from German authorities not to supply the maquis, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10, 22 December 1943; report of agent administratif de Reignier et Annemasse, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10, 20 December 1943.
17 Vichy had already attempted a policy of both carrot and stick in 1941, when it had encouraged the peasants to deliver calves voluntarily, while at the same time threatening that a cow would be requisitioned for every calf not handed over.

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any shortfalls.\textsuperscript{18} The Ravitaillement Général also resorted to fines and confiscations in an attempt to force the peasants to deliver.

Yet, in the end, the power of the state was limited. Without the consent of the municipal authorities, the administration discovered it was incapable of imposing its will on the localities. Its attempts to coerce the population failed. Not least because the resources available to the administration were clearly inadequate. As the SCT became increasingly directed towards political opposition to Vichy rather than the operations of the black market, so the number of telephone and postal interceptions sent by the service to the Prefecture declined.\textsuperscript{19}

The agencies in charge of food collection were also over-stretched. In 1943, at the very time when Vichy hoped to force the peasants to supply the necessary food, resources were directed to more immediate and pressing problems such as controlling the security situation. While the director of the Ravitaillement Général argued that he needed, at least, a register of animals and energetic policing to prevent large scale clandestine slaughter of cattle in the mountains,\textsuperscript{20} the police were becoming increasingly distracted by the problem of the réfractaires from the Laval’s STO and the beginnings of military resistance. The commandant in charge of the Gendarmerie in the department pointed out that the number of black market infractions discovered that month by the police had fallen from 309 in May to only 180 in June. He reminded the prefect that the black market had not disappeared, but that for the last month, the Gendarmerie had been almost exclusively dedicated to the hunt for réfractaires from the STO.\textsuperscript{21}

Furthermore, even when offences could be investigated, the punishment, normally in the form of fines, proved a limited deterrent. For one thing, the authorities proved unable to collect them: of the 83 fines administered during the summer of 1943 for failing to deliver milk and illegal sales of dairy products on the alternative

\textsuperscript{18} Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 5 July 1943.

\textsuperscript{19} A decline from 6,718 interceptions in 1942 to 3,899 in 1943. The fall was steeper than might be imagined from these figures: in January 1942, the SCT sent about 900 interceptions to the various agencies. By December 1943 that had fallen to less than 250. See figure 3. Undated graphs, SCT, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256. Although all branches of the administration received fewer interceptions for investigation, the decline was particularly steep for the Contrôle Economique (from 135 in 1942 to 88 in 1943) and the Ravitaillement Général (from 81 to 11).

\textsuperscript{20} Report of Ravitaillement Général, Annecy, A.D., 808 W 4, 21 May 1943.

\textsuperscript{21} Report of C..., commandant de la Compagnie de la Haute-Savoie, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 22 June 1943.
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markets, only 12 had been collected by December - representing 104,500 francs out of a total 1,040,000.\textsuperscript{22}
Even when the authorities did succeed in forcing the farmer to pay, the size of the fines was hardly damaging:
'les amendes administratives... [les] laissent indifférents car il leur est toujours facile de les récupérer en augmentant le prix de leurs produits au marché noir.'\textsuperscript{23}

\textbf{TELEPHONE INTERCEPTIONS BY THE SCT SENT TO PREFECTURE: JAN 1942 - DEC 1944}

\begin{figure}[h]
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\caption{Figure 3}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{22} These fines were the heaviest imposed: report of Ravitaillement Général, Annecy, A.D., 808 W 4, 8 December 1943.

\textsuperscript{23} Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10, 19 December 1943.
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The trend towards coercion accelerated as the administration turned increasingly to forced requisitioning.24 The new head of the Ravitaillement Général complained that the failure to enforce the government's threats to deal with the black market and non-delivery of farm produce undermined the administration's authority: he noted that the collection of eggs in the department was not being taken seriously by the mayors and syndics because of the lack of sanctions in previous years.25

When the authorities did take firm action, it was often counter-productive: raids on farms to find hidden pigs caused a mass slaughter of the animals throughout the department, none of which made their way into the hands of the administration.26 The director of the service admitted,

Malheureusement, l'effet de ces mesures, en ce qui concerne la collecte des pommes de terre est, en grande partie, négatif... Les saisies ne donnent rien et les amendes provoquent l'irritation. Exemple: à Neydens démission du syndic agricole et menace de démission de maire.27

The scale of opposition to the policy was such that, in a report about the delivery of cattle, the Ravitaillement Général admitted, 'L'on peut dire que 97% des réalisations sont effectuées sur ordre de réquisition, les propriétaires craignant la saisie qui a dû être opérée à plusieurs reprises dans certaines communes.28

One reason for such opposition was the low remuneration offered by the Ravitaillement Général for requisitioned produce. The service paid only 3,550 to 5,000 francs for animals that were worth between 20,000 to 28,000 francs. By June 1943, some communes had been forced to hand over as much as 10 per cent of their animals since the previous autumn.29 The farmers claimed that the pressure to meet the administration's monthly quota, was such that some were forced to hand over milking cows to be slaughtered for their meat.

24 Increasingly desperate, the Prefect sacked the head of the Ravitaillement Général in February 1943 after the organisation's failure to provide even 400 of the 500 cattle needed from the department in December 1943, K..., the departmental director of the Ravitaillement Général, was dismissed, according to Louis DépOLLier because 'les habitants de la Haute-Savoie sont trop bien traités: ils mangent "trop bien." Unpublished diary of Louis DépOLLier, Annecy, A.D., 1 mi 162, 1 February, 1943.


26 Réport of Ravitaillement Général, Annecy, A.D., 808 W 4, 8 November 1943.


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Given that most Haut-Savoyard peasants made their living selling dairy produce, this could imply serious financial losses. The Ravitaillement Général estimated that the number of milking cows in the department declined by 10,000 between November 1942 and May 1943.

The effect of such efforts was to alienate profoundly the department’s peasant population: the Contrôle Postal reported,

Les réquisitions de bétaill portant, suite à la faiblesse du cheptel, sur les vaches laitières provoquent la colère ou le découragement des paysans. Ceux-ci subissent du fait de ces réquisitions des pertes sensibles.

An indication of that alienation was the increasing number of resignations of mayors and syndics. Although not all resignations were in protest against the government’s agricultural policies, a good many were. There were, of course, local variations. Some cantons continued to supply produce as asked, others were particularly recalcitrant: during the summer of 1943 it was expected that as a whole the department would deliver about 70% of the quota of eggs required, but that in the areas around Thonon, Bons and Abondance the peasants would send only 20% of their allocations. As late as May 1944, the Renseignements Généraux reported that the farmers around Rumilly, Faverges and Cruseilles to the west of the department continued to supply eggs.

30 In fact, the decline in numbers of milk producing cows and the losses sustained by the peasants in Haute-Savoie were much less dramatic than might have been expected: some farmers were able to buy poor quality cattle from other areas at 8-10,000 francs which they sold at a loss to the authorities rather than losing highly productive milking animals: see report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 12 July 1943 and 2 August 1943.


32 Commission de Contrôle Téléphonique d’Annemasse, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, May 1943.

33 The decision not to help in the supply of produce did not necessarily imply political dissent or resistance: the mayor of Petit Bornand, who was in the Armée Secrète (A.S.) and played an important role in the Glières affair, was commended by the director of the Ravitaillement Général for his efforts in collecting ‘produits de basse-cour’: report of Ravitaillement Général, Annecy, A.D., 808 W 4, 21 May 1943. For example the mayor of Copponex (Cruseilles) resigned after his secretary and the members of the municipal council had been taken to court after their failure to deliver the commune’s potato quota. This was not an isolated example. Report of sous-préfet de St. Julien, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 25 June 1943; the director of the Ravitaillement Général recorded that the sanctions taken there were ‘abusifs’: report of Ravitaillement Général, Annecy, A.D., 808 W 4, 22 June 1943; for other examples see the resignations of the syndics at Pringy (Canton) and Sillingy (Canton): report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10, 12 December 1943.

34 Eggs were selling to hoteliers at 200 francs a dozen while the Ravitaillement Général was offering only 21 francs: report of C..., commandant de la Compagnie de la Haute-Savoie, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 22 June 1943. Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 2 August 1943.
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as requested, while in the Chablais and Faucigny there was still 'une résistance passive'. The report also added, 'c'est dans ces dernières régions que se manifeste le plus particulièrement, l'action des terroristes.' This pattern of an orderly calm in the west of the department in the pre-alps and a much more turbulent environment in the mountains was also repeated in the distribution of mayors who were resigning.

The impact of the cities' growing demands for food and the increasingly authoritarian methods used by the Government to prise out agricultural produce was the profound alienation of the Haut-Savoyard peasant population. Food supplies to the non-agricultural population in the department also began to be compromised. The deteriorating relationship between the administration and the peasants was such that by 1943, the authorities discovered that the objective of ensuring supplies for the major conglomerations was incompatible with their other objective - to feed the department itself. So little food was arriving from the countryside and so much of what did arrive was being sent out of Haute-Savoie that large sections of the department's urban population began to experience shortages of food. The Ravitaillement Général in Annecy complained that if their role, defined by the law of 23 October 1941, was to guarantee the supply of food to neighbouring departments as well as assuring that of the department itself, the regional authorities had always insisted on supplying the departments with commodities in short supply first, and only then Haute-Savoie. The report commented,

En conclusion, le département qui jouit d'une réputation totalement injustifiée de 'pays de cocagne' voit aujourd'hui ses besoins en partie sacrifiés à ceux d'autres départements qui possèdent de "grands centres". Il apparaît nécessaire que cette situation soit revisitée.

In March 1943, after 300 of the 550 cattle required by Lyon had been provided by Haute-Savoie the previous month, there was a deficit in the department which resulted in only 50% of the meat ration being honoured. Complaints about meat became increasingly vociferous throughout 1943, as ever larger

38 Report of Ravitaillement Général, Annecy, A.D., 808 W 4, March 1943. There were also complaints about the quality of the meat when it was available: the peasants tended to supply the oldest and least productive animals for slaughter - animals offering the toughest meat.
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quantities were exported from the department to destinations as far away as Paris. By the autumn of 1943, Vichy was unable to guarantee the supply of food to those groups within the department that could not fend for themselves on the alternative markets.

The following year, in 1944, the ability of the authorities to gather and distribute food diminished seriously. The collection of food produce was increasingly jeopardised not only by the unwillingness of the agricultural community to deliver produce to the authorities, but also by the attitudes of local fonctionnaires who proved reluctant to fulfil their duties as they became the targets of threats and even attacks from the resistance. The director of the Ravitaillement Général reported, "plusieurs présidents de commissions d'achat m'ont donné leur démission devant les menaces dont ils étaient l'objet et vu les graves incidents dont ils ont été les victimes." Even when supplies were sold to the Ravitaillement Général, the same goods were often stolen or sabotaged before they could be transported to the towns in the department. The reports from the Renseignements Généraux and Ravitaillement Général from the winter of 1943 onwards consistently complained that cattle, butter and other produce that could be resold were being stolen. What could not be resold easily was destroyed: in December 1943 nearly 240,000 eggs at a depot were broken by a group of unknown men.

Moreover by 1944, the authorities no longer had the means to transport food to the towns. The collection of eggs and potatoes, which had anyway fallen well short of targets, was so seriously hampered by lack of petrol and fuel for the gazogènes that potatoes were reported to be rotting in storage. The poor security

39 In August 1943, Haute-Savoie provided 416 of the 500 required by the department of the Seine, leaving a deficit of 151 cattle for the following month in Annecy and other towns. Report of Ravitaillement Général, Annecy, A.D., 808 W 4, September 1943.

40 In 1943, agents of the Contrôle Economique had even been threatened by the peasants themselves. At Fillinges (Evian), inspectors looking for corn were warned by peasants that it would not be in their interests to requisition a large stock of illegal eau de vie they had accidentally discovered: report of C., commandant de la Compagnie de la Haute-Savoie, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 22 February 1943.

41 Report of Ravitaillement Général, Annecy, A.D., 808 W 4, 10 January 1944 (misdated 1943).

42 For instance, six tonnes of butter were stolen from the Ravitaillement Général at the hamlet of Eluiset in the commune of Viry (St. Julien) and five tonnes of cheese from a refinery at the town of Seysel in early December 1943: report of Ravitaillement Général, Annecy, A.D., 808 W 4, 8 December 1943; for cattle rustling: Ibid., 24 January 1944.


44 These were cars which had been converted from petrol to run on a variety of alternative fuels.
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situation and the state of siege instituted in the department during January 1944 made transport increasingly
difficult. Even when supplies arrived at the station there was not always sufficient rolling-stock to export them
outside the department. Shortages of rolling stock were reported as early as September 1943,\textsuperscript{46} and by
November there were no longer sufficient quantities of wagons to carry the food away.\textsuperscript{47} As levels of sabotage
by the resistance increased, so rail-links within the department, as well as those with the exterior, became more
tenuous and by July, the lines to the outside were definitively cut.\textsuperscript{48} In an exceptional move, the
Ravitaillement Général sent out 260 lorries between 10 June and 27 July 1944, loaded with various goods to
the Isère, Rhône, Drôme, Vaucluse and Gard to be swopped for corn, sugar, fruit and vegetables so that the
food supply of the department could be guaranteed.\textsuperscript{49}

The effect of the reluctance of the peasants to supply food together with the breakdown in communications
during the spring of 1944, also had serious repercussions for nutritional levels within the department. It became
increasingly precarious for individuals to go into the country to buy or barter for food.\textsuperscript{50} Those without stocks
- for the most part those on low incomes - were forced to depend on ration tickets whose value, even when they
were actually honoured, diminished almost every month.

By the winter of 1943/4, rationing had all but broken down, and nearly all foodstuffs were in short supply. Most
critical were the shortages of oil and fat: tickets for 'matières grasses' were not honoured in Annecy between
November 1943 and the following February.\textsuperscript{51} Only 100 of the 225 grammes of butter theoretically available

\footnotesize{\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{45} Report of Ravitaillement Général, Annecy, A.D., 808 W 4, 8 October 1943; 23 October 1944.
\item \textsuperscript{46} Report of Ravitaillement Général, Annecy, A.D., 808 W 4, 23 September 1943
\item \textsuperscript{47} Report of Ravitaillement Général, Annecy, A.D., 808 W 4, 8 November 1943.
\item \textsuperscript{48} Report of Ravitaillement Général, Annecy, A.D., 808 W 4, 11 August 1944. Allied bombing contributed
to the disruption of the French railway system too.
\item \textsuperscript{49} The director noted that, 'aucun incident n'a été enregisté au cours des voyages effectués par les camions
qui sont tous arrivés à bon port': report of Ravitaillement Général, Annecy, A.D., 808 W 4, 17 July 1944; 24
July 1944.
\item \textsuperscript{50} No buses left Annecy in June, and nearly all private cars had been requisitioned: report of prefect,
Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, June 1944.
\item \textsuperscript{51} Report of Ravitaillement Général, Annecy, A.D., 808 W 4, 8 December 1943; 22 December 1943; report
\end{itemize}}

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in exchange for tickets were actually distributed in November,\textsuperscript{52} and in December each individual was provided with only 50 grammes.\textsuperscript{53} By February the butter ration was reduced to 110 grammes, but only 70 were actually supplied.\textsuperscript{54} There were also shortages of meat: ration tickets were regularly not completely honoured - in May 1944 only 30\% were exchanged - and when they were, the meat was often hard and inedible.\textsuperscript{55} As communications became progressively more difficult, so the situation worsened: by the middle of July no meat had been distributed for a fortnight.\textsuperscript{56} For the first time, even bread began to run short: in Annemasse, rations were reduced in June to 100 grammes per person per day\textsuperscript{57} and in some rural communes stocks of flour were completely exhausted.\textsuperscript{58} The situation was exacerbated by the paucity of food available in the market place: supplies of vegetables were reported to be difficult to obtain throughout the spring of 1944,\textsuperscript{59} except for a brief period in April, and prices were often so high as to be unaffordable - the Renseignements Généraux recorded the price of a kilo of peas as being as high as 32 francs.\textsuperscript{60}

The implications of this failure to maintain the food supply was serious for both the population of Haute-Savoie and the government in Vichy. Infant mortality rates, in comparison with previous years, deteriorated in Haute-Savoie during 1943 and 1944, though, as in the rest of France, the worst was yet to come in 1945 (See Table 3). As for overall aggregate mortality rates in the department, even without accidents (including deaths caused by the occupation), there was a clear regression in 1944. Urban and semi-industrialised cantons were particularly hard hit (See figure 1.).

\textsuperscript{52} Report of Ravitaillement Général, Annecy, A.D., 808 W 4, 8 December 1943


\textsuperscript{54} Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 19 February 1944.

\textsuperscript{55} Reports of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 25 June 1944; 9 April 1944.

\textsuperscript{56} Report of Ravitaillement Général, Annecy, A.D., 808 W 4, 17 July 1944.

\textsuperscript{57} Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 18 June 1944.

\textsuperscript{58} Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 2 July 1944.

\textsuperscript{59} Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 12 March 1944

\textsuperscript{60} Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 14 May 1944. As will be demonstrated later, after a brief improvement, the situation deteriorated still further after the liberation.
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The implications for Vichy's legitimacy and authority were equally serious: the departmental administration had failed to protect the nutritional standards of the urban population in Haute-Savoie as well as elsewhere, and in failing had antagonised and alienated the agricultural community. Respect for Vichy, the administration and the rule of law had been weakened: more serious, perhaps, was the impact of material deprivation on the social strains that had existed before the war and the creation of new ones created during it. French society appeared to be losing its cohesion - a disintegration that according to Vichy risked civil war.
ALTHOUGH nearly every section of society was eventually antagonised by the implementation of Vichy's economic policies, it was the agricultural community, making the largest part of the population of Haute-Savoie, that was particularly alienated. The increasingly heavy involvement of the departmental administration in peasant affairs triggered considerable resentment in the agrarian community - a community which had expected to enjoy a privileged position under Vichy. The regime's propaganda had consistently stressed the importance of peasants and had sought to elevate their status within French society. This was after all, a government which had promised, after the disappointments of the Third Republic, to look after their interests. While it was far from clear what peasant farmers anticipated from the government, slogans such as 'Le retour à la terre' and 'La terre, elle, ne ment pas', had certainly raised their expectations.

The essential dilemma facing Vichy was that it was unable to fulfil those expectations because the interests of producers were directly incompatible with those of consumers. The government saw one of its primary roles to be the prevention of revolution - revolution which if it occurred, would start in the cities. As part of its policy of alleviating the plight of the poorer sections of urban society in an attempt to ensure social cohesion, the government became committed to a programme of maintaining prices at levels which were affordable for those on low incomes and which would guarantee adequate nutritional intake. The implications of that policy were increasing government intervention in the affairs of farming communities and the artificial depression of commodity prices - a strategy which failed totally to coincide with peasant expectations.

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1 Synthesis of prefects' monthly reports in April 1943, 18 May 1943, Lyon, A.D., quoted in Luirard, M., La région stéphanoise dans la guerre et dans la paix: 1936-1951, St. Etienne, 1980, p.440

2 The Contrôle Postal in Annecy noted in May 1941, 'approbation de la politique agricole du Maréchal. Les paysans voient qu'elle est dans leurs intérêt, et "marchent à fond"': Annecy, A.D., 12 W 257, 29 May 1941.

3 French peasants had little experience of detrimental state intervention in their affairs. During the First World War, requisitioning had given way to an ineffectual system of quota: the prices offered by the Government failed to match that of the market and goods disappeared from view. The Government was incapable of administering an effective system, and in the end, was forced to fall back on imports to guarantee its army and urban citizens necessary food. By 1916, 60 per cent of the army's meat was refrigerated and came mainly from the United States and Argentina. This level of imports - reflected in other areas - meant that the French civilian population did not suffer too greatly during the First World War- at least compared to the privation experienced in Germany. Bread rationing, for example, was only introduced in 1918. See: Moulin, A., Les Paysans dans la Société Française, Paris, 1988, p.172-4. Peasants' experience of intervention did not increase after the outbreak of war in September 1939. Although some prices had been fixed in the pre-war period, rationing was not introduced until after the government was installed in Vichy. It is possible that the Daladier government's decision not to control the economy too tightly was taken with the knowledge of the
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In attempting to balance the needs of the towns with the desires of the agricultural community, Vichy was placed in an impossible position: on the one hand, the government was presented with complaints from much of the urban population that prices were fixed at levels that were unaffordable; on the other, farmers complained that they were too low. The Contrôle Postal in Annecy reported as early as July 1941, that,

"On parle de divers mécontentements dans la foule, à propos des mesures de ravitaillement, des formalités administratives toujours assez critiquées. Les paysans seraient 'enervés par les taxation'."

It was almost impossible for Vichy to please either consumer or producer, let alone both at the same time: by March 1942, the Contrôle Téléphonique in Annemasse commented, 'la hausse constante du coût de la vie diminue le pouvoir d'achat des classes laborieuses et contribue à augmenter le malheur'; and yet went on to note that, at the same time, farmers were giving wheat and other produce to pigs because prices for their commodities were insufficiently remunerative. When farmers believed that the prices for commodities were being fixed at levels which offered insufficient profit, they simply failed to deliver produce to the market place; when the authorities failed to enforce fixed prices so that the peasants would come, the consumers complained that food in the market place was too expensive.

likely response.

4 See among many examples, for instance, report of the Contrôle Téléphonique d'Annecy, 'grièves habituels, les producteurs jugent les taxes trop faibles, les acheteurs les trouvant trop élevées', Annecy, A.D., 12 W 157, 15 February 1941. The reaction of farmers in Haute-Savoie proved no exception to the more general rule of peasant opposition to what is perceived as government interference. Studies of Germany during the First World War and under the Nazis have demonstrated the hostile reaction of peasants elsewhere when confronted with interventionist governments. Kocka, J., Facing Total War: German Society 1914-18, Lenington Spa, 1984, and Kershaw, I., Popular opinion and political dissent in the Third Reich 1933-45, Oxford, 1983.


6 Report of Contrôle Téléphonique d'Annemasse, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 257, 1 March 1942; food being given to livestock was also reported in a report of the Contrôle Téléphonique d'Annecy, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 258, 1 November 1941.

7 For example, when the prefect set a new price for eggs, the Contrôle Téléphonique reported next month that subsequently none could be found in the markets: report of Contrôle Téléphonique d'Annemasse, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 257, June 1941

8 There were persistent complaints that prices in the market were above the levels fixed by the government: one report argued that they were at least 20% higher than they ought to be: report of Contrôle Téléphonique d'Annecy, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, 1 January 1942.
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The problem was, as the authorities admitted, 'très complexe, très difficile à resoudre, c'est le grand sujet de récrimination.'9 Initially, in an attempt to intervene as little as possible in price setting, the administration's introduction of fixed prices tended to be reactive, rather than part of any formalised structure.10 However, it was soon evident that no single price could be controlled without creating an impact on other parts of the supply structure. Fixing the price of peas merely stopped peasants bringing them to market, thereby creating demand for other vegetables which forced their price up in turn, with the result that the government was forced to interfere again. The administration was inextricably drawn into the messy business, so that eventually the price of almost every product was regulated.

As the administration was increasingly obliged to intervene in the economy, fixing both prices and production quota, so the frequency and scale of protests about the local administration increased. Farmers lamented 'l'excès d'étatisme,'11 and maintained that 'on n'est plus maître de ses recoltes.'12 They complained not only about the scale of the administration's interference but also the inefficient and bureaucratic nature of its intervention.13 The comités de gestion and répartition were particularly blamed for their incompetence: by January 1942, the administration was noting, 'récriminations de plus en plus acerbes sur l'incompétence de ces comités,'14 and complaints about 'comités de désorganisation.'15 The scale of red tape was also resented: the Contrôle Téléphonique quoted one lament, 'pour avoir une poignée de marchandise il faut un kilogramme de paperasserie.'16

10 There were complaints that prices were fixed too late: handwritten synthesis of reports of SCT, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 258, first fortnight July 1941.
13 The irritation about price fixing was not only directed towards Vichy. When the government set the price of Gruyère in January 1940, there were also complaints from the peasants. Report of A..., directeur du centre départemental d'Information, Annecy, A.D., 1 M 108, January 1940.
15 Report of Contrôle Téléphonique d'Annecy, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 258, 1 November 1941.
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In some respects the criticisms about the inefficiency of the bureaucratic machinery were justified. French fonctionnaires had little experience in running a controlled economy. The rapid expansion of the bureaucracy required to run a managed economy was far from painless. The increase in the number of employees at the Secrétariat Général de l'Agriculture from 12,997 in 1939 to 19,065 in 1944, was, for example, criticised by peasants because it led to the recruitment of staff who were not sufficiently well trained in the details of day-to-day farming. One of the members of the Ravitaillement Général in charge of the collection of dairy produce had, according to local farmers, been trained as a hairdresser. The sous-préfet for St. Julien admitted that some of the complaints of the peasants about the incompetence of a number of employees of the Ravitaillement Général were justified: farmers complained that the fonctionnaires did not realize that estimating yields merely on the basis of areas sown was insufficient - the quality of the soil, which differed considerably from valley to valley and from side of valley to side of valley in this mountainous area, was also important.

It was this sort of incompetence and unfairness that irritated the peasants' acute perception of injustice. More than anything else, the Haut-savoysard farmers complained about the inequality and injustice of the system. There was widespread belief that the system was not only inefficient, but also corrupt. The Comités de Gestion et Répartition, which held considerable power over the supply of goods and services to peasants, wholesalers and retailers, were particularly criticized. As early as May 1941, the Contrôle Téléphonique reported complaints that the comités were favoring friends and by September it stated that there were, "vive critiqués, répétés, au sujet des Comités de Gestion et de Répartition. "Cela continue", entend-t-on journellement, "ils se servent"

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17 The constant reorganisation of the various services involved in the economy bore witness to the system's disorganisation.


19 Report of Contrôle Téléphonique d'Annemasse, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, April 1942.

20 In 1943, the Renseignements Généraux agreed that bureaucrats were still making mistakes: the commune of Alex (Annecy-nord), which received no sun during the winter - so that the snow there stayed longer - and had only a few hours during the summer, was not an effective area for cultivating oil-bearing crops. Yet it had received a demand from the Services de Ravitaillement for a quota of 1,495 kg, when the commune opposite, Dingy-St-Clair (Annecy-nord), which received a good deal of sunshine, was required to hand over only 1,050 kg. The report concluded that the authorities had little understanding of the local situation. Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10, 7 November 1943.

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et servent les amis.”22 The syndics and representatives of the Corporation Paysanne were also felt to be less than unbiased: reports suggested that favouritism riddled the organization at all levels.23

The peasants reacted to an administration which they felt to be interfering and unfair with growing animosity. In attempting to control the economy, the government had taken on responsibility for much of the social and economic welfare of the population, and in adopting that role provided a focus for discontent. There was little for which it was not blamed. In rural areas, intercepted letters reflected growing hostility (‘méfiance’) towards the administration and government,24 blaming it for ‘chinoiseries’, ‘la pagaille administrative’ and ‘fonctionnarism’.25

A l’égard de l’Administration, le public prodigue ses doléances coutumières. Le ravitaillement en particulier est indiqué comme dirigé par des fonctionnaires incompétents, décidant des taxations arbitraires, des répartitions fantaisistes ou empreintes de favoritisme.26

The result of government attempts to control the rural economy was a steady alienation of the agrarian community from both state and administration. Savoyard farmers blamed both for intervention which they perceived to be over-extensive, ill thought-out and unjustly executed; for price levels that were too low; for excessive requisitioning; and for regulations that were manifestly to their disadvantage. Those beliefs and prejudices were reinforced by the shift in policy from cooperation to coercion after November 1942 when Axis forces occupied the Zone Libre and added additional strains on the economy. Vichy’s prestige and support in agricultural communities suffered accordingly. It was not that the peasants rejected the values of Vichy’s Révolution Nationale - far from it. Rather they rejected the implementation of Vichy’s policies. The Prefect

22 Report of Contrôle Téléphonique d’Annemasse, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 257, September 1941; the complaint was repeated in November.


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summed up attitudes of a wide cross-section of Haut-Savoyard society, when he reported, 'Vichy, aux yeux de l'ensemble de la population représente la "Réglementation."' 27

The decline in Vichy's prestige was not limited, however, to the countryside. If the government was unable to fulfil the expectations of the rural population, nor was it able to meet those of the urban conglomerations in Haute-Savoie, particularly those expectations concerning food. It was the food supply that dominated the preoccupations of Haut-Savoyards: even at the moment when Pierre Laval, probably the most loathed man in France during the Vichy period, was being reintroduced into the government during April 1942, the cabinet du préfet recorded that, 'seul le ravitaillement continue à préoccuper les gens.' 28 This view was supported by both the Contrôle Téléphonique in Annecy which reported that food made up the theme of the vast majority of calls, 29 while the Contrôle Postal reported that complaints about the food supply in the department featured in 80% of all letters intercepted. Vichy's support depended heavily on its ability to supply the population with food equitably, but the report concluded, 'Vichy ne fait rien.' 30

If Vichy alienated the peasants by encroaching too much in their affairs, it antagonised the urban population by failing to intervene sufficiently. Expectations that the Ravitaillement Général and police would introduce effective measures to deal with the black market were widespread. By August 1942, about thirty letters a day were intercepted complaining about the black market: the Contrôle Postal noted, 'on ne cesse de demander des sanctions sévères contre les trafiquants et les accapareurs.' 31 The Contrôle Téléphonique agreed, 'le mécontentement est grand, on ne comprend pas pourquoi ce marché noir est si peu efficacement combattu, on attend des mesures draconiennes.' 32

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27 Handwritten synthesis of reports of the SCT, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 258, first fortnight July 1941.

28 Synthesis of reports of Service de Contrôle Technique by the cabinet du préfet, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, second fortnight April 1942; see also report of Contrôle Postal d'Annecy, which reported, 'la seule question qui intéresse les Français est celle du ravitaillement: plus rien d'autre ne compte': Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, April 1942.


32 Report of Contrôle Téléphonique d'Annemasse, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 257, August 1941.
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One of the main difficulties facing the authorities trying to control the parallel markets was the lack of resources available to deal with such a widespread problem. This was not a new problem. In 1934, the government had been forced to abandon a measure attempting to fix the price of wheat at 115 francs a quintal because it did not have the means to enforce it.33 Eight years later, it was no better placed to deal with the problem and lacked both material and men. As early as December 1942, the Director of the Ravitaillement Général in Annecy complained of a lack of transport which prevented his men verifying the number of ration tickets being handed out in as many as 97 of the 315 communes in the department.34 The administration also had to deal with a critical shortage of man-power. The sous-prefect in Thonon complained that it was impossible to control prices in the market because of a shortage of police.35 This problem became even more acute as the resistance in the department became more active. Resistance activity had a twin effect. Firstly, it intimidated officials, preventing them fulfilling their functions: as early as October 1943, the Renseignements Généraux reported letters threatening reprisals against members of the Commissions d'Achat if they continued their jobs.36 Secondly, as the security situation deteriorated, so police resources became increasingly stretched, with the result that the control of prices and hunt for black marketeers became something of an irrelevancy for the administration, if not the urban population.

If the authorities simply had neither the resources nor the expertise to deal with the scale of the alternative markets, it also appeared to many that the fonctionnaires lacked the will to do anything about the problem: urban workers noticed that the black market was not only tolerated by the authorities, but actually used openly by many fonctionnaires who were driven by need to supplement their rations:

On se rend compte que la chasse aux trafiquants est rendue très difficile, par suite de l'appui et de la tolérance dont beaucoup de ces derniers bénéficient, auprès des services du ravitaillement.37

Customs' officers and police were often the targets for complaints of the population:

33 Moulin, A., Les Paysans dans la Société Française, Paris, 1988, p.188.
34 Report of Directeur du Ravitaillement Général de la Haute-Savoie, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 9, 8 December 1942.
37 Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 5 July 1943; see also report of Contrôle Postal, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, 28 March 1942 which mentions hauts fonctionnaires providing a poor example.
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One of the main consequences of Vichy's failure to deal with the black market and food supply in Haute-Savoie's towns was increasing dissatisfaction with the administration in the urban population. The Contrôle Postal quoted one intercepted letter: 'jamais l'administration n'a su se rendre si impopulaire.'

Of all the government agencies, it was those dealing with the food supply that bore the brunt of hostility: by June 1942, it was reported that, 'les services du ravitaillement sont, avec les divers organismes de répartition, ceux qui suscitent le plus de critiques.'

Vichy's decision to organise the food supply fundamentally changed the nature of the relationship between the state and population. The impact of the authorities' failure to meet the conflicting expectations of both consumers and producers, eventually deeply alienated both groups in the department from the state and administration. The legitimacy of the state, government and the law were put into question.

Although both state and administration were blamed for the situation, the fonctionnaires' status and prestige also suffered, with significant ramifications. Together with the peasants, retailers and wholesalers, it was the fonctionnaires, taking on responsibility for the food supply, who were blamed for shortages: they were seen as, 'des fainéants qui ne font rien de la journée,' and 'parasites incapables et paresseux' who 'multiplient la paperasserie pour justifier leur existence.'

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38 Report of Contrôle Téléphonique d'Annemasse, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 257, August 1941.


40 Synthesis of reports of the SCT by the cabinet du préfet, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, June 1942.


42 Report of Contrôle Postal d'Annecy, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, July 1943.

43 Report of Contrôle Technique d'Annecy, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, November 1943. The widespread and persistent demands for the épuration of fonctionnaires after the liberation must surely have been a reflection of the hostility of much of the population towards the administration during Vichy; hostility caused more by material than political motives.
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Many of the fonctionnaires themselves were less than happy about the situation. The evident loss in prestige and status caused by increasing hostility from much of the population coincided with a serious loss of purchasing power. Even before the worst of the inflation, the pay of some civil servants had been ridiculously low: in 1941, the secretaries at the Préfecture in Annecy received 800 francs a month. As inflation increased, it was clear that the salaries of fonctionnaires were failing to follow prices: civil servants noted a contraction in differentiation between themselves and the working class, and witnessed an increasing proletarianization of white collar workers. Demands for substantial increments became more persistent, and the failure of Vichy to react to those demands profoundly affected morale. The SCT reported,

La question des traitements des fonctionnaires apparaît comme une des principales causes de mécontentement et l'on s'indigne de voir les pouvoirs publics 'discuter pour savoir si l’augmentation sera de 10 ou de 12%' alors que le coût moyen de la vie est en hausse de 50%.


45 Report of Service de Contrôle Technique, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, November 1943.
CHAPTER 14: TOWN-COUNTRY HOSTILITY AND VICHY'S ECONOMIC POLICIES

The impact of Vichy's failure to mobilize the economy and effectively deal with the food supply had other equally serious ramifications. If the primary motivation for Vichy's economic policy had been to maintain social cohesiveness and reduce the risk of revolution, the failure of that policy realized the government's worst fears. Frenchmen not only turned against their government, but also against themselves as the deteriorating food supply actually accelerated the centrifugal forces within French society.

The structural faults which existed in French society before the Second World War had, by 1943, been widened by obvious mal-distribution of food and resources. Class conflict, which Vichy had sought to transcend, had been exacerbated by the inability of the urban poor to feed itself while the rich appeared able to eat more than adequately thanks to their greater purchasing power; anti-semitism, always latent within French society, reappeared even more virulent than before, as some Jews, often with their life-savings, attempted to purchase their escape to Switzerland or appeared to be feeding demand for the black market; town turned against country and country against town as consumers blamed peasants for shortages in the markets and peasants saw townsfolk as idle complainers; both consumers and producers turned their anger towards the state and bureaucracy because it intervened too little or too much; both were united in their hostility to wholesalers and middlemen who were thought to be profiteering from the situation. French society was arguably more divided than it had been since the French Revolution: a division made all the more acute when contrasted with the unity engendered by Pétain in the autumn of 1940 and spring of 1941.46

One of the most bitter divisions within French society under Vichy was that between town and country. Even before the war, there had been some friction in Haute-Savoie: reflecting that discord, F. Miquet had noted in the Revue Savoisienne of 1923 that the rural cantons had suffered proportionally more casualties during the First World War than in urban cantons,

C'est là qu'on a vu des cuisiniers et des tailleurs, improvisés tourneurs d'obus, s'épanouir avec les gros salaires fixés par les syndicats, tandis que les conscienceux tapu-terra des cantons de Cruseilles, Reignier, Seyssel et Abondance, où l'industrie n'a pas pénétré, se faisaient trouser le peau pour la gloire, au tarif d'Austerlitz, dans la proportion de 40 à 45 pour mille habitants.47

46 The importance of J. Kocka's work on First World War Germany for focusing many of the ideas in this section must be acknowledged: Kocka, J., Facing Total War: German Society 1914-18, Leamington Spa, 1984.

47 Miquet, F., 'Les morts de la Grande Guerre en Haute-Savoie', Revue Savoisienne, 64 (1923), p.21-36, p.36. The changing economic and technological demands of modern conflict during the First World War meant that skilled factory workers had to be retained away from the trenches in munitions plants. However, the exemptions for factory workers undermined the concept of the levée en masse and the sentiments of wartime republican egalitarianism, creating understandable resentment from the peasants who remained machine-gun
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This sort of bickering continued during the phoney war. In the autumn of 1939 and spring of 1940, there was a widespread belief in agricultural areas that the peasants were bearing the brunt of the fighting just as they had during the First World War: an intercepted letter from Sillingy (Annecy-nord), complained, ‘du reste, le cultivateur n’a jamais été soutenu nulle part. Il n’y a que le cultivateur qui va au front.’

There were also disputes about the amount of leave available: during Christmas 1939, A..., the director of the centre départemental d’information, stated that people were complaining that more urban based soldiers were allowed home than those from the countryside. A... had no doubts about the consequences of such apparent injustice: ‘il est bien évident que l’antagonisme entre classe paysanne et classe ouvrière ne sortira pas diminué des circonstances actuelles.’

Town-country antagonism was exacerbated by the problems of the food supply after the Armistice. The dangers of such divisiveness were apparent to the authorities: in April 1942, the Commissariat d’Annemasse of the Sureté Nationale argued:

Déjà, peu à peu, la ration de pain s’avère insuffisante dans la plupart des familles, surtout chez les ouvriers. Et justement, un certain nombre de gens commence à craindre que les appels répétés, aux paysans, fassent naître dans l’esprit de la classe ouvrière, une impression que la pénurie de pain est imputable à l’egoisme et à l’appât.

fodder. In June 1917, an enquiry by the prefects into the state of civilian morale after the mutinies pointed out the ‘hostility of soldiers and of the agricultural population towards the workers.’ For a discussion of these issues, see: Horne, J., ‘L’impôt du sang: republican rhetoric and industrial warfare in France, 1914-18,’ Social History, 14 (1989), p.201-223.

It had also not been helped by the deterioration in the economic position of peasants during the 1930s. Agricultural revenue declined 25 per cent between 1931 and 1935, the price of wheat dropped 50 per cent over the same period. See: Moulin, A., Les Paysans dans la Société Française, Paris, 1988, p.187-8.


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du gain chez les paysans, impression qui, si elle devenait certitude, risquerait de faire se dresser l'une contre l'autre, ces deux grandes classes de la nation. 53

The impression that shortages of food were due to the peasants' failure to deliver produce and their involvement in the black market, was, in fact, widespread: in November 1941 the sous-préfet for St. Julien commented, 'le ravitaillement devient difficile, les citadins accusent les paysans d'égroisme et d'aprétem au gain,' and added simply, 'ce reproche est malheureuseusement parfois exact.' 54 As the alternative markets developed and food became increasingly scarce for those without access to them, so reports complaining of the peasants' 'égrisme,' 'mercantilism' and 'amour de lucre' become more prevalent. 55 Rumours about the scale of peasants' profits ran wild: one intercepted telephone call estimated that 200,000 tourists had been in the department during the summer of 1942, and that the peasants had made 800 million francs from them - while the poor in the towns went hungry. The same report argued,

Une violente opposition, qui se manifeste dans un grand nombre de lettres ou de conversations, met aux prises les classes laborieuses des villes contre les paysans d'une part et les classes aisées d'autre part, accusés tous deux de les avoir affamés par la pratique scandaleuse d'un marché noir intense... des menaces contre les propriétés et les biens des agriculteurs sont souvent prononcées. 56

An intercepted letter lamented, 'le paysan est roi.' 57 The Contrôle Postal was concerned about the possible consequences of such attitudes, commenting,

La mentalité des paysans est l'objet de violentes critiques: ils seraient les principaux artisans du marché noir et ne se priveraient pas, par esprit de jalouset de vengeance, de "tenir la dragée haute" à la population citadine. 58

The report concluded that there was astonishment that the government continued to be so tolerant towards the peasants. Similar criticisms were made elsewhere: the peasants had been 'gâtés' and the propaganda in their


54 Report of sous-préfet de St Julien, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 30 November 1941.


Town country hostility

favour was viewed in the towns with resentment: 'on les adule trop.' Hostility was such that, as early as June 1941 when Pétain was almost beyond censure, even the Marshal was criticised for his favourable attitude towards the peasants: 'le Maréchal gonfle trop les paysans qui s'imaginent avoir tous les droits. Ils ne pensent qu'à eux.' One worker in the vallée de l'Arve refused to take part in the Relève - Laval's effort to provide Germany with workers in exchange for French prisoners of war - because his departure for Germany might trigger the release of a peasant: 'un ouvrier désigné aurait motivé son hostilité à partir par la crainte de provoquer la libération d'un prisonnier cultivateur qui ne ferait que se joindre à la collectivité paysanne, profitable du moment, et affamée du même peuple.'

The implications of such hostility for the social cohesion of the country were grave: the SCT noted in November 1943, 'l'hostilité des citadins à l'égard des paysans, "profiteurs du malheur des autres," se traduit par des menaces et des souhaits de "juste châtiment."' By the autumn of 1943 the sous-préfet for Bonneville was under no illusion about the situation nor of the possible consequences:

Il est certain que la population, composée en majeure partie d'agriculteurs et de commerçants, ne se plaint pas de cet état de choses, puisqu'elle retient le bénéfice, mais la classe ouvrière, les fonctionnaires, retraités, petits rentiers se trouvent dans une situation très pénible et, malgré que l'état d'esprit ne soit pas mauvais, il n'en subsiste, pas moins, entre les différentes classes, une jalousie justifiée qui, sensiblement, se transforme en animosité et en haine. Les conséquences politiques en résultant peuvent être très graves, surtout à l'heure où l'influence russe tend de plus en plus à pénétrer dans notre pays en utilisant précisément le mécontentement issu de l'injustice sociale.


60 Synthesis of reports of the SCT by cabinet du Préfet, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 257, 18 June 1941.

61 Special report on the Relève by the Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 5 February 1943.

62 Report of sous-préfet de Bonneville, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10, 22 October 1943; see also the report for the same month of the agent administratif for Reignier and Annemasse, Ibid.)
Town country hostility

It was no coincidence that the relationship between réfractaires from the STO of urban origin and the peasants was sometimes extremely difficult; the foundations of those difficulties in 1943 and 1944 had been laid in the preceding years of hunger.

As will be demonstrated, the number of peasants killed by maquisards was far from negligible.

The hostility of the town-dwellers towards the peasants was mirrored by the attitudes of the peasants to their fellow citizens: in the Hérault, there were complaints about the countryside having to feed the towns. See: Austin, R.S.P., 'The Education and Youth policies of the Vichy Government in the Department of the Hérault, 1940-1944' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Manchester, 1981), p.269. The same was true around St. Etienne. See: Luirard, M., La région stéphanoise dans la guerre et dans la paix: 1936-1951, St. Etienne, 1980, p.629-30.
CHAPTER 15: CLASS CONFLICT AND VICHY'S ECONOMIC POLICIES

The widening fissures in the fabric of French society were caused not only by town-country friction, but also by increasing stress between social classes. Vichy proved unable to control the power of money and without that control, social inequalities within France were laid bare: the poor went hungry and the rich appeared able to purchase whatever they chose. As early as March 1941 the Contrôle Postal had pointed out, "ce sont toujours les pauvres qui souffrent: "les riches, même dans les situations les plus difficiles ne sont jamais privés de rien." The cabinet du préfet recognised the changes in outlook that the failure to control the spending power of the richer elements in society created: "on peut affirmer que le sentiment dominant dans des classes populaires est la conscience, rendue plus aigüe par les difficultés présente, de l'inégalité sociale." One of the consistent themes in Vichy reports was that of the inequality caused by differences in purchasing power of different sections of society: in March 1942, the cabinet du préfet reflected a common concern among fonctionnaires, "on s'indigne principalement des inégalités que crée les différences des moyens pécuniaires." One complained about what he perceived to be "l'inégalité révoltante" in Savoyard society.

The fonctionnaires' concerns were heightened by the conspicuous ability of the rich to use the parallel markets. The Contrôle Postal touched on this point: "la classe labourieuse peut avoir à toute occasion sous les yeux le spectacle de gens riches et oisifs pour qui les restrictions sont inconnus." As Christmas approached in 1942, it was impossible for those less well off to purchase toys which were openly displayed in shop windows, raising the expectations of children. It was this sort of contrast, demonstrating the differences in life-styles between rich and poor, which angered different groups most, particularly when linked to food. As early as January 1941, a letter from 'un groupe de mère de famille d Annemasse,' complained that pets were being given cakes openly by their owners when mothers were unable to feed their children adequately, and they

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65 This is not the place to discuss the problems posed by class for the historian. However, given that contemporaries were acutely aware of class and analyzed society in these terms, the concept remains a useful tool for an historian of the period.


67 Synthesis of reports of the SCT by cabinet du préfet, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, second fortnight April 1942.

68 Synthesis of reports of the SCT by cabinet du préfet, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, 10 March 1944.


70 Report of Contrôle Postal d'Annecy, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, August 1942.
appealed to 'le general Pétain' [sic] to intervene.71 Those with money were, in spite of shortages, able to obtain meat if they paid the butcher a supplement - they also tended to receive the best cuts.72 The evidence of this inequality was obvious on a day-to-day basis. Workers were unable to find eggs for their families when omelettes were on the menus of restaurants every day - for those who could afford them.73 The Contrôle Postal reported, 'à Annecy, on constate que dans les "restaurants chics", on sert de "plantureux repas" et que dans les salons de thé on achète des "truffes en chocolat" alors que "dans les bas quartiers, on mange son pain sec."'74

The acute sense of social injustice and an increase in class-consciousness channelled hostility against the more privileged elements in society. Factory owners, in spite of the efforts made by some to alleviate the conditions of the workers, were far from popular: the Renseignements Généraux noted,

Bien que notre région ne compte pas de masses ouvrières proprement dites, on note une hostilité envers le patronat, malgré les efforts de certains membres des organisations patronales pour améliorer la condition actuelle des travailleurs: jardins ouvriers, allocations déguisées sous formes de prime diverses etc. Les plus extrémistes répandent soigneusement le bruit qu'il ne s'agit que d'un 'paternalisme' tendant à faire oublier les fortunes qui sont édifiées en ce moment par les industriels.75

The reports of the Renseignements Généraux repeatedly returned to the same theme:

Entre ces derniers [ouvriers] et les patrons, les relations sont plutôt mauvaises. En effet, les ouvriers se rendent bien compte que les patrons ne font rien pour améliorer leur triste sort. Les entreprises ne savent comment employer les gros bénéfices réalisés, alors que les ouvriers ne peuvent s'acheter le strict nécessaire et subvenir d'une façon convenable aux besoins de leur foyer.76

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72 Report of Contrôle Téléphonique d'Annemasse, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, May 1943; report of Contrôle Téléphonique d'Annemasse, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, October 1941.

73 Report of Contrôle Téléphonique d'Annemasse, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, June 1942.

74 Report of Contrôle Postal d'Annecy, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 258, October 1941.


Class conflict in Haute-Savoie

Sometimes the workers demonstrated their feelings towards their employers by striking or going-slow. At the SRO factory in Annecy, which produced ball-bearings, the workers introduced a go-slow in December 1942. The Renseignements Généraux believed that it was happening because, "les ouvriers estiment que leur salaire ne cadre pas avec le coût de la vie, alors qu'ils connaissent l'importance des bénéfices réalisés par leurs employeurs." Not all factory owners did well during the war. The jewellery and paper and building industries, for example, had considerable difficulty in obtaining raw materials. However, the majority of firms involved in precision engineering, which made up the largest sector of industry in the department and which were concentrated in the Vallée de l'Arve, did extremely well: in April 1943 most were reported to be in full production, their raw materials being provided directly by the Germans.

The hostility caused by manifest social injustice was also directed against commerçants, intermediaries, wholesalers, restaurateurs and hoteliers who appeared to benefit from the black market. Although many wholesalers and retailers resented government interference in their affairs as much the peasants, primarily because their margins were affected, the rest of the population resented the scale of their profits. Both the peasants and the urban population complained about the margins available to intermediaries and retailers. When carrots sold at 160 francs per quintal by a peasant would be sold by the wholesaler at 260 francs, and finally in the shop at 320 francs, it was clear that somebody was profiteering. Although the scale of the commerçants' profits is difficult to estimate, the reports of various government services were quite unequivocal. The Renseignements Généraux argued, "les commerçants en majorité, sauf les épiciers dont les produits sont sévèrement taxés, accumulent des bénéfices considérables.

Indeed, it appears that the commerçants lacked for little, and what they did lack was more often than not acquired through barter.

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79 For reports of irritation among commerçants and industriels to government intervention see: synthesis of reports of Contrôle Technique by cabinet du préfet, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, 19 April 1942.
80 The equivalent figures for lettuce in October 1942 was, 200, 360, 445 francs. Both sets of figures: report of agent administratif des cantons de Reignier et Annemasse, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 7, 20 October 1943. On the other hand, middlemen have always been blamed for inflationary situations.
81 E.g: butter for wine: report of Contrôle Téléphonique d'Annemasse, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 257, July 1941; oil for potatoes: synthesis of reports of Contrôle Technique by cabinet du préfet, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 258, 4 July 1941.
Class conflict in Haute-Savoie

There were also complaints about the sharp practices of some commerçants. The wine trade was subject to widespread and lucrative fraud. The payment of a soulate, an extra payment under the table in addition to the sum fixed by the government, was often the only way for retailers to guarantee supplies for their shops. The Service Général de Contrôle Économique wrote to the Prefect in December 1942 of a single wine merchant in Thônes who, they estimated, had made 1,200,000 francs from soulates alone. Butchers were reported to be cheating clients by fraudulently altering weights: the Renseignements Généraux believed that although customers were unwilling to complain at the time, for fear of being served even poorer cuts of meat, they would take their revenge after the war.

There was concern among the authorities that there would be reprisals at a later date: the sous-préfet for Bonneville reported,

On doit signaler, à ce sujet, que certaines catégories de commerçants, les restaurateurs notamment, font l’objet de l’opprobre générale et il serait à craindre, un jour ou l’autre, que les représailles ne soient très dures.

Hostility was also directed against the well-to-do tourists served by the commerçants who flocked to the department each summer and winter season. These were blamed for encouraging, if not creating, the black market by offering unreasonable sums for black market produce and removing any motivation for the peasants to attend markets. The Contrôle Postal reported,

Sur le plan local cette tendance se manifeste par de violentes doléances au sujet de la saison touristique qui a faussé les prévisions de ravitaillement et crée, dans le département une situation difficile pour les classes laborieuses, spécialement dans les agglomérations.

The bitterness created by the arrival of wealthy tourists each season could be considerable: the Contrôle Postal quoted one letter complaining about the number in Mégève, one of the department’s leading ski-stations,

La dictature de cette pourriture, pour qui ne rien foutre et la gueule sont tout s’exerce sur l’ouvrier qui n’a pas le droit:

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84 Report of sous-préfet de Bonneville, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 22 June 1943.
Class conflict in Haute-Savoie

1 - de donner son avis et de bouffer
2 - de faire chaque semaine la soudure
3 - de faire du ski et le reste

mais qui a le droit de:
1 - de crever de fain
2 - de f... le camp en Allemagne
3 - de fermer sa gueule
4 - de payer une armée et une flotte pour les beaux résultats que tu sais. 66

The Vichy administration believed that the results of its failure to control the black market and power of money could result in catastrophic social consequences: as early as the spring of 1942, the contrôlè postal was warning, 'les craintes se multiplient au sujet de la possibilité d'un mouvement révolutionnaire suscité par les difficultés de ravitaillement. Critiques très nombreuses et souvent violentes.' 67 By the summer, the warning was renewed,

Beaucoup estiment 'qu'une révolution ferait du bien' et que l'existence du marché noir constitue un danger de guerre civile: 'il n'y a rien de changé, les pauvres ne peuvent manger à leur faim.' 68

The following month the report was still more blunt: 'le mécontentement de la population constituerait le ferment d'un danger réel et grave de révolution.' 69 The Contrôlè Postal quoted one correspondent who with a veiled reference to the Révolution Nationale of Vichy wrote, 'Ils veulent la révolution? Ils l'auront!' 70 In November 1943, the Service de Contrôlè Technique concluded that French society was fundamentally divided:

Les querelles partisanes s'accentuent, les opinions extrêmes se précisent, le désir de vengeance se manifeste partout: 'c'est la haine sous toutes ses formes.' ... Fonctionnaires et commerçants, patrons et employés, citadins et paysans s'accusent réciproquement, par ailleurs, de 'profiter de la situation' ou de 's'enrichir sur le dos des autres' et chacun n'attend impatiemment que l'occasion de 'prendre sa revanche.' 71

68 Report of Contrôlè Postal d'Annecy, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, July 1942.)
69 Report of Contrôlè Postal d'Annecy, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, August 1942.
70 Synthesis of reports of the SCT by cabinet du préfet, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, March 1943.
71 Report of the SCT, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, November 1943.
CHAPTER 16: THE RISE OF ANTI-SEMITISM

One important additional effect of the centrifugal forces in French society caused by the mis-handling of the economy by Vichy was the growth, particularly between 1940 and 1942, of anti-Semitism. This is not the place to discuss the causes of anti-Semitism in France during the Second World War - there are other works which deal specifically with the issue. However, the proximity of the Swiss border, the widespread availability of food and the protection offered by the Italians from Vichy's legislation between November 1942 and September 1943, attracted large numbers of Jews into Haute-Savoie during the Vichy period. At times they were actively welcomed and assisted by the local population, but, initially at least, the vast majority were indifferent to their plight, while a substantial minority were actively hostile.

Although the department was overwhelmingly Catholic, few members of this anti-Semitic minority appear to have been motivated by ideological religious reasons; rather anti-Semitism in Haute-Savoie seems to have been the consequence of a scape-goat mechanism which blamed Jews for the deprivation and inequalities that existed in the department. As early as May 1941, there were reports of an influx of Jews into the department, who were arriving like 'véritables sauterelles.' Many arrived with their life-savings and the money raised from the businesses they had been forced to sell at only a fraction of their real value. Frequently without the contacts to utilize the other alternative markets, many of these Jews were forced to use the black market extensively, and were blamed for high prices and diverting food from the rest of the population. The largest group was in Mégève where, in July 1941, the Contrôle Téléphonique reported, 'protestations véhémentes des habitants de Mégève contre les hôteliers qui monopolisent la viande pour nourrir leur clientèle "juive."' The contrast between the Jewish refugees, who shocked the population because of the 'impudeur avec laquelle ils dépensent leur argent,' and the indigenous population created considerable bitterness: the Contrôle

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94 Synthesis of reports of the SCT by cabinet du préfet, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 258, second fortnight May 1941.

95 One intercepted letter estimated that 80-90% of the guests in Mégève during August 1941 were Jewish: report of Contrôle Postal d'Annecy, Annecy A.D., 12 W 257, August 1941.


The rise of anti-semitism

Postal quoted one letter, [on juge] "inadmissible" que la population crève de faim pour garer ces sales juifs."98

Not all reaction to the increase in the Jewish population was negative. During the spring of 1942 the prefect admitted during the spring of 1942 that there was hostility towards Jews because of their role in the black market, he complained that 'nouveaux dans le pays, ils sont encore mal connus des Savoyards, auxquels les donneés du problème juif échappent totalement: il se trouve des âmes compatissantes pour plaindre "ces pauvres juifs."99 Although some believed that the anti-semitic legislation was not severe enough and that it was necessary to send Jews to concentration camps to prevent them 's'engraisser à nos depens,100 others believed that such legislation was the result of German influence on Vichy and was unjust. A distinction was often made in Vichy reports between 'foreign' Jews who had arrived recently, and 'French' Jews and it was thought dishonest to mix the problem of foreigners with 'Israélites Français'.101 Meanwhile the vast majority of the population was 'parfaitement indifférente à la question juive.'102

Another symptom of the disintegration of cohesion in French society was the rapid expansion in the practice of délation - denunciation. In Haute-Savoie, as in other departments in the country, the practice was rife, directed against foreign Jews and Frenchmen alike.103 The files of nearly every service of the administration now in the departmental archives in Annecy contain letters, sometimes signed, often anonymous, bringing attention to the Prefect, or indeed, the Marshal himself, 'anti-national' behaviour. Often these letters concerned

98 Report of Contrôl Postal d'Annecy, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 257, August 1941.

99 Synthesis of reports of the SCT by the cabinet du préfet, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, second fortnight April 1942.

100 Report of Contrôl Postal d'Annecy, Annecy A.D, 12 W 256, April 1942


102 Report of Contrôl Postal d'Annecy, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, April 1942.

The rise of anti-semitism

food: in January 1942, the Ravitaillement Général thanked the prefecture for its recent denunciation of anonymous letters:104

Celles-ci se sont, en effet, fâcheusement multipliées. Rien qu'à la direction départementale du ravitaillement général de la Haute-Savoie, elles arrivent à la cadence moyenne de trois à quatre par jour. Rarement, elles sont assez précises pour permettre des vérifications. Quand elles le sont toutefois, leurs précisions s'avèrent généralement calomnieuses.105

Other organizations also received these letters: it was often only because of these that Vichy authorities were able to make arrests among Jews, réfractaires, and members of the resistance. However, the targets of anonymous letters were, in fact, much broader than just dissenting elements within society. Such missives were often directed by neighbours against their fellow villagers, motivated by the petty jealousies of small communities. Their effect was to create a climate of distrust and fear.106 As the divisions within French society became increasingly acute so people became wary of expressing opinions to each other for fear of the consequences. Reports about the state of opinion began to mention the unwillingness of the population to express itself as freely as it might. As early as December 1942, at the start of one report, the director of the Renseignements Généraux began, 'Dans le domaine intérieur, la population, tout en observant une prudente réserve dictée par la crainte de la délation....'107

By 1943, France was a fearful and divided society. The structural faults in French society had been widened yet further by the mal-distribution of food and resources. Class conflict was more bitter than ever, town was turned against country and country against town. Almost all were antagonistic towards the administration and the implementation, if not the ideals, of the Vichy Government. In just three short years, all goodwill towards Vichy had been dissipated; the disintegration of support for Vichy by 1943 presented an obvious contrast with the Union Nationale of 1940.

104 This move had been prompted by the Minister of the Interior: it was followed up in October 1943, threatening imprisonment and a fine for those found guilty of anonymous denunciation. See: Ibid. p.22.


106 A fear reflected in the famous detective film about denunciation, Le Corbeau, made in 1943 by Henri-Georges Clouzot.

CHAPTER 17: THE RELEVE IN HAUTE-SAVOIE

By the summer of 1942, Vichy's relationship with Haute-Savoyards was already in serious difficulties. The administration's failure to access the rural economy effectively had alienated both town and country. Enthusiasm for the National Revolution - or at least its implementation, was waning. Respect for authority was rapidly dissipating while the government's chosen foreign policy - that of collaboration was almost universally hated. However, if the government admitted that support for Vichy was sliding precipitously away for many and varied reasons, it recognised that the introduction of the Relève marked a turning point in its relationship with the French people.

Pierre Laval's speech announcing the Relève in June 1942 shocked most of the department's inhabitants. The reaction was caused not only by the programme itself, which involved sending volunteers to Germany and was widely considered to be contrary to French interests. Rather, the speech was shocking because it contained the most famous sentence made in France during the occupation, 'Je souhaite la victoire de l'Allemagne.'

At the end of June, the Contrôle Postal based in Annecy observed, 'Très rares sont ceux qui prêchent une "reconciliation loyale" avec le vainqueur... la grosse majorité est pronément hostile à toute politique collaborationniste.' The administration admitted that the Relève's results were disappointing in Haute-Savoie. Between Laval's speech on 22 June 1942 and the introduction of the law of 4 September which provided the mechanism for the obligatory dispatch of workers, only 146 men and women living in the department volunteered for work in Germany. Moreover, many of these were not Savoyards, but foreigners who happened to be living in the department. By February the following year, towards the end of the volunteer programme, the Renseignements Généraux reported that in all only 500 workers had volunteered...

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1 Report of Contrôle Postal d'Annecy, Annecy A.D, 12 W 256, June 1942.

2 This was not only in terms of meeting the targets for Haute-Savoie, but also in relation to other departments in the region. There were clearly large regional variations. In the department of the Lot, in the Pyrenees, there were only about 90 volunteers for the programme by the end of August 1942, of whom only about 20 were French. See: Laborie, P., Résistants, Vichyssois et autres, Paris, 1980, p. 236. By 3 August 1942, there were only 3,100 volunteers from the whole of the region of the Rhône-Alpes. See: Luirard, M., La région stéphanoise dans la guerre et dans la paix: 1936-1951, St. Etienne, 1980, p.436. By the end of August, a total of 4,605 volunteers had left the region. Of these, 850 were from Lyon, 283 from Grenoble, 228 from St. Etienne, 103 from Chambéry, 92 from Valance, 90 from Annecy and 59 from Roanne. Report of Prefect in Lyon, 3 September 1942, quoted in Chauvy, G., Lyon 40-44, Paris, 1985, p.195.

3 Weekly reports of the Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 7, from 1 August to 3 September 1942. The poor response continued throughout the programme. In December 1942, for example, 16 of the 42 volunteers from Haute-Savoie were not originally from France: report of C., Commandant de la Compagnie de la Haute-Savoie, 12 W 9, 24 December 1942.
The end of consensus: the Relève

and actually left for Germany from the department - a figure which compared unfavourably with other departments. To the south, in the department of the Isère, which admittedly was larger and more industrial than Haute-Savoie, 1,164 workers volunteered.

The reasons for the failure of the volunteer programme in Haute-Savoie were not limited to simple anti-Germanism, although this, of course, played an important role. The local administration believed that the social and economic situation in the department was also significant in explaining the failure of the initiative. The Prefect pointed out that there was little incentive for the vast majority of the population to volunteer for factory-work in Germany because for the most part Haut-Savoys worked in agriculture. He added that although there were about 25,000 workers in the department, the pool from which Vichy might hope to find volunteers was far more limited than this number might suggest. The number of potential volunteers was reduced still further by the low levels of underemployment and unemployment in the department among urban workers. In January 1942, Pierre Lamy, the Inspecteur Départemental du Travail, stated that there were only 40 men and 37 women in the department who were completely unemployed.

Furthermore, the attraction of the relatively high salaries offered in Germany, which provided the main incentive for workers in departments such as the Ariège, did not prove as attractive in Haute-Savoie. Although industrial production was officially down from 1938 levels in the metal working and precision

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4 This total was taken from weekly Renseignements Généraux reports between 1 August 1942 and 15 February 1943, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 7, 12 W 9.


6 Report of the Prefect, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 7, 1 September 1942. The Prefect’s estimate may have been on the low side: the 1936 census estimated the number of workers and artisans at 32,595: see Raymond, J., La Haute-Savoie sous la IIIe République, 2 Vols, Seyssel, 1983, II, p.606.

7 The sous-préfet in Bonneville, who was responsible for the Vallée de l’Arve where most of the industry outside Annecy was located, explained that the low level of unemployment among the workers in his arrondissement offered little incentive for potential volunteers. Report of the sous-préfet of Bonneville, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 7, 25 August 1942.

8 Report of Inspecteur départemental du Travail to the Prefect, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 9, 22 January 1942. Lamy, who was active in the resistance, was subsequently shot by the Germans. The local labour exchange in Annecy is named after him. See: Viret, P., Pierre Lamy, Paris, 1946.

The end of consensus: the Relève

engineering sector almost all factories in the sector targeted for the Relève\(^{10}\) were nevertheless operating at 40 hours a week.\(^{11}\) In January 1942, Pierre Lamy estimated that there were only 18 men and 203 women on monthly incomes less than the level set by the government - 750 francs in urban communes and 562 francs in rural communes - although he argued that these levels were insufficient.\(^{12}\) The social support systems set up by the factory owners proved a further disincentive to recruitment.\(^{13}\)

However, more than anything else, it was the unusual working patterns in the department that played a key role in the failure of the Relève programme. Many workers were unwilling to leave because they were not prepared to abandon their landholdings. A substantial number of those earning their living in factories in the Vallée de l’Arve had not completely abandoned the soil or their contacts with the countryside.\(^{14}\) A report by the local gendarmerie reminded the administration in Vichy that, ‘le sort des ouvriers de nos communes industrielles n’a rien de comparable à celui de leurs colleagues des villes.’\(^{15}\) In a report to the Minister of the Interior, the Prefect described the situation in Haute-Savoie, 

Dans leur très grosse majorité, les ouvriers ont des attaches locales et ont conservé le caractère mi-ouvrier, mi-paysan, si bien qu’on a pu dire lors d’une enquête sur la dépopulation des campagnes qu’en Haute-Savoie l’ouvrier n’avait pas abandonné la terre, mais qu’il était toujours cultivateur. L’insuffisance de rendement de sa terre que le savoyard compensait autrefois par l’émigration temporaire trouve aujourd’hui sur place son complément dans des industries de caractère nettement local, soit saisonnières (hôtellerie), soit demi-saisonnières (bâtiments, travaux publics), soit permanentes (industries du bois, décolletage,

\(^{10}\) Factory managers had an interest in reporting lower production because they could blame falling output on lack of raw materials, heating and shortages of workforce, and thereby strengthen their arguments for more resources.

\(^{11}\) For example, all 912 workers at the SRO ball-bearing factory in Annecy were working 48 hour weeks. Production was up 15 per cent on that of 1938. At the Usine de Chedde, 558 workers were working 48 hours a week, although production was down 42 per cent on 1938 levels. Admittedly, some of the clothes manufacturers in the department were in severe difficulties, but these employed far smaller numbers. Report of the President of the Chambre Industrielle Haut-Savoyarde, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 9, 15 December 1942.


\(^{13}\) One of the aims of the creation of these schemes was undoubtedly to retain labour.


\(^{15}\) Undated gendarmerie report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 7, November 1942.

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Workers, therefore would have had to abandon their land-holdings or worker gardens and in doing so forsake one of the main methods of feeding their families, substituting instead a cash income whose real value was swiftly diminishing during a high period of inflation. Quite simply, the constituency from which Vichy could have hoped to recruit workers in Haute-Savoie - even if the Relève had been popular - was unusually small. Finally, even if the constituency of urban workers had been numerically significant, the success of the programme would have been compromised still further by the lack of confidence in the Relève’s results. Few workers believed the promises of the German government that the volunteers would be replaced by prisoners of war. Certainly the number of prisoners sent back to the department was disappointingly low. By February 1943, only eight prisoners had actually returned, despite the departure of more than 500 volunteers.\(^\text{17}\) The Renseignements Généraux also reported fears expressing concern that workers going to Germany could become new hostages. As a result of widespread hostility to the Germans together with the unique social and economic situation in the department which offered an unusually small constituency for recruitment, the response of the urban and semi-urban workers to the Relève was, for the Vichy authorities, disappointing. In a weekly report, the Renseignements Généraux wrote, "Dans les milieux ouvriers on ne constate pas d’hostilité ouverte contre le recrutement de la main d’œuvre pour l’Allemagne, mais on observe cependant une résistance passive et un manque de confiance."\(^\text{18}\)

However, despite the latent hostility of Haut-Savoyard workers towards the Relève, the attitude of the peasants to the programme was far more ambiguous. Although the Contrôle Téléphonique in Annemasse estimated that about 75 per cent of Savoyards were hostile to the Relève\(^\text{19}\) - and, of course, the majority of the population was made up of peasants - a substantial minority was not completely antipathetic.\(^\text{20}\) This minority was concentrated among the peasants who had most to gain from the Relève. After noting that the major preoccupations of the peasants in his two cantons during August 1942 had nothing to do with politics, but were

\(^{16}\) Report of the prefect, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 7, 1 September 1942.

\(^{17}\) Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 8 February 1943. It has not proved possible to establish exactly how many were released either through illness or because of the Relève.


\(^{19}\) Report of Contrôle Téléphonique d’Annemasse, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, July 1942.

\(^{20}\) The Contrôle Postal in Annecy estimated that about 30 per cent of the population was not hostile: report of Contrôle Postal d’Annecy, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, August 1942.
centred rather on the drought currently affecting their crops, the Agent Administratif de Reignier et Annemasse commented, 'La politique intérieure et extérieure du Gouvernement ne provoque que peu de réactions... L'arrivée du premier convoi de prisonniers libérés a déménti les bruits qui circulaient et confirmé l'espoir qui est né dans les campagnes.'21 The hope of seeing the prisoners of war again, to which he referred, was not confined to the peasants of Reignier and Annemasse. The synthesis of prefects' reports noted - with, admittedly, perhaps a touch of urban prejudice - 'les paysans... réclament vivement le départ des ouvriers en Allemagne, afin que les prisonniers ruraux reviennent, sans être décidés pour cela à faire les efforts suffisants pour ravitailler les citadins.'22 While some peasants saw the policy as a method of obtaining the return of rural prisoners of war - and coincidentally ridding the region of urban communist activists23 - many workers were antipathetic towards the programme precisely because it might benefit peasants.

However, despite this initial ambivalence in some sections of the rural community, attitudes towards the Relève hardened among peasants after the introduction of a compulsory element of the programme in September 1942.24 Indeed, the introduction of the Law of 4 September was seen by the Vichy administration itself as something of a turning point in relations between the government and the French population. The synthesis of prefects' reports stated,

La passivité d'esprit qui caractérisait le mois d'août a disparu dans la majorité des départements. La loi du 4 septembre sur l'utilisation de la main d'œuvre a en


22 Synthesis of the Prefects' reports, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 7, 15 December 1942. There were about 2,000 peasant prisoners of war from the department in Germany. See: Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 21 May 1944. For a similar reaction in the Ariège, see A. Laurens, 'Le STO dans le département de l'Ariège' (unpublished thèse de 3ème cycle, Université de Toulouse - Le Mirail, 1977), p.202. A local report written on 25 June 1942 stated, 'En général l'Ariège, département agricole, a accueilli favorablement la Relève.'


24 On 4 September 1942, Laval was forced to make the Relève obligatory for workers in certain categories in response to the increasing demands of the Fritz Sauckel, the German Minister for Labour. The new law provided the government with the power to oblige all men, aged between 18 and 50, and women between 21 and 35, 'à effectuer tous travaux que le gouvernement jugera utiles dans dans l'intérêt supérieur de la Nation,' - which naturally included sending them to Germany. For the rationale behind the agreement and Laval's efforts to protect France's position, see Paxton, R.O., Vichy France: old guard and new order 1940-1944, (Morningside edition), New York, 1982, pp.310-11.
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quelque sorte, cristalisé les inquiétudes latentes en risquant de provoquer les plus vives réactions.25

In Haute-Savoie, reports coming in from all sections of the administration during September and October 1942 were unanimous in confirming a change in the preoccupations among Haut-Savoyards. They stressed that the theme dominating the public's concern had become 'le travail obligatoire,' which was seen as 'purement et simplement [comme une] réquisition à peine déguisée.'26

The new law targeting skilled workers to be exchanged for agricultural prisoners of war in a ratio of three to one, was, of course, most poorly received in the urban communities in the department. It was this section of the society which had already felt least affinity with Vichy.27 The Charte de Travail had clearly failed to enthuse Haut-Savoyard factory workers, and despite Petain's periodic verbal attacks on capitalistic trusts,28 the Government had done little for the less privileged elements of urban society. Indeed its policies appeared to have affected the poorest sections of society more adversely than any other part of the population. Despite Vichy's efforts at controlling the power of money, as Roger Austin has explained in his study of the Hérault, the mechanics of the black market had made a mockery of the idea of social unity and class reconciliation.29

Now, with the introduction of the Relève, those parts of society that previously had believed themselves most victimised and least cared for by Vichy felt themselves betrayed once again. There were even rumours that the Government was keeping wage levels low to encourage recruitment for the Relève.30

25 Synthesis of prefects' reports, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 7, 15 October 1942.


27 In parts of France the regime was seen, rightly or wrongly, as being the revenge of the Popular Front: see Vinen, R., 'The politics of French business' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge, 1989). In Haute-Savoie too, there were some workers who perceived Vichy as a reactionary regime dedicated to the promote the Catholic Church and eradicate the evils of the Third Republic. See, for example, the comments of Abbé G..., who wrote in October 1940, 'Mentalité des milieux ouvriers d'après [les] rapports des JOC: indifférence absolue pour l'oeuvre du Gouvernement. Les curés et la droite gouvernent; ils ont leur revanche du Front Populaire, obtenue par la guerre, voulue de concert avec le Pape!' Report to A..., chef du centre départemental d'information, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 337, 22 October 1940.

28 See for example his speech in August 1941.


30 Synthesis of prefects' reports in the Zone Libre, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 7, 14 August 1942.

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The rejection of the second and obligatory phase of the Relève by Haut-Savoyard workers was assisted by military events during the autumn of 1942 and spring of 1943. Attitudes in the department towards the Germans clearly hardened after the total occupation of France by the Axis, in the form of Italian troops who arrived in Haute-Savoie on 13 November 1942 with about 600 German customs officers to control the frontier. 31 That anti-germanism was given further encouragement by a series of Allied successes, starting with El Alamein and North Africa, followed by the bombing of Essen and Cologne, and culminating in the the German defeats of Stalingrad and Tunisia during early months of 1943. 32 These military events played a not insignificant role in reinforcing anti-axis sentiment. 33 Not least, they gave confidence to those opposing the policy of collaboration and its most evident manifestation, the Relève. As early as November 1942, the synthesis of prefects' reports noted, 'La preque unanimité des Français considère qu'une victoire anglo-saxonne, facilitée par la résistance prolongée de l'URSS, est certaine.' 34 The consequences of that belief were not lost on the Renseignements Généraux in Haute-Savoie which concluded,

On peut remarquer, dans le milieu des travailleurs surtout, une hostilité toujours plus grande à l'égard du principe de 'la Relève' qui peut faire craindre une résistance pour le moins passive de la part de certains ouvriers, s'ils étaient désignés pour le départ en Allemagne. La propagande, et notamment celle de la radio anglaise, n'est sans doute pas étrangère à cet état d'esprit. 35

Such was the hostility to the idea that many workers believed that the whole recruitment policy would be quietly and conveniently forgotten. 36 The Renseignements Généraux concluded, 'S'il n'y a pas eu, dans notre région d'opposition proprement dite au recrutement des ouvriers pour l'Allemagne, l'opinion ne s'en passionne pas moins.'

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31 Anonymous report on relations with the troupes d'opérations, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 9, 29 November 1942.

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36 Weekly report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 7, 19 October 1942.
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The extent of that passion was demonstrated when the lists of those designated to leave for Germany were published. At the end of October, encouraged by rumours of disturbances in St Etienne and Lyon, 419 workers at the Forges de Cran aluminium plant staged a two hour strike after 22 workers had been chosen to be sent to Germany.\(^{37}\) The following week there was a similar though far more serious demonstration in the Vallée de l'Arve in reaction to the publication of the lists of those workers who had been selected. On the 29 October, all but one factory in Cluses, Scionzier, Magland and Mornay - all in the heart of the precision engineering industry - went on strike in response to the announcement that 70 workers from the valley's factories had been designated for Germany.\(^{38}\) In a display of solidarity, the local factory owners kept the gates shut to help the workers. During the morning, about 500 workers assembled at the Place de la Mairie in Cluses where the German commission was expected to arrive to obtain signatures for the Relève contracts. The situation was sufficiently serious for the Prefect, Henri Tremeaud, to warn the commission that it should avoid the town, and for him to set off to Cluses to deal personally with the problem. He also summoned the Gardes Mobiles de Reserve (GMR) to Cluses from Annemasse and put the gendarmerie elsewhere in the department on full alert. In the event, neither were required since the crowd dispersed peacefully after the Prefect made a brief speech in the afternoon, details of which remain obscure. The gendarmerie stationed locally reported shortly afterwards that the area was quiet, but added that no further lists had been published which had helped quieten protests.\(^{39}\)

These were the first signs of open popular dissent in the Haute-Savoie. Such opposition was mirrored in other departments,\(^{40}\) but on the whole the reaction of the Haut-Savoyards was significant because it contrasted

\(^{37}\) The strike was on 22 October 1942. For details about the demonstrations in St. Etienne see: Luirard, M., *La région stephanoise dans la guerre et dans la paix: 1936-1951*, St. Etienne, 1980, pp.441-2. Luirard points out that although there were between 15,000 and 20,000 people in the streets on 18 October in St. Etienne, only about 150 of them were actually demonstrating.

\(^{38}\) Cluses was the only town in the department with any syndicalist tradition. There had been demonstrations and riots there in 1904 during which three workers had been killed and 43 injured. A factory had also been burnt. See: Raymond, J., *La Haute-Savoie sous la IIIe République*, 2 Vols., Seyssel, 1983, II, pp.704-10.

\(^{39}\) For details about this incident, see: Report of sous-prefect in Bonneville, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 7, 31 October 1942 and an undated report of Gendarmerie, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 7, November 1942. Tremeaud was deported to Germany in November 1943 in circumstances that remain unclear.

\(^{40}\) See for example, the reaction in the Puy-de-Dôme, where there was a series of strikes at the Michelin factory and other plants. At Montluçon, in the Allier, a large crowd stormed the train on 6 January 1943, overwhelmed the guards and allowed all those who were supposed to be leaving for Germany to escape. For this detail, see: Sweets, J.P., *Choices in Vichy France: the French under Nazi occupation*, Oxford, 1986, pp.24-5.
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quite markedly from the Ariège. André Laurens has shown in his study of the STO in the department on the Spanish border that the workers required to leave the department as part of the Relève appeared willing to accept their fate. Laurens explains that they believed all passive resistance to be useless and responded to the call-up papers sent to them. Between 2 January and 23 March, 498 people left the department, leaving behind only 32 réfractaires. The authorities in the Ariège congratulated themselves on the lack of incidents and small number of réfractaires given the proximity of the frontier and the options of leaving the department for neighbouring Andorra or the Free French forces in North Africa. Laurens argues that Vichy propaganda, together with the threat of both Government and German sanctions, the poverty of resistance movements in the area and the harsh winter of 1942-43, all prevented a more developed opposition developing.41

In Haute-Savoie, as has been demonstrated, the reaction to the designations was very different from that in the Ariège. So too was the reaction of the Government which mirrored, to some extent, the Government's growing impatience with the peasants. The effect of the opposition to the programme was to make the administration in Annecy become increasingly intolerant and authoritarian in its dealings with popular dissent, signifying a shift in policy away from consent towards coercion. During the fortnight after the protests in Cluses, the authorities arrested and interned five ring-leaders, two from Thyez, and one from Scionzier, Cluses and Sallanches.42 There were a further nine arrests after an attempted demonstration in front of the war monument in Annemasse on 11 November 1942 which had been orchestrated by railway workers from the arrondissement.43 The authorities recognised that the Vallée de l'Arve was unusually disturbed by the new obligatory nature of the Relève. They recorded leaflets protesting against the programme being posted through letter-boxes at night in Sallanches, Scionzier, Cluses as well as towns elsewhere in the department in towns such as Annecy, Thonon and Annemasse. In Morzine, north of the valley, slogans were daubed on walls, proclaiming, 'À bas les SOL, à bas Petain, vive Thorez, vive le parti communiste Français.44

Recognising the delicacy of the situation, the administration did nothing further before Christmas. The police reported, 'La question de la Relève était passé au second plan. Personne n'en parlait plus et les ouvriers

42 Undated report by the gendarmerie on events on 11 November 1942, A.D., Annecy, 12 W 9.
43 Six of these were from Annemasse itself, two from Scionzier and one from Cluses. Undated report on events during 11 November 1942 by the gendarmerie, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 9; also report of police, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 9, 24 November 1942.
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estaient même qu'il n'en serait plus question.\textsuperscript{15} But on the 28 December, in the middle of the holiday period, during which the authorities believed the workers would be less able to put together an organised response, 245 men were called up for medicals and immediate departure. The majority of this contingent lived in Annecy (102) and most of the remainder (80) came from the Cluses area in the Vallée de l'Arve. However, the administration's attempted ruse was far from successful. The same day that the nominations were delivered by the gendarmerie, those chosen from the SRO ball-bearing factory in Annecy met in a local café and decided not to appear at the rendez-vous point on the following day. Although eight Anneciens turned up for medical examinations, five were rejected after failing the inspections and the three remaining workers who did pass then failed to arrive at the station. A second round of medical examinations on the 30 December did little better. The seven workers who presented themselves had evidently heard that those with a poor medical history would not be sent. All failed. In total, 92 workers in Annecy failed to attend the medicals - representing some 90 per cent of those called up.\textsuperscript{46}

The reaction in the Vallée de l'Arve was similar. Of the 41 chosen in Bonneville, only five came to a second round of medicals on 4 January 1943. By that date, only 62 of the 245 workers called up in the department had presented themselves for medicals (25.3 per cent), 34 had been recognised unfit (54 per cent of those at medicals), 16 had signed the contracts accepting work in Germany and seven had refused to put their names to the document. Only two had actually left (0.008 per cent required by the authorities). Most of those attending medicals knew already they would not be accepted. The situation had hardly improved the following week when the Renseignements Généraux filed their next report: of the 292 called up, 181 had not arrived for medicals (69 per cent), 60 were viewed as unfit (54 per cent of those at medicals), 33 had signed up and 18 had refused. By 25 January only 13 workers had actually left (0.04 per cent of those required), 150 had been designated as officially on the run and only 16 had been arrested.\textsuperscript{47}


\textsuperscript{46} Report of the Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 4 January 1943.

\textsuperscript{47} Reports of the Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 7, 12 W 9, January and February 1943. The reaction elsewhere in France to the Relève varied considerably. In the Lot, for example, the situation was similar to that in Haute-Savoie. From a total of 70 men called up in that department on 4 December 1942, only 22 (28.5 per cent) came for their medicals of whom 12 failed (54.5 per cent of those at medicals), 11 signed up and nine refused to sign their contracts - only one person actually left for Germany (0.014 per cent). See: Laborie, P., Résistants, Vichyssois et autres, Paris, 1980, p.236. In the Ariège, however, the situation was very different. Between 2 January and 23 March 93.96 per cent of those called up were either designated as unfit or were successfully dispatched to the other side of the Rhine. See: Laurens, A., 'Le STO dans le département de l'Ariège' (unpublished thèse de 3ème cycle, Université de Toulouse - Le Mirail, 1977.), p.74.
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C., the commandant of the Gendarmerie in the department, warned, 'cette situation va devenir catastrophique.'

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Report of C., Commandant de la Compagnie de Gendarmerie de la Haute-Savoie, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 23 February 1943.
That catastrophic situation deteriorated still further with the introduction of the Service du Travail Obligatoire, announced on 16 February 1943. Better known as the STO, the programme was initially directed towards men born between 1 January 1920 and 31 December 1922, and made them liable for obligatory work service in Germany. The effect of its implementation was to accelerate the increasing dislocation between state and population in Haute-Savoie. Although much of the population had been irritated by the poor administration of the food supply and the failure of the Government to do anything effective against the black market, the vast majority did not perceive itself to have been obviously and directly affected adversely by the actions of the regime in Vichy. While the Relève had touched only a small proportion of population, once the STO was implemented, for the first time, a substantial section of Haut-Savoyard society was directly affected. They were affected, moreover, by a policy linked with the hated policy of collaboration.

The first indication of the extent of the alienation in almost all sections of the community in Haute-Savoie came from the attendance rates at medical inspections prior to the departure of those called up. Of the 5,394 men born between the proscribed dates in the department, only 4,460 (82.68 per cent) actually turned up for the initial medical inspections during the last two weeks of February. The attendance rates varied considerably, however, in different parts of the department. In the politically stable cantons to the west, in the pre-alps, attendance was notably high (Seyssel 99.1 per cent, Frangy 94.8 per cent, Rumilly 98.5 per cent), while in some cantons to the north and east of the department, where high concentrations of refractaires were later to be found, far lower levels were achieved. 1 Admittedly, these figures gave the authorities only an indication of opposition. As the Renseignements Généraux noted, the majority of those called for medicals were prepared to attend, because although they might be unwilling to leave, they nevertheless hoped there was a possibility of receiving a dispensation from the doctor. 2 Further signs of the hostility of the population became evident once the first lists of those required to leave for Germany were published. Throughout the department there were demonstrations. On 4 March 1943, 200 young people marched to the war memorial in Rumilly to lay flowers while singing the 'Marseillaise' and 'Les Allobroges' and shouting, 'Nous n'irons pas en Allemagne.' The following day, there were similar, though, smaller demonstrations in Thonon and the previously calm town of Seyssel. On 6 March youths were reported demonstrating in Faverges.

1 These included the rural cantons of Boëge - 40.9 per cent, Taninges and Samoens - 61.7 per cent and some of the more urbanised cantons such as St. Jorioz - also 61.7 per cent, Annemasse - 66.7 per cent, and Thonon - 69.6 per cent. The turn-out in St. Gervais at the end of the Vallée de l'Arve was also low at 54.5 per cent. See map 5: report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 2 Z 875, 5 March 1943 and 6 March 1943.


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HAUTE-SAVOIE: medical attendances of those called up for the STO, 5–6th March 1943
The STO

Although the geographical distribution of absenteeism for medicals within Haute-Savoie was variable, the final rejection of the STO by those in the first tranche was at a rate far higher than in many other departments. By 25 March, the Renseignements Généraux reported that only 120 of the 1038 men who had passed their medicals had voluntarily arrived at their embarkation points - leaving 918 defaulters (a rejection rate of 88.4 per cent).\(^3\) The situation deteriorated still further at the end of March when from the second tranche, only 11 out of a total of 900 arrived at the station (98.7 per cent).\(^4\) These rates of absenteeism were even higher than those during the Releve when 473 workers from a total of 600 failed to leave (a rejection rate of 78.8 per cent). It also meant that by the end of February 1943 there were about 1,440 Haut-Savoyards on the run from either the Releve or the STO. The Gendarmerie estimated that in addition there were probably 200 to 300 other réfractaires in the area from other departments - making a total of between 1,640 and 1,740 men hiding out in the mountains.\(^5\)

The high proportion of réfractaires in the Haute-Savoie during the spring of 1943 contrasted noticeably with the situation in some other departments. For example, in the Ariège, the whole process of medicals and departures during March 'se passa de façon parfaite sans le moindre incident à la satisfaction des responsables du maintien de l'ordre qui purent se féliciter mutuellement.\(^6\) In all, only 13.5 per cent of those who were called up and passed their medicals were not actually successfully dispatched. Between 5 May and 1 June 1943 a further 119 were sent from the Ariège (a rejection rate of 11.8 per cent).\(^7\) It was only in June, when a quarter of the class of 1939 together with the class of 1922 were called up, without exemptions, that the authorities began to have problems in the Ariège: absenteeism at the point of departure rose from 28.3 per

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\(^3\) Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 25 March 1943. These general figures were confirmed by the Gendarmerie which estimated that only 110 of those called for STO had left for Germany out of a total 1080, leaving 970 defaulters (89.8 per cent) See report of C., Commandant de la brigade de gendarmerie de la Haute-Savoie, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 22 March 1943.

\(^4\) Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 29 March 1943. The accuracy of the intelligence received by the British coming out of Haute-Savoie during this period is highlighted by a telegram sent on 2 April 1943 by Elizabeth Wiskemann at the British Embassy in Berne. A source at the sous-préfecture in St. Julien informed her that only 146 of the 1,038 Haut-Savoyards called up had left. Wiskemann's reports were not always so accurate. Telegram from Berne to London, London, P.R.O., FO 371 55059A, Z4222/519/17, 2 April 1943.

\(^5\) Report of C., Commandant de la brigade de gendarmerie de la Haute-Savoie, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 22 March 1943.

\(^6\) Laurens, A., 'Le STO dans le département de l'Ariège' (unpublished thèse de 3ème cycle, Université de Toulouse - Le Mirail, 1977.), pp.77-78.

\(^7\) Ibid., p.86.
cent on the 15 June 1943 to 80.7 per cent by 6 July 1943 - a rate achieved in Haute-Savoie five months earlier.\textsuperscript{8}

Other departments were also later than Haute-Savoie in demonstrating their rejection of the STO programme. In the department of the Loire only 10.6 per cent of those who passed medicals were on the run by 25 April. It was not until the third tranche in May and June that the rejection rate reached 43.9 per cent.\textsuperscript{9} In the department of the Lot, widespread rejection of the STO took place even later: while the rejection rate between 12 March and 12 June was only 11.9 per cent, as late as 17 June it was still only 28.1 per cent, and it only reached 95.2 per cent at the end of August.\textsuperscript{10} Similarly, in the Hérault, the first tranche was despatched with few incidents. It was only in June that about 31.4 per cent of those called up refused to leave.\textsuperscript{11}

Haute-Savoie was, then, peculiarly early in rejecting the STO and experiencing the réfractaire phenomenon. It was for this reason that the department initially became so closely associated with the resistance both in France and among the Allies.\textsuperscript{12} A report prepared by the British on the maquis in 1944 explained, "The original organisation and the symbolic, if not real, headquarters of the Maquis, is in Haute-Savoie which is why the department was the first to be cleaned up by Darnand's police."\textsuperscript{13}

The reasons for the rejection of the STO at such an early period and on such a large scale in Haute-Savoie were not limited only to the mountainous geography of the department which made it relatively easy to avoid capture. Admittedly, the agricultural practices in the department offering large numbers of high altitude mountain huts for the most part uninhabited during the winter months did provide almost limitless

\textsuperscript{8} Ibid., p.88.
\textsuperscript{11} Gérard Bouladou argues that there was a réfractaire tradition in the region. He points out that only 14 per cent young men from the mountains actually joined the army during the \textit{levée en masse} in the Revolutionary period 140 years early. This compared with a figure of between 60 and 75 per cent in the plains. Bouladou, G., \textit{"Le maquis du massif central mériédonal (1943-4)}" (unpublished thesis, université Paul Valéry, 1974), 2 vols, I, p.111-117.
\textsuperscript{12} In 1943, the BBC reported that there were three regions of Europe resisting: Greece, ... Greece, Yugoslavia and Haute-Savoie. Crémieux-Brilhac, J-L., \textit{"La bataille des Glières et la "Guerre Psychologique,\textquotedblright}, \textit{RHDGM}, 99 (1975), p.45-72.
\textsuperscript{13} London, P.R.O., FO 371 41924, undated report.
opportunities for the réfractaires to hide from the authorities. But the early rejection of the STO was more than a geographical accident. Other departments offered similar conditions and did not witness similar disturbances. Similarly, the undoubted unfairness of the implementation of the STO in Haute-Savoie\textsuperscript{14} was mirrored in other departments.\textsuperscript{15}

What was unique about Haute-Savoie was that it contained an alienated urban workforce which had retained unusually strong links with a peasant population willing, at least initially, to welcome them into their communities. Since most réfractaires at this stage were local, the peasants did not have to take into account their traditional hostility towards those from the towns. Indeed many réfractaires were reported to be related to the peasants with whom they were staying.\textsuperscript{16} The attitudes of most peasants - some of whom had previously been in favour of the Relève - had hardened considerably when it was made compulsory. This was especially true in the area surrounding the Vallée de l'Arve where, as we have seen, the workers were mi-ouvriers, mi-paysans and had retained close contacts the rural population. A special report on the situation in the valley prepared by the Renseignements Généraux stated, 'La population... dans son énorme majorité est favorable, même dévouée à la cause des réfugiés,' adding that only one man had been arrested in the area and that had been due to a informer.\textsuperscript{17}

Admittedly, some town-country hostility continued to simmer beneath the surface of public opinion. Although the authorities admitted that opposition to the STO in Haute-Savoie was serious, it was limited, to some extent until June 1943, by the exemptions available for students and, most interestingly for most Haut-Savoyards, those

\textsuperscript{14} In February 1943 C..., the commandant de la Compagnie de la Haute-Savoie pointed out, 'Si l'opposition à cette opération est née des sentiments anti-axistes de la population, elle a été aggravé par des désignations faites, semble-t-il un peu à la légère, par des injustices flagrantes et par des mesures d'exécution parfois incohérentes.' Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 22 February 1943.


\textsuperscript{16} Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis 11 March 1943.

\textsuperscript{17} Special report on the situation in the Vallée de l'Arve by the Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 5 February 1943. This sort of support was not limited to Haute-Savoie. In the Auvergne, too, the population offered a 'passive complicity' in all matters involving the réfractaires. See: Sweets, J.F., Choices in Vichy France: the French under Nazi occupation, Oxford, 1986, p.27; a similar situation existed in the Cévennes: Kedward, H.R., 'The maquis and the culture of the outlaw', in Kedward, H.R. and Austin, R.S.P., (eds.), Vichy France and the Resistance: culture and ideology, London, 1985, p.243-249.
involved in agricultural activities. The STO involved in agricultural activities. Part of Vichy's policy of shielding France from the worst excesses of German occupation was to protect the peasantry. Most men in rural cantons escaped the full weight of the first tranche of the STO. In a totally agricultural canton such as Thônes, for example, only 16 men (There were 278 in the classes of 1920 and 1921 alone) were actually designated for departure to Germany, compared with 100 (from 440) in Cluses, 187 (470) in Thyon and 474 (1,631) in the far more populated cantons of Annecy-nord and Annecy-sud. The protection offered to the rural sections of the community meant that the STO was accepted most calmly there. The Renseignements Généraux commented, 'Cette nouvelle loi a causé une vive émotion...,' although it added, 'Seuls, les milieux agricoles font preuve d'un certain calme encore que les jeunes cultivateurs redoutent d'être requis, eux aussi à plus ou moins brève échéance.' The result of this protection was that, when it was announced in June 1943 that some of the class of 1919 and the class of 1922 would be called up without exception - making young peasants liable for the first time - the measure was actually welcomed among some town-dwellers: the Renseignements Généraux noted, 'le fait que la classe 1942 a été soumise à l'obligation de travail sans aucune exception a provoqué une certaine satisfaction dans la classe ouvrière.' Nevertheless, the report concluded that the peasant population was now more willing to help the réfractaires because their children were now also affected by the programme.

However, in spite of these continuing town-country suspicions, agricultural communities do appear to have been willing to suspend their hostility towards town-dwellers and absorb some of the local urban réfractaires into the rural economy. To some extent - and with geographical variations - a 'culture of the outlaw' existed in

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18 Within days of the announcement of the STO, many urban-based Savoyards of an age likely to be called up were reported to be searching for employment in the countryside to avoid being sent to Germany: see special report of the Renseignements Généraux on the situation in the Vallée de l'Arve, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 19 February 1943. This phenomenon appears to have been widespread. In the Hérault the proportion of agricultural workers in the active population increased from a pre-war figure of 11.3 per cent to 50.3 per cent by May 1943: see: Austin, R.S.P., 'The Education and Youth policies of the Vichy Government in the Department of the Hérault, 1940-1944' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Manchester, 1981), p.305.

19 Undated anonymous report on those called for STO in the classes of 1920 and 1921, Annecy, A.D., 10 M 34. Figures for 1922 were not available. Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 2 Z 875, 5 March 1943; 6 March 1943.


22 For example, there were only a few isolated réfractaires hiding in the arrondissement of St Julien. See report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 13 March 1943.
The STO

Haute-Savoie during the spring and early summer of 1943 similar to that in the Cévennes described by Roderick Kedward.23

The Renseignements Généraux had little doubt about the attitude of the vast majority of the population in Haute-Savoie. They commented, 'Ils [les réfractaires] bénéficient par ailleurs de l'appui moral et de la générosité des habitants notamment des commerçants et des propriétaires de camions, qui n'hésitent pas à les utiliser pour effectuer des transports d'hommes et de vivres à la faveur de la nuit.'24 This view was supported by Commandant C... head of the Gendarmerie in the department who wrote that much of the population supported the decision of the réfractaires both morally and physically:

Cette relève est entravée par tous, c'est sans doute sur ce point que la population savoyarde se montre la plus unie: on épie les sorties des gendarmes, on alerte les ouvriers et les jeunes; on favorise leur fuite: on les recueille, les cache, les ravitaille et les départs se chiffrent par une proportion énorme de défaillants.25

He added,

Quant à l'ensemble de la population, à part quelques rares exceptions elle approuve pleinement l'attitude prise par les jeunes et considère qu'ils obéissent au seul idéal compatible avec l'honneur français.

This 'culture of the outlaw' did not exclude the peasants. In March 1943, it was noted that around the commune of Draillant (Thonon), where a large number of réfractaires were hidden,

Les déserteurs stationnés dans notre région paraissent se ravitailler directement chez les cultivateurs de la montagne. Ces derniers paraissent pour l'instant témoigner d'une certaine solidarité à l'égard des ouvriers désignés pour le Relève.26

23 Kedward defines it as follows: 'Such a culture, wherever it has positively existed in history, embodies the conviction that the established law has exceeded its rights and has itself become illegal, so that real authority, real justice and legitimacy, now lie with those who have technically become outlaws.' Kedward, R., 'The maquis and the culture of the outlaw (with particular reference to the Cévennes)', in Kedward, H.R. and Austin, R.S.P., (eds.), Vichy France and the Resistance: culture and ideology, London, 1985, p. 244.

24 Special report on the reaction to the STO by the Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 6 March 1943.


In other mountainous cantons, the situation was similar. The gendarmerie described the situation towards the east of Annecy around Thônes where the largest groups of réfractaires were to be found:

Depuis trois mois des chalets de montagne sont occupés par des groupes organisés et partiellement armés de réfractaires à la Relève et au travail obligatoire. Toute la population fait cause commune avec les réfractaires. Bien que presque pas touché par l'envoi d'ouvriers en Allemagne, la population est farouchement hostile à cette mesure.

Indeed, the introduction of the STO represented a rapid acceleration in a fundamental shift in attitudes among the peasantry in Haute-Savoie during the spring of 1943 - a section of the community, which had earlier provided the bed-rock for Vichy's popularity. The authorities recognised the significance of the STO in this shift. The Renseignements Généraux admitted that even the most stalwart supporters of the regime had doubts about the new scheme. They commented: 'Ceux mêmes qui ont observé jusqu'ici une correction parfaite à l'égard du Gouvernement et approuvé sincèrement sa politique, donnent l'impression d'être ébranlés dans leurs convictions. Bon nombre des parents des futurs requis émettent publiquement l'opinion que le Gouvernement “va trop loin” et que les choses vont finir par se gâter.'

They also remarked that the population was unusually united on the issue: 'Les milieux ouvriers, bourgeois, voire même religieux, y sont nettement hostiles.' In March, the Renseignements Généraux concluded, 'L'application de la loi sur le Service du Travail Obligatoire a considérablement aggravé l'indisposition générale. On enregistre, depuis, une véritable hostilité à l'égard de la politique du Gouvernement et particulièrement contre l'action personnelle du Président Laval.'

Moreover, once the sons of peasants were directly affected, they had still more reason to empathise with those local Haut-Savoyards on the run from the authorities. By July 1943, C., commandant de Gendarmerie, stated,

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28 Report of Capt. V..., Commandant section de gendarmerie d'Annecy, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 239, 4 May 1943.
29 Special report on the situation in the Vallée de l'Arve by the Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 19 February 1943.
31 Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 8 March 1943.
The STO

'Le STO rencontre la plus vive hostilité de toutes les classes sociales, y compris la paysannerie,' adding that the offer of an amnesty given by the government had made everyone smile.32

The extent of that hostility can be seen in the complete failure of the government to implement the STO in the department during the summer of 1943. In June 1943 the whole of the class of 1922 and the section of the class of 1919 not conscripted in 1939 were summoned without the possibility of exemption for students and peasants. At this stage the rate of absenteeism at medicals soared: only 650 arrived for examination out of a total 1,318 (49.3 per cent), and of these 194 failed (29.8 per cent).33 In the town of St. Julien, only nine of the 35 men required to attend medicals actually presented themselves - and all were rejected on medical grounds.34 The numbers who actually reported for departure at the railway station in Annecy were even lower than before. For example, only six of the 180 recognised as fit for the Todt organisation35 turned up at the between the 7 and 9 June 1943 (a rejection rate of 96.6 per cent).36


34 Report of C., Commandant de la brigade de gendarmerie de la Haute-Savoie, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 22 June 1943.


36 Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 14 June 1943. No complete figures were available in the series made available in the Archives Départementales in Annecy, although they most likely exist in the Fonds du STO which are in Series R 3 D. Charles Rickard gives the following figures without, unfortunately, giving his source: 7,446 recorded in the census, 402 declared unfit, 1,417 excused, 244 sent to the Todt, and 381 sent off to Germany, leaving a total of 5,002 réfractaires of whom, he states, 885 joined the armed maquis: Rickard, C., La Savoie dans la Résistance, Evreux, 1986, p.117.
THE political rejection of Vichy by the vast majority of the Haut-Savoyard peasants - particularly in the pre-alps, alps and Chablais where they welcomed the réfractaires - represented a fundamental turning point in the relationship between the administration, government and local population.

It can be argued that the main reason for the support of the réfractaires was economic self-interest. Many farms in the department were suffering from lack of workforce. These shortages were created not only by the 2,000 peasants originating from the department who were prisoners of war in Germany, but also by the increase in demand for labour arising from the attraction of increasing production which could be sold at substantial profit on the black market. Moreover, at these early stages, the number of réfractaires appears to have been manageable. Towards the end of March, the Gendarmerie estimated that there were about 1,700 men on the run from the authorities in the department. The vast majority of these (all but 200 to 300) were local and many of them either lived and worked with relations in the countryside or returned home after the authorities had searched for them.

However, in deciding to support the réfractaires, there appears to have been a happy coincidence of interest for the peasants between economic self-interest, patriotism and political attitudes. It is clear that by the autumn of 1942, many peasants in Haute-Savoie had become disenchanted by the implementation of Vichy's policies. The government's attempts to guarantee food-supplies to the cities and the increasing and at times inept interference of the State and administration in the affairs of the peasants had, by the autumn, alienated many of the government's supporters. The National Revolution had manifestly failed to transcend the divisions in French society. So much was clear from the collapse in support in the department for the Légion. Moreover, after the invasion of the Zone Libre by the Germans in November 1942, Vichy no longer appeared to be sovereign: the imposition of a compulsory Relève and the introduction of the STO, which, moreover, was linked to the detested policy of collaboration, appeared to confirm that the government was no longer working in the

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1 In June 1943, the Renseignements Généraux reported a shortage of qualified workers. Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 22 June 1943.


3 Report of Commandant de la brigade de gendarmerie de la Haute-Savoie, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 22 March 1943.

The crisis of authority: the clergy

interests of France. Furthermore, the implementation of the STO, like so many of Vichy's policies, was perceived as being unfairly and unjustly put into action. Finally, the vast majority of the réfractaires in the department, at least initially, were local Haut-Savoyards.

But most important in cementing the change of attitudes among the peasants in Haute-Savoie was influence of many of the opinion formers in Haut-Savoyard society. Most peasants did not have access to a radio, nor did many read newspapers, especially during the winter when the roads were closed. The opinion formers in Haute-Savoie included the notables, such as François de Menthon whose chateau sat at the mouth of the valley leading down from Thônes to the Lac d'Annecy, the mayors and, most significantly, the parish clergy.

Haute-Savoie remained one of the most religious departments in France during the 1940s. Catholicism was overwhelmingly the dominant faith. The attitudes of the French Catholic Church in general, and the local parish clergy in particular, were therefore crucial in forming the opinions of many Haut-Savoyards, particularly in the countryside. However, the lead offered by the local clergy in Haute-Savoie was often just as muddled as the attitudes of their parishioners. Like their flocks, the parish clergy became increasingly divided about where the best interests of France might lie. This is not the place to examine the role of the Catholic Church during the period, but it is undoubtedly true that the response of the French Catholic Church to Vichy was just as diverse as the rest of the population.

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5 The post-war justifications of the shield philosophy do not appear to have created any resonances in Haute-Savoie, at least. Indeed, there little reference to it in either the SCT reports or those of the Renseignements Généraux.

6 There were complaints of favouritism and allegations that the sons of the bourgeoisie and the factory owners had not been selected for the Releve and that on occasions there had been blatant miscarriages of justice. Special report on the situation in the Vallée de l'Arve by the Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 5 February 1943.

7 More through problems in distributing the newspapers rather than because of illiteracy. In 1936, the Inspecteur d'Academie au Conseil Général estimated the illiteracy rate at only 1.1 per cent. See: Raymond, J., La Haute-Savoie sous la IIIe République, 2 Vols, Seyssel, 1983, II, p.902.

8 St François de Sales had been responsible during the Counter-Reformation for dealing with the Protestantism which had seeped into the area from neighbouring Calvinist Geneva.

9 Like so much of this period, the history of the Church has been dominated by debates based on the resistance/collaboration matrix. Studies have for the most part been confined to the role of the episcopacy, though given the sacerdotal nature of the religion this is hardly surprising. Some good local studies are needed to examine the role and attitudes of parish priests during the period.
The crisis or authority: the clergy

Assessing the attitudes of the Catholic Church in the department is far from easy. The parish letters, known as Semaines Religieuses and edited by Mgr. Cesbron, the bishop of Annecy after 1940, give little indication there was a war in progress, let alone a clue as to his attitudes towards the government. A distinct shift in his attitudes can be detected, however, between Mgr Cesbron's speech to Légion in August 1941 and his most significant and public gesture during the Vichy period when he distanced himself from the regime by refusing to attend the founding ceremony of the Service d'Ordre Légionnaire (SOL).

The attitudes of the parish priests are also difficult to gauge. A few priests appear as notable personae dramatis in the history of Haute-Savoie during the war. They range from l'Abbe Jean Truffy, the cure of Petit Bornand and other members of the clergy such as Abbé Folliet who were seen by Vichy as assisting the resistance, to those who were identified after the liberation as encouraging young members of their congregation to join the anti-resistance militia, known as the Milice. These included the curé of Chavanod (Annecy-sud) who was reported to have encouraged seven young men from his parish to join the Milice; the curé at Fessy (Douvaine) where there were 12 men joined the military wing of the Milice as Franc-gardes; and the curé at Cercier (Cruseilles) who was reported to have said, 'Ceux qui ne sont pas miliciens ne sont pas des hommes!'. All were murdered after the liberation. A number of parish priests also fled the department after the liberation. These included the curés in Brethonne (Douvaine), Etercy (Rumilly), and Massongy (Douvaine).

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11 When he told the Légion, 'Ce qui nous donne confiance à tous, c'est que les voix officielles de la nation qui modulaient hier des couplets légers, des couplets d'un jour, s'entraînent aujourd'hui sur des rythmes graves aux sonorités profondes et divines d'éternité. L'Eglise s'y connaît à ces cadences'. Quoted in Langlois, Cl., 'Le régime de Vichy et le clergé. 1940-42', Revue Française de Science Politique, 22 (1972), p.750-773, p.764.

12 Later known as the Curé du maquis de Glières.

13 Others include Philippe Bulbens, a curé in Thonon, who was also investigated by the authorities. See: report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 11 March 1943. Many of the religious institutions and hospitals in the department also contributed to the resistance by helping those in need. See Lazare, C., 'Un Aviateur au Maquis', in ed. Remy, La Résistance dans le Dauphiné-Savoie, Paris, 1975. Although the protestant churches initially played a more important role in helping refugees cross into Switzerland clandestinely, the Catholic church also contributed significantly, especially after the summer of 1942. See: Munos, O., 'Les passages clandestins entre la Haute-Savoie et la Suisse pendant la Seconde Guerre Mondiale' (unpublished mémoire, séminaire d'histoire contemporaine, religions, mentalités, sociétés, Grenoble, 1984.)
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where all eleven members of the SOL joined the Milice. The numbers identifiable from the archives and published sources as falling into each category can be put into single figures. The opinions of the remaining 300 odd parish priests whose attitudes are impossible to gauge from their actions, remain hidden from view except for the occasional reports which mention the clergy sent by the various agencies to the Prefect.

Nevertheless, in spite of the difficulties of sources, it is clear that the new regime initially, at least, held considerable appeal for French Catholics after the decadence of the Third Republic. Vichy’s return to traditional values dovetailed with an upsurge in religious feeling in France. As Bill Halls has pointed out, after June 1940 prayer was in fashion - prayers for the families to be reunited, prayers for prisoners to be released. Studies in other departments have demonstrated that the moves against freemasons, the new education laws supporting private Catholic schools, the end of aggressive laicism, the rejection of urban values as well as the propaganda and language of Vichy proclaiming national reconciliation and the end of the class struggle, all created resonances in Catholic circles. Not without justification did Cardinal Gerlier, the Archbishop of Lyon, say, ‘Travail, Famille, Patrie: ces trois mots sont les nôtres.’ Moreover, those clergy with early doubts about the government were not encouraged by the attitudes of their superiors. It has been suggested that those questioning the regime were trapped by the hierarchical nature of their religion and the clear and positive lead given by certain parts of the hierarchy to the new government in Vichy. This lead included Pius XII’s pastoral letter of 22 December 1940 which quite clearly supported the regime.

14 Letter from the Prefect to the Minister of the Interior, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 85, 17 January 1945. The curé at Brethonne was blamed by the mayor of the village for not having prevented three youths who were shot at the liberation from joining the Milice. The Mayor wrote, ‘Il n’aurait eu qu’un mot à dire en temps utile, car les miliciens étaient très pratiquants.’ Letter from mayor of Brethonne to the Prefect, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 85, 9 December 1944. The canton of Douvaine on the shores of Lake Geneva appears to have been something of a stronghold for the Milice.


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By the autumn of 1942, however, the virtual unanimity of opinion among the clergy in the department had disappeared. Not all had rejected either Vichy or its values. Indeed, the Catholic Church in Haute-Savoie, as in other areas of France, was fundamentally divided. This is hardly surprising - the Church reflected the same doubts and diversity found elsewhere. But the implications of that divide were that while many of the clergy still identified with the Révolution Nationale, others were increasingly keen to disassociate themselves from the regime. An indication of the extent to which the local clergy was unwilling to identify too closely with Vichy can be seen in the complaints from sections of the Légion in 1942 about its attitude. After meeting l'Abbé Maurice Greffier in Annecy, Louis Dépollier wrote in his diary, 'Au sujet du régime fait par la Légion, il a les mêmes idées que 95% de la population: "si la Révolution Nationale ne réussit pas, ce sera la faute au clergé," a-t-on coutume de dire dans les milieux légionnaires.'

By the time of the introduction of the STO, the ambiguity of the clergy's reaction to Vichy was even more pronounced. In Haute-Savoie, the SCT intercepted a series of letters which complained 'La division du clergé sur la question de l'attitude à adopter par les Chrétiens dans le problème du départ en Allemagne est vivement déplorée.' This division among parish priests reflected the confusion in the higher echelons of the French Catholic church over how to react to the new laws. While Monseigneur Théas, the bishop of Montauban, publicly condemned the STO as a violation of human rights, others were more ambiguous in their response or, like the bishop of Grenoble, actually preached compliance.

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21 As Bill Hall's has commented, 'Catholicism under Vichy was not a monolithic phenomenon,' Ibid, p.133.


24 Hall, W., 'Catholicism under Vichy: a study in diversity and ambiguity', in Kedward, H.R. and Austin, R.S.P., (eds.), Vichy France and the Resistance: culture and ideology. London, 1985, p.133-46, p.143. The schizophrenia of the leadership of the French Catholic Church during this period was acute. The assembly of cardinals and archbishops in January 1943 was, for example, significantly silent in condemning the Reîvre. The Conseil National de l'Association Catholique de la Jeunesse Française at Avignon, on the other hand, denounced the STO on 6 March 1943, calling it an 'atteinte au droit naturel et au droit international positif.' Delpech, F., 'Les Chrétiens et le STO', in de Montclos, X., (ed.), Eglises et chrétiens dans la Iie Guerre Mondiale, Lyon, 1982, p.348. Other cardinals actually supported the scheme and even announced they wanted
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Nevertheless, despite the disarray among the French episcopacy, many of the parish clergy had little doubt about their complete rejection of the STO. The strength of opposition to the programme among some of the parish clergy was such that, by the spring of 1943, the Renseignements Généraux were adamant that some had played a significant role in creating opposition to its implementation. In March 1943, they noted growing opposition to the STO in a special report on the reaction to the programme and added, 'Ces sentiments sont partagés par la majorité du clergé et il est hors de doute que celui-ci contribue par ses encouragements à raffermir les parents dans leur attitude de résignation [to their sons becoming réfractaires]. Later that month, they added, 'de son côté, l’ensemble du Clergé, bien qu’il n’ait pas pris publiquement position à l’égard de la nouvelle loi, laisse entendre par insinuation qu’il ne peut [l’] approuver.' The memoirs of both réfractaires and priests in Haute-Savoie support the thesis of a pivotal role for members of the clergy in the rejection of the STO.

The reasons for the hostility of some of the clergy in Haute-Savoie to the STO were, as might be imagined, varied. In the opinion of the Renseignements Généraux one of the main reasons for opposition was the effect of the STO on civil liberties. They noted, 'Dans les milieux ecclésiastiques, on manifeste une sourde hostilité en indiquant que la nouvelle loi porte une grave atteinte à la liberté individuelle.' Many clergy were also concerned about the impact of the programme on the family. For the example of the bishop of Grenoble who twice, at Easter and in August 1943, stated that those called up should go to Germany, see: Godel, J., 'Monseigneur Caillot, Evêque de Grenoble et le régime de Vichy', in de Montclos, X. (ed.), Eglises et Chrétiens dans la 2e Guerre Mondiale: Rhône-Alpes, Lyon, 1978, pp.78.1-78.4. For an example of those wanting total German victory, see: Hall, W., 'Catholicism under Vichy: a study in diversity and ambiguity', in Kedward, H.R. and Austin, R.S.P., (eds.), Vichy, London, 1985, p.133-46, p.138. Halls also points out that the failure of the Catholic hierarchy to give clear moral support to the rejection of the STO created a breakdown in the relationship between the episcopacy, parish clergy and Catholic laity. It seems as though this failure, together with the clear injustice of the mal-distribution of resources during the war, were the fundamental basis of the move of the French Catholic Church to the left after the liberation.

27 See for example, Truffy, J., Mémoires du Curé du Maquis de Glères, Paris, 1979, p.21; Marcel Prous, un réfractaire, describes in his memoirs the help offered by the curé at Mont-Saxonnex (Bonneville) when he arrived to join the maquis: Prous, M., Merci de m’avoir aidé, Annecy, 1978, p.22.

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which had preached the primacy of Travail, Famille, Patrie, was now betraying the last two for a dubious first. After the full occupation of France by Axis forces in November 1942, some clergy, like many of their Haut-Savoyard congregations, could no longer bring themselves to believe that the programme was in the interests of France.

By the time of the introduction of the STO in February 1943, the programme represented only the latest in a series of policies which disturbed a substantial proportion of the clergy in the department. For many, the reinstatement of Pierre Laval, and the re-affirmation of the policy of collaboration, was a turning point in the attitudes of many Catholics to Vichy. The increasingly authoritarian nature of the regime, apparent in the behaviour of the SOL during the de Menthon affair, the increasing racism of the regime, as well as the painful and public implementation of the government's anti-semitic legislation, all appeared to undermine the government's legitimacy. At a time when the dangers of Bolshevism - which could have rallied support - had not become manifest, the STO represented the last of a series of measures which seriously disturbed the clergy of Haute-Savoie. Vichy had lost the support of many of its most faithful followers.

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31 This was particularly the case in Haute-Savoie where so many Jews had come because of the proximity of the Swiss frontier with its illusion of safety. Odile Munos has argued that, 'La Haute-Savoie constitue l'étape finale avant le passage. C'est le terminus principal de tous les réfugiés de la zone sud.' She quotes a report by the gendarmerie: 'Au moment des mesures de regroupement des israélites, le département de la Haute-Savoie a été, vers le 20 septembre 1942, littéralement envahi par des milliers de juifs qui tentaient de se réfugier en Suisse.' Report of Gendarmerie, Annecy, A.D., 12 M 708, 5 February 1943. Munos, O., 'Les passages clandestins entre la Haute-Savoie et la Suisse pendant la Seconde Guerre Mondiale' (unpublished mémoire, séminaire d'histoire contemporaine, religions, mentalités, sociétés, Grenoble, 1984.), p. 37, 25. Between October 1942 and the beginning of February 1943, the gendarmerie arrested about 500 Jews and 60 passeurs on trains between Aix-les-Bains, in the neighbouring department of Savoie, and Thonon. Ibid., p.39-40.
CHAPTER 20: THE CRISIS OF AUTHORITY: MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

Il est curieux de constater que la presque totalité des magistrats municipaux, du moins ceux sur qui l'Administration préfectorale est en droit de compter, déplorent la crise générale d'autorité dont cette question du Service du Travail Obligatoire n'est qu'un aspect.¹

THE LEAD offered by much of the clergy in Haute-Savoie against the STO supported and confirmed the advice given by other opinion formers in the villages. These included a significant number of mayors. These men represented the basis of the administrative system, responsible for providing the information necessary for the Government to formulate policy and accountable for the implementation of the decisions emanating from Vichy and Annecy. They mayors represented the keystone of the administrative system, essential if France was to be governed by consent.

However, by the autumn of 1942, many of the mayors were proving less than enthusiastic in meeting their many obligations. Many were irritated by the increasingly heavy administrative load they were forced to bear - a load, moreover, which consisted essentially of implementing unpopular policies. The mayors provided the interface between the population and the administration, and experienced uncomfortable pressure from both above and below. They were already experiencing divided loyalties when implementing the collection of agricultural produce for the Ravitaillement Général. It seemed to many that the interests of Vichy, in terms of collecting food produce from their municipalities, was incompatible with their interests or those of their neighbours who wanted either to consume that same produce locally, or, alternatively sell it to friends, relatives and even strangers on the black market.

In the autumn of 1942, the mayors' position became even more unpleasant when they were asked by Vichy to help implement the Relève and the STO. Not only were they asked to organise the census of those workers eligible for the Relève and the STO, but also to assist in the administration of medical inspections and the complicated system of exemptions and suspensions. These requirements placed still further demands on men who were for the most part already far from happy about their role and government policy.²

Many mayors reacted to this increasingly uncomfortable load by simply ignoring those commands from the centre which they felt were contrary to the interests of community. Others reacted by being less than efficient in supplying the necessary information. On 20 January 1943, G..., the inspecteur général à la production

¹ Sous-préfet de St. Julien, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 21 July 1943.

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industrielle, complained to the Prefect that 24 communes had continued to fail to provide the census information necessary for the Relève. He pointed out that, in other departments in the region, the census which had begun in September was practically finished.\(^3\)

Other mayors reacted by resigning.\(^4\) Between the autumn of 1940 and 1943 about 15 per cent of the communes experienced a change in local administration.\(^5\) Generally, the resignations or enforced changes occurred not in the rural areas, but in the urbanised and partly urbanised cantons where the demands of the Relève and the STO were most acute.\(^6\) In the urban cantons, 18 per cent of the communes experienced change, while in the partly urbanised areas 27 per cent underwent substitution. In some partly urbanised cantons, which had a high concentration of skilled precision engineering workers, there were remarkably high rates of resignations.\(^7\) Meanwhile, in rural cantons about ten per cent changed between the autumn of 1940 and 1943, and in the semi-rural areas only 8 per cent altered.\(^8\)

Not all of the resignations were motivated by a political rejection of the principles of the Révolution Nationale or Vichy's foreign policy. In rural communes, the main cause of friction with the government before the summer of 1943, when young peasants became liable for the STO, was not the Relève or the STO, but the

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\(^3\) Letter of G. .., inspecteur général à la production industrielle to the Prefect, Annecy, A.D., 10 M 34, 20 January 1943.

\(^4\) Unfortunately, there are no figures available which list those who decided to resign rather than those who were changed by the authorities because mayors were deemed to be incompetent, corrupt or political unacceptable. However, an indication of the crisis in the municipalities can be found by comparing the lists of mayors published in the Recueil des Actes Administratifs in 1940, 1941, 1943 and 1944. The Recueil for 1942 does not appear to have been published. Later in the thesis, the lists in the Recueil for 1945 and 1947 will be considered. Recueil des Actes Administratif, Annecy, 1940-47.

\(^5\) This figure does not include those communes with towns with over 2,000 inhabitants, whose municipalities were automatically changed by the government.

\(^6\) Peasants were initially exempt from both the Relève and STO. The cantons have been divided on the same basis as Emile-François Callot's work on post-war elections in the department. Callot, E.-F., 'Geographie et sociologie electorale du département de la Haute-Savoie de 1956 à 1968' (unpublished thesis for diplôme supérieur de recherches et d'études politiques, Paris, Science Pol., 1969), p.68-9.

\(^7\) These were mainly along the Vallée de l'Arve and included, St. Jeoire, 28 per cent; Bonneville, 30 per cent; Sallanches, 44 per cent; St. Gervais, 75 per cent.

\(^8\) Between 1943 and the liberation the figures were as follows: urban cantons, 7 per cent; partly urbanised cantons, 6 per cent; partly rural cantons 6 per cent; rural cantons 8 per cent. The departmental average between 1943 and the liberation was 7 per cent.

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increasing and often maladroit interference by the administration in agricultural affairs. Although the gathering pace of resignations in municipal administrations could be seen as a sign of increasing political opposition or even as evidence of Resistance, most should be interpreted rather as a rejection of the growing conflict between a centralised state on the localities - a phenomenon that was not limited to France. As far as the Agent Administratif de Reignier et Annemasse was concerned, all the crises in the municipalities in his arrondissements were caused by the problems created by the rationing system. He gave the example of the resignation of the mayor at Nangy (Reignier), which was supposed to be for reasons of ill-health, but had actually been caused by the friction created by the increasing demands for cattle in the commune. The unattractive aspect of the mayor's role could be seen in the difficulties that the prefecture had in finding suitable replacements for departing mayors. On occasions, poor candidates were chosen either by mistake or because there was no alternative, undermining the legitimacy of Vichy still further and accelerating the general crisis of authority. Sometimes no replacements could be found at all. The implications for Vichy of the collapse of much of the municipal system were serious. There was an element of moral chaos. In March 1943, the Renseignements Généraux explained, 'La population ne considère plus le Gouvernement comme une autorité effective et estimant ne plus jouir d'aucune protection, elle se montre disposée à se protéger elle-même, à se grouper et à préparer une résistance active.'

By the time the STO had become applicable to young peasants in the summer of 1943, Vichy was forced to conclude that the main significance of the Relève and the STO was the further alienation of the population

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9 This process was not limited to Haute-Savoie: Derek Aldcroft has argued: 'One of the chief characteristics of economic development in the twentieth century has been the increasing role played by the state.' Aldcroft, D.H., 'The development of the managed economy', Journal of Contemporary History, 4 (1969), p.117-137, p.117. When offering reasons, few mayors in Haute-Savoie were willing to come out openly against the government. Although the authorities were often aware that this was not the true cause of the resignation, most gave reasons of ill-health.

10 See, for example, Britain during the First World War. R. Storry Deans explained: "Everywhere," wrote a contemporary historian, "was the high hand of authority. The State, personified by the police, naval and military authorities, officials of the Ministry of Munitions, the Food Controller, the Coal Controller, the Press Censor, and other executive departments, old and new, pervaded the land. Britain knew what it was to be ruled." Storry Deans, R., 'The law and the defence of the realm', in Wilson H.W and Hammerton, J.A (eds.), The Great War, 13 vols, X, London, 1918, p.312. Quoted in Englander, D., 'Military intelligence and the defence of the realm: the surveillance of soldiers and civilians during the First World War', Bulletin of the society for the study of labour history, 52 (1987), p.24-32, p.24.


from the government and the creation of a general crisis of authority. Those organisations involved with the economy and the food supply were, as has been demonstrated, already the object of considerable resentment. Moreover Vichy itself admitted that the programmes, together with the acute hostility they created towards the parts of the administration trying to implement the programmes signalled a major change in the relationship between the government and the population.

That crisis in authority was most apparent in the population’s rejection of the symbols of authority obliged to implement Vichy’s policies - the authorities involved in collecting agricultural produce and those involved in searching for réfractaires from the Relève and STO - the police, the gendarmerie and gardes mobiles. The first two organisations were both responsible for delivering the letters informing workers that they had been chosen. All three were obliged to hunt réfractaires who had failed to turn up for medicals or subsequent departure. The attempts by these organisations to find the réfractaires were increasingly obstructed by the population. Indeed, the local population became so obstructive and unhelpful that members of both the police and the gendarmerie began to complain of their increasing isolation and alienation from the communities they were supposed to serve. According to the Renseignements Généraux, ‘Ces représentations de la force publique [The gendarmerie and the gardes mobiles] qui, jusque’à présent bénéficiaient de l’estime publique font actuellement l’objet d’une véritable hostilité.13 This hostility was particularly acute in the Vallée de l’Arve, explained the Renseignements Généraux. The worst locations, it noted, were Cluses and Scionzier, ‘où toutes les portes des habitations se ferment hermétiquement à l’arrivée des gendarmes, il semble que les habitants de la vallée se montrent également méfiants à l’égard de tous les fonctionnaires de l’administration.’14 The report cited the example of a Gendarme, Inspecteur R..., based in Cluses, who on entering a restaurant in the town one lunch-time found that all conversation came to a halt. Such was the reaction that the owner asked him not to come back to his establishment again.15

By the summer of 1943, it was clear that Vichy’s relationship with Haute-Savoie, one of its former strongholds, had almost completely broken down. Its attempts at governing through consensus had manifestly failed. The


15 Special report on the situation in the Vallée de l’Arve by the Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 19 February 1943.
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Légion was unable to generate crowds of any noticeable size,\textsuperscript{16} and its organisation was described in one report as asphyxiated.\textsuperscript{17} Even Marshal Pétain's efforts were met by the population with apathy. Meanwhile, Vichy's economic policies had alienated peasants and workers alike. The legitimacy of the government was questioned as increasing numbers of mayors and priests, traditional opinion formers, preached obstruction to Vichy's policies. As the government moved towards a system of coercion in its efforts to enforce food collection as well as the Relève and STO, the instruments through which Vichy hoped to enforce compliance found themselves alienated from their communities and increasingly impotent. The prefecture in Annecy had lost control of the localities. By the summer of 1943, there was, in Haute-Savoie, a general crisis of authority.

\textsuperscript{16} In May 1943, the Legion was unable to create any enthusiasm for the festival of Jeanne d'Arc in either Annecy, Annemasse, Thonon or Evian, although its efforts were reported to have been hindered by appalling weather. Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 10 May 1943. One Sunday in Annecy during September 1943, only two Légionnaires attended the ceremony to raise the Legion's colours. Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 27 September 1943 (in October file).

\textsuperscript{17} Report of sous-préfet de St. Julien, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 25 June 1943.
PART III: REACTION TO THE MAQUIS
THE SUCCESS AND FAILURE OF THE CULTURE OF THE OUTLAW

THE CULTURE of the outlaw that sustained the réfractaires in the mountains remained a fragile phenomenon. While in some districts, and in particular around the area of Thônes, the symbiosis between resistance and population worked effectively, elsewhere, the relationship between the réfractaires and the local communities on whom they depended quickly ran into difficulties. In effect, the culture of the outlaw, when it existed, was often localised, sometimes transitory and, as resistance activity increased, more often than not short-lived.

The main problem was that the whole phenomenon of the réfractaires during the spring and early summer of 1943 was predicated upon the premise that the Allies were planning imminent landings on mainland France. So too was the encouragement of their parents, teachers and priests. The realisation that landings might not be imminent not only had a serious effect on the morale of the réfractaires but also upon the local population which became aware that there would be considerable problems supporting the réfractaires in the countryside on a continuing basis. In a report on the situation in the department at the end of March 1943, the Renseignements Généraux explained,

Si le mouvement de résistance, qui avait pris d'inquiétantes proportions dans le département il y a quinze jours, s'est peu à peu réduit aux éléments les plus réfractaires, il faut en rechercher les causes dans la lassitude et la déception qui ont gagné, aussi bien les jeunes fugitifs que la majorité de l'opinion... Croyant fermement à la rébellion dans le pays, et à un débarquement en France des troupes alliées qui aurait coïncidé avec le mouvement de Résistance, les jeunes insoumis ont été profondément déçus et ne témoignent plus aujourd'hui les mêmes sentiments de confiance à l'égard des Alliés, particulièrement les britanniques.  

The report added that the population had been noticeably upset by a speech given by Churchill in which the British Prime Minister had warned that the war could well continue until 1944 or even 1945. This did not coincide with the hopes of many Haut-Savoyards who seem to have believed that the war would be over by the end of the year and that there would be landings during the spring - an expectation which had been encouraged, moreover, by the BBC. By June, the Contrôle Postal noted that the population appeared to

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1 See: anonymous memo to Colonel Stanton, London, PRO, FO 898/203, March 1943 which argued that the resistance to the STO had been caused by the belief that invasion was coming in the summer of 1943 and that 'in the short-term it is worth risking everything.'


3 Report of Contrôle Téléphonique d'Annemasse, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, May 1943. In general, the French do not seem to have relished Churchill's consistent pessimism in same way as the British. See, for example, report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 24 May 1943. It is also interesting to consider whether the widespread belief that there would be landings in 1943 was a manifestation of a British
The success and failure of the culture of the outlaw

be holding its breath, while it awaited significant events. Letters intercepted by the service also complained about the slow-down in military operations, as Haut-Savoyards became increasingly concerned both about the failure of the Allies to land on mainland France as expected as well as their lack of support for the réfractaires.

The realisation that landings might not take place, and that the réfractaires would have to experience a winter in the mountains had significant implications not only for those who had decided to take refuge from the STO in Haute-Savoie but also those who had to support them. During the spring of 1943 there had already been problems in maintaining supplies to the réfractaires. Although some peasants were willing to support small numbers of these young men - in particular those who were local and willing to help with farm-work - this was not always the case. Indeed, some peasants were reported to be profiteering from the plight of the réfractaires by charging inflated prices for food. Those able to pay prospered, but it appears as though the enthusiasm of early days soured as the social divisions among the réfractaires became increasingly more apparent. C., the commandant of the gendarmerie in Haute-Savoie, wrote to the Prefect explaining that some well-heeled réfractaires were eating food they had bought from the peasants in front of others who had limited resources little food and were extremely hungry. C. was quite sure where this would lead. Almost prophetically, he added,

decception plan whose aim was to relieve pressure on the Eastern Front.


5 Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 22 March 1943. The British had been as surprised as anyone by the réfractaire phenomenon. H. Paniguian, an officer at Political Warfare Executive (PWE), wrote to Colonel Nigel Sutton, regional director for France at PWE, on 20 March, suggesting a meeting between the two of them together to review the whole history of the Haute-Savoie affair. He added, 'It now looks as though this movement is going to peter out. Although this is by no means as tragic a denouement as a blood-bath would have been, in the light of events it seems to me that we remain uncovered.' Letter dated 20 March 1943, London, P.R.O. FO 898/203. Allied aid during the spring seems to have been limited to a single parachute drop on 20 March on a mountain called Tête du Parmelan opposite Annecy. Paniguian's meeting was also to discuss the impact of the BBC's reporting of the situation. He was aware that the prestige of the BBC in Haute-Savoie had fallen considerably because of its coverage. It was felt that the organisation had encouraged belief in the possibility of landings during the summer - landings which had not materialised. Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 25 March 1943. The BBC was also accused of reporting incidents in the department which had never happened and deforming those that had. As a result its popularity was reported to have declined in favour of Radio Sottens; report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 29 March 1943. See also: Cremieux-Brihac, J-L., 'Radio et information au maquis', in Gerlier, C., (ed) Colloque sur les maquis: 22-23 novembre 1984, Paris, 1985, p. 123-133, p.125-126.
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Enfin on peut se demander ce que feront à la longue tous ces oisifs et la vie qu’ils mèneront. Il est à craindre que des scènes d’ivrognerie se produisent, que des bagarres éclatent et que sous peu, des jeunes prennent par la force le ravitaillement qui leur est indispensable pour continuer ce qu’ils appellent leur résistance.6

The view that food and lodging had become the major preoccupations for the réfractaires even in these early days was echoed by Renseignements Généraux. Their reports noted that very few peasants were providing supplies without charge, and that some were profiting from the situation by charging exorbitant prices. Some réfractaires had been unable to procure a substantial meal during the day and had then been forced to sleep under the stars in the cold by night.7 This vulnerability was exacerbated by the failure of the two main militarily capable resistance movements in the department, the Communist-led Francs-Tireurs et Partisans (FTP)8 and the more conservative Armée Secrète (AS),9 to anticipate either the potential numbers of those refusing to leave for obligatory work service or the opportunities offered for extending the power of the resistance by harnessing the réfractaires. During the first fortnight in March, there were rumours in the department, encouraged by the BBC, that the réfractaires were being organised by officers from the army and being provided with food and arms by Allied parachute drops.10 Encouraged by such reports an impressive

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8 This was the armed and guerrilla wing of the Front National which was organised by the communists but open to all those who wanted to resist.

9 The Armée Secrète (AS) was the military wing of the Mouvements Unis de la Résistance (MUR). The MUR was a Gaullist organisation formed from Combat, Libération (Sud) and Franc-Tireur.

10 Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 8 March 1943; 13 March 1943.
The failure of the culture of the outlaw

HAUTE-SAVOIE: early concentrations of Refractaires, spring 1943

Land over 1,000 metres
The success and failure of the culture of the outlaw

number of réfractaires headed for the mountains of Haute-Savoie. Groups were reported to be scattered across the department, hidden in chalets.\(^\text{11}\)

Since both the British and the resistance movements had been taken by surprise by the scale of the rejection of the STO and neither had the organisation nor the supplies to support such groups,\(^\text{12}\) life for the réfractaires was not easy. The Renseignements Généraux noted,

Les jeunes insoumis ont en effet été déçus lorsqu’arrivés aux lieux de rassemblement indiqués, ils n’ont rencontré aucun officier et ont constaté que contrairement aux assurances qu’on leur avait données aucune organisation n’existait. D’autre part, beaucoup d’entre eux, croyaient à la rébellion générale dans tout le pays et à un débarquement imminent en France des troupes alliées.\(^\text{13}\)

\(^{11}\) The largest concentrations were in the Chablais in the hills above Thonon and Evian. Police report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 22 March 1943. In the arrondissement of Abondance, there were groups in Vacheresse, Abondance, la Chapelle d’Abondance, Châtel and Bernex where a chalet contained about 20 réfractaires. There was also a group of about six at the old château at Féternes (Evian), and another 30 were reported in the commune at La Grotte des Fées. There were also groups in chalets around Orie (Thonon), Cervans (Thonon), Le Lyaud (Thonon) and Habère-Lullin (Boëge). Police report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 22 March 1943. The scale of some of the camps could also be impressive. At Lullin (Thonon), there were two camps had assembled about 150 men, who were fed by lorry directly from Draillant (Thonon). Few of the réfractaires were armed, however, and the arms they did have were fairly pitiful. On 3 March, capitaine P..., the commandant de la section de gendarmerie de Thonon, visited a camp at Draillant (Thonon), where he found about 20 young people armed with two mausers, a couple of shot-guns and several revolvers. The situation was sufficiently serious that five days later, the prefect, sous-prefet de Thonon and capitaine P... went up again to talk to them. Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 11 March 1943. Outside the Chablais, the largest groups were to the east of Annecy around Grand-Bornand, where the réfractaires were mostly people from other departments. A band of about 20 was reported on Le Parmelan near Dinge-St. Clair (Annecy-nord), and another near Mont Charvin at Le Bouchet (Thônes). At Markens (Faverges), on the border with Savoie, there were about 45 people hiding. Groups at Arches (Cluses) and Magland (Cluses) were also reported, as was one located on a mountain called Le Môle above Bonnevile in the commune of Mont Saxonex (Bonneville). However, hardly any réfractaires were hidden in the low-lands to the west of the department. Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 13 March 1943. The sous-prefet for St. Julien believed that many of those in his arrondissement had simply slipped over the frontier into Switzerland. For the difficulty of establishing the number of those réfractaires who slipped over into Switzerland, see: Munos, O., 'Les passages clandestins entre la Haute-Savoie et la Suisse pendant la Seconde Guerre Mondiale' (unpublished mémoire, séminaire d’histoire contemporaine, religions, mentalités, sociétés, Grenoble, 1984.), p.27. One of Munos’ interviewees explained the reticence of many who prefered not to admit they had left the country: ‘Mais si on passait en Suisse, on n’était plus résistant!’


The success and failure of the culture of the outlaw

As a result, most réfractaires had to learn how to fend for themselves. Moreover, it should be noted that not all réfractaires minded being left to themselves: refusing to leave for Germany did not necessarily imply the desire to fight the Axis. Many preferred to hide rather than to take part in operations. They were réfractaires, refusing to leave for Germany, rather than maquisards wanting to fight in armed groups organised by resistance organisations. In Haute-Savoie, the anonymous authors of the official history of the FTP in the department complained, 'le maquis avait été organisé dans l'esprit de se cacher, et non pas pour combattre.'14 The Armée Secrète agreed: Pierre Golliet, a member of the AS, explained in a book published just after the war, 'Les réfractaires n'étaient pas tous pétris avec de la pâte de héros.'15 Certainly many réfractaires in the department stayed away from home during the census, medical examinations and the period when those called up were actually supposed to set off for Germany. But most then returned to their parents where they were, on the whole, left alone by the authorities.16 For those réfractaires who did not return home, it was certainly far easier for those from rural areas such as Haute-Savoie to survive than those from the towns.17 Many could stay with relatives or friends on farms living singly or in small groups rather than joining one of the bands linked to the resistance.18 Quite simply, those with local contacts did not need to make contact with the resistance in order to avoid the STO. This explains the small number of peasants in the maquis in much of France: in the department of the Aude, for example, only 6 per cent of maquisards were peasants, while 50 per cent of réfractaires were sons of farmers.19 The proportion of réfractaires actually joining a resistance movement varied from area to area. Pierre Mermet explained, 'Le problème est donc bien posé: on fuit la

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15 Jourdan, L., Helfgott, J., Golliet, P., Gières - Première bataille de la Résistance, Geneva, 1946, p.15. Even when the infrastructure to welcome réfractaires was in place, not all went into the maquis. Those who were thought by the AS not able to support the lifestyle of a maquisard were sent to work on farms. See Challamel, J-B. (ed.) , La vallée de Thônes et Gières pendant la 2e Guerre Mondiale, 2 vols., Thônes, 1984, Vol 1, p.102-4.

16 Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 13 March 1943. Many were also be supplied with false identity papers by the local mayor.


19 See Mermet, P., 'Du service du travail obligatoire (STO) au maquis', in Gertier, C., (ed) Colloque sur les maquis: 22-23 novembre 1984, Paris, 1985, p.59-64, p.61. Until the Fonds du STO are made available, the proportion of réfractaires in Haute-Savoie who actually joined the maquis will remain difficult to estimate. A derogation to examine the fonds was refused.

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réquisition mais sans esprit de combatte.20 In the Landes, for example, only 19 per cent of réfractaires actually joined resistance organisations. In the Ariège, the proportion of réfractaires who joined resistance movements was higher - some 35.6 per cent.21

Those who had been expecting to join organised bands and discovered that there was no infrastructure to support them soon found that life could be extremely difficult. Many decided to abandon a life-style which in theory was romantic, but in reality was uncomfortable and dangerous. A large proportion of the sons of the peasant farmers in the department were reported to have returned home after the regional prefect explained that they were exempted from the STO.22 It is not clear how many Haut-Savoyards regularised their position during one of the frequent amnesties offered to the réfractaires.23 Certainly as the year dragged on, the idea of spending a winter in the mountains had little appeal.24 Louis Jourdan, a member of the AS, explained after the war,

Il faut avoir vécu dans le maquis au déclin de cette année 1943 pour comprendre quel malaise créaient à l'entrée de l'hiver, l'incertitude, les craintes multiples, l'isolement, l'obscurité du terme vers lequel on courait dans cette aventure qu'avait inspirée aux réfractaires la tiède haleine du printemps.25

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22 The regional prefect came from Lyon to the Chablais on 10 March to talk to the mayors in the Chablais. Many had not known that the sons of peasants were exempt. Report of C... commandant de la brigade de gendarmerie de la Haute-Savoie, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 1068, 22 March 1943.

23 Although the population is supposed to have viewed them with amusement, a few did take up the offer. Some were subsequently killed by the resistance.

24 For example, at the end of the summer of 1943 a large number of the réfractaires around Grand-Bornand left the area. See, Challamel, J-B. (ed.), La vallée de Thônes et Glières pendant la 2e Guerre Mondiale, 2 vols., Thônes, 1984, p.44.

CHAPTER 22: THE CULTURE OF THE OUTLAW IN PRACTICE: THÔNES

In some areas, such as the Vallée de Thônes, réfractaires were assimilated successfully into the community via the resistance in spite of the lack of preparation for their arrival. The reasons why this particular valley offered such a warm welcome to the réfractaires can be put down to a combination of the political history of the valley itself - which had a tradition of opposition to authority dating back to the revolution - and the way in which the réfractaires were organised by the resistance based there.26 This was a legacy of which the population under Vichy was well aware. After an incident in May 1943 when there was a near riot during which a crowd released four prisoners from custody, Maurice Greffier, the parish priest, explained, 'pour qui connaît l'histoire, le tempérament propre de cette vallée, de vibrer profondément, voire vivement, pour les grandes causes.'27

With this tradition firmly implanted in the minds of the inhabitants of the Thônes valleys, it was hardly surprising that Vichy experienced difficulties when it, in turn, attempted to enforce impositions and an unpopular system of conscription. The area was particularly upset when François de Menthon, whose château guarded the entrance to the valleys, was attacked by members of the SOL in Annecy on 2 May 1942. There were further problems the following April, when the American and British flags and one with a Croix de Savoie were found hanging from the Légion's flag-pole in the town square at Thônes.28 When, five days later, on 2 May, a number of gendarmes tried to arrest four of those responsible, the Church bell was rung in the town and a crowd of between 300 and 400 people rescued them from the gendarmes' car to shouts of 'Ils ne partiront pas.' The mayor, Auguste Thevenet, was suspended from his duties, the town put under a curfew,

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26 The region around Annecy appeared to rally enthusiastically to the French cause when général Montesquiou arrived in the region during the autumn of 1792 with his slogan 'Vive Libre ou Mourir,' - one which was to be adopted by the 465 maquisards who fought against the Germans on the Plateau de Glières a century and a half later. But that enthusiasm soon evaporated. In an unusual echo of the difficulties faced by Vichy, the demands of a war-time government on peasant population created considerable friction. Peasants began to complain about inflation and excess requisitioning by the army with French money which was deemed as valueless. The authorities, on the other hand, argued that the peasants were hiding corn and began searching barns and seizing crops that were deemed to be in excess of family requirements. At the same time, there was a religious crisis created by the Republic's Jacobinism. In February 1793, after the announcement of the levée en masse proclaiming that all Frenchmen were soldiers, Savoyard priests were in the forefront of those encouraging Savoyards not to obey the conscription. The most serious incident occurred in the valleys around Thônes where, between 4 and 6 May 1793, local peasants led by réfractaire priests seized the valley and for a moment threatened the town of Annecy itself. The rebels were eventually defeated at Dingy-St. Clair (Annecy-nord) while attempting to defend one of the access-routes to Thônes. After the battle, three leaders were executed, a number of villages were pillaged and a fine of 40,000 livres was imposed on the rebel villages - all of which left bitter memories in the area. There was also a significant element of town-country hostility in the revolt. For details see: Guichonnet, P., Histoire de la Savoie, Toulouse, 1973, p.340-3.

27 Letter of l'Abbé Maurice Greffier to the Secrétaire Général, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 239, 7 May 1943. Greffier subsequently received the médaille militaire, médaille de la résistance and croix de guerre.

28 Various allied flags had been found on the flag-pole in the preceding weeks.
and 32 Thônnins taken into custody. When the four flag-flyers gave themselves up they were sent to work for the Todt at La Rochelle.29

Given the area's tradition and recent history, it was hardly surprising that the local population supported the réfractaires from the Relève and STO. Although the local in the valleys was hardly touched by either programme - it was for the most part agricultural and therefore exempt until the summer of 1943 - nevertheless, the police reported that 'toute la population fait cause commune avec les réfractaires.'30 The extent of the support may be seen during an incident at Grand-Bornand when the gendarmerie was unable to take away two réfractaires because women and children placed themselves in front of their car.31

But despite the tradition of resistance in the area and the undoubted hostility of the population to the Relève and STO, it was the behaviour of the réfractaires, many of whom were incorporated in the highly disciplined right-wing AS, which guaranteed that support from local population. The AS in the Thônes area tried to integrate its réfractaires into the local communities. After the war, Pierre Golliet, a member of the movement, described a camp at Entremont (Bonneville), where a group of seven or eight réfractaires were hidden. The local peasants used to come to the camp to listen to the BBC and discuss events with the réfractaires. It represented, argued Golliet, 'un modèle de cette cohabitation pacifique ou plutôt amicale qui caractérisait les camps de l'AS.32 There was a similar camp near Le Bouchet and Serraval (Thônes). The relationship between the groups and the population in the area was sufficiently good that the AS set up their école de cadres in Manigod (Thônes) above Thônes. Golliet explained,

Tous ces camps de la région de Thônes avaient un caractère commun, qui leur assurait la sympathie de la population des montagnes: à l'hospitalité dont ils jouissaient ils répondaient par une parfaite tenue. Leur présence ne constituait pas une occupation onéreuse pour l'habitant; aux réquisitions et aux brutalités, ils avaient préféré les relations de bonne amitié et de dévouement mutuel. Faut-il


30 Report of Capitaine V..., commandant de la section de gendarmerie d'Annecy, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 239, 4 May 1943. Misdated 1944. V... was killed by the resistance on 1 October 1943.

31 Police report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 239, 7 May 1943.

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préciser qu'il n'était pas question pour eux de rançonner les passants sur les routes ou d'exécuter des coups de main lucratifs?33

These arguments appear to be borne out by the police reports for the period which noted few attacks in the area until the arrival of a band of communist-led FTP into the valley. In the commune of Manigod (Thônes), for example, there were only two reported incidents for the whole of the occupation - when one barn was sacked and two uninhabited chalets were set on fire, possibly by Vichy forces. There were no robberies. Before November 1943 when an FTP group started operating in the area, there were only five incidents reported there. These ranged from two attacks on the property of Italians living in Thônes, two pylons being damaged, and a single robbery from a peasant in September of 700 francs, one pig, two goats and some rabbits.34

One of the reasons that the groups affiliated with the AS did not alienate the local peasants was the discipline imposed on the réfractaires by the organisation. The AS, which had strong links with the 27 Battalion Chasseurs Alpins, the local battalion in Annecy, did not attempt to live off an unwilling population and adopted army discipline to prevent its men doing so. This discipline could be harsh. Lieutenant Tom Morel, who commanded the 465 maquisards who raised the French flag on the Plateau de Glières and held back both Vichy and German forces between 31 January and 31 March 1944, ordered the execution of at least one maquisard for indiscipline.35 Louis Jourdan, a member of the AS, wrote after the war,

Pour des maquisards, la discipline comportait l'obéissance aux chefs... Elle impliquait qu'on ne considérait pas comme des exploits guerriers honorables les coups de main sur les bureaux de tabac, les fromageries, les banques ou les saloirs des paysans dont on ne partageait pas les opinions.36

Admittedly, not all of the actions undertaken by the AS were viewed with understanding. Although Lieutenant Simon, one of the early leaders of the AS, was widely admired, his recklessness did invite criticisms. The abbe Truffy explained in his memoirs,

J'ai donc connu Simon pendant deux mois et si j'avais un jugement à porter sur lui, je dirais qu'il était brave jusqu'à la témérité. Il n'avait peur de rien, mais était

34 In the last fortnight of November 1943 six robberies were reported in the arrondissement.
The culture of the outlaw in practice: Thônes

d’une imprudence folle. C’est ainsi que ses exploits, peut-être brillants, coûtèrent parfois la vie à des Français.37

Overall, however, the tactic of the AS not to take action which would bring attention to its bases or the local population around Thônes meant that their relationship with the local communities retained something of the culture of the outlaw.38 The AS also attempted to protect their local communities against groups working on their own. For example, in October 1943, the police du maquis, set up by the AS to control rogue elements, killed D... at Petit-Bornand. The police report commented,

Cet individu, étranger au pays, se montrait constamment armé d’un pistolet et ne se gênait pas à montrer son arme à n’importe quelle personne. D’après les renseignements que j’ai recueilli, il s’agit d’un individu très dangereux, ayant des complices dans la région qui circulent depuis un certain temps et sèment la terreur dans le pays... Depuis hier au soir, date du crime, une grande partie de la population est unanime et manifeste sa satisfaction de cette exécution.39

Indeed, the most significant problems that occurred between réfractaires and the population in the area around Thônes were caused by a similar group of FTP led by Marcel Lamouille, a communist born in Petit-Bornand who lived in Annemasse on the border with Switzerland. At the beginning of November 1943, he gathered a group around him - some of whom were local, others not - and began to undertake a series of operations.40

According to Jean Truffy, the curé of Petit-Bornand, one of the communes where Lamouille was operating, the result of these operations, many of which were directed against the local economy, was that, ‘la population

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38 This can be seen in the local support that was given to the maquisards on the Plateau de Glières, where the resistance made a stand against both Vichy and German forces between 31 January and 26 March 1944.


40 This was not the only group of FTP in the area. From November 1943, there was a camp of about 40 members hidden in two chalets on a mountain above Morette (Thônes) called le Dent du Cruet. There were complaints about the lack of discipline of the group. One of its members, Louis Gerin, explained in 1984, “Tout n’était pas parfait, comme d’ailleurs dans beaucoup de maquis de l’époque. Il est bien certain que le manque d’activité et de formation, la vie dans de perpétuelles angoisses, le manque d’armement, l’irritation entre ceux qui voulaient perpétuellement harceler l’occupant et ceux qui préféraient attendre, les privations de toutes sortes, ne contribuaient pas à la sérénité et provoquaient parfois des indisciplines.” Challamel, J-B. (ed.), La vallée de Thônes et Glières pendant la 2e Guerre Mondiale, 2 vols., Thônes, 1984, Vol 2, p.7.
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toute entière, se trouvait en effet terrifiée par l'action du Groupe Lamouille. Lamouille's actions eventually attracted the attention of the authorities. He was responsible for the capture and deaths of 16 commissaires and inspecteurs of the Renseignements Généraux based in La Roche sur Foron and Bonneville. Their disappearance was one of the triggers for Vichy's decision to institute a state of siege in the department which indirectly led to the Plateau de Gières tragedy, when about 465 maquisards were dislodged from their mountain stronghold. The discovery of the graves of the members of the Renseignements Généraux at St. Pierre de Rumilly (La Roche) gave rise to a poster used throughout France, proclaiming 'Katyn, Vinnitza, Haute-Savoie. Le Stalinisme ferait de l'Europe un charnier. Hommes et méthodes sont les mêmes.'

The culture of the outlaw could break down extremely quickly. As far as Jean Truffy was concerned, his role was two-fold. Firstly he needed to protect the réfractaires.

Contre les erreurs ou les faiblesses du Gouvernement prisonnier de l'occupant, contre les abus également de certaines groupes qui prétendaient travailler à sauver le pays, en pillant des Français. Si nous devions aider les jeunes à échapper à la déportation en Allemagne pour le service obligatoire, notre service était aussi de veiller à ne pas les laisser enrôler par certaines bandes qui se constituaient en marge de la Résistance ou sous son couvert et risquaient de les entraîner hors du droit chemin.

If that dual role was not always an easy task around Thônes where he had the support of the AS (Truffy was eventually deported.), it was almost impossible in the Chablais, where the FTP was more firmly implanted.

41 Truffy, J., Mémoires du Curé du Maquis de Gières, Paris, 1979, p.40. What happened next is a fine example of the moral difficulties which had to be faced during this period. The mayor of Petit-Bornand, François Merlin, who was a member of the A.S., eventually decided it was necessary to protect the community and contacted the police, asking them to deal with the group. The police suggested that the resistance should deal with the problem themselves. The AS contacted the FTP which eventually replied that the group was part of their organisation. In the meantime, Lamouille had captured a group of Renseignements Généraux, one of whom had a letter from Merlin indicating the position of Lamouille's hide-out. Merlin was forced to go into hiding, protected by a priest near Taninges, but was eventually killed by unknown men on 16 August 1944. Truffy's book, which is unusually frank about the problems faced by the village of Petit-Bornand, should be treated carefully. It was published originally in 1950, but a new edition was subject to a successful libel action from Lamouille. See also: Rickard, C., La Savoie dans la Résistance, Evreux, 1986, p.230-2; and prefect's report of 17 May 1945, which appears to bear out Truffy's view, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 80, 17 May 1945.

42 Annecy A.D., 5J 81.

CHAPTER 23: THE CULTURE OF THE OUTLAW IN PRACTICE: THE CHABLAISS

IN THEORY, the very existence of groups of *maquisards* for extended periods in Haute-Savoie should imply that the population supported them. Certainly after the liberation, when it was politically desirable to stress the popularity of the resistance movements and to suggest that resistance was a manifestation of the French people, this view was extensively propagated. In the official history of the FTP in Haute-Savoie, the authors wrote,

> En montagne, plus peut-être qu'ailleurs, il n'est possible aux maquisards de subsister que s'ils s'appuient sur la complicité active des populations paysannes. Le secret du grand succès des Francs-Tireurs de Haute-Savoie, c'est avant tout le patriotisme inébranlable et obstiné des Savoyards.\(^1\)

This Maoist view that the resistance fish needed a willing sea of support from the population has been supported by more recent historians. Pierre Laborie has written,

> A de rares exceptions près, une présence durable en zone rurale peut ainsi être interprétée comme le signe d'une population vivant en bonne intelligence avec le maquis et assurant à son profit une fonction nourricière et protectrice.\(^2\)

The reaction of the population was far more complicated than this view might suggest, however. While most of the rural population was happy to support individual *réfractaires* from the STO or organised groups which did not draw attention either to themselves or the local communities through apparently pointless actions, its attitude to the small bands of more loosely constituted, but highly active, maquisards was far more ambivalent.

As has been demonstrated, these groups, particularly in the Chablais, had not received such a warm welcome from the rural population and were not as well integrated into the local communities as those around Thônes. It is far from clear why the maquisards did not receive as much support in the Chablais as in the Thônes area. It may have been that the Chablais did not have a tradition of dissent and was not as politically alienated from the Vichy regime. The fact that many of the maquis in the region were not from local agricultural communities may also have contributed to the friction between peasants and *maquisards*. Many of the *maquisards* in the area were from towns outside the department who might have elicited hostility from peasants with little time for those from the cities. The fact that many of the *maquisards* were also foreigners from outside France did

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not help the relationship between rural communities and the maquis. The Spanish and Russian origins of some of the maquisards in the Chablais will also have alienated some of the local clergy and population which clearly feared bolshevism. So too will the more active attitude of the FTP which risked bringing down the wrath of the occupation forces.

Whatever the causes, the implications of the reticence of the peasants in Chablais in supporting the maquisards were serious. Without the support of an organised resistance and unable to depend upon the charity of the peasants, some réfractaires in the area, who did not have local ties or could not find employment with peasants, were obliged as winter approached to start forced requisitioning from the peasants in order to survive. Others merely took advantage of the situation to profit from it.

An indication of the growing dislocation between population and maquisards can be seen in the increase in the number of robberies reported in the department before the state of siege was instituted at the end of January 1944. Most of the activity was concentrated in the cantons along the Vallée de l'Arve and in the Chablais. The peasants in the Chablais, where the FTP was most active, suffered considerably. Before the state of siege, 14 attacks against the property or lives of peasants in the arrondissement of Thonon were

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3 Though this was clearly not determinative. Some of the groups in the Thônes valleys were not local either, while some of the FTP groups in the Chablais did in fact recruit heavily in nearby communities. After the murder on 12 November 1943 of M..., a fifty-two year old peasant at Fêternes (Evian), the police noted the following May, 'Il est probable que M... a été abattu par des individus de la région - l'un portait des sabots - car le mouvement FTP était très développé dans la région de Fêternes et recrutait ses adhérents surtout parmi les gens du pays.' Police report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 89, 31 May 1944.

4 Many of these were former Spanish Republicans and escaped Soviet prisoners of war. Even Maurice Greffier, the curé in Thônes, who was a member of the Armée Secrète, was worried about the threat of communism. In May 1943, he wrote to the Secrétaire Général at Annecy, 'Vous devinez cette atmosphère lourde, ce mécontentement sourd, où se délité toute notion de hiérarchie et de discipline... [Il y a un] climat pré-révolutionnaire dont vous savez bien [à] qui [le] profite: le communisme et l'anarchie.' Letter of Abbé Greffier to the Secrétaire Général du cabinet du préfet, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 239, 7 May 1943.


6 In September there were 6; in October, 19; in November, 53; in December 76; and in January 1944, 182.

7 Cluses, Bonneville, La Roche-sur-Foron and, in December and January, Reignier.

8 Evian, Thonon and, to a lesser extent, Douvaine. See map 8.
The culture of the outlaw in practice: the Chablais

reported to the authorities compared with six in the arrondissement of Bonneville, the next most disturbed district.9

A further indicator of the degree of the maquisards' integration into the communities is the extent to which they were willing to pay for requisitioned goods. The arrondissement of Thonon once again appeared to be the most disturbed area. On only three occasions were instances reported to the police of maquisards paying for produce taken, compared with nine in the arrondissement of Bonneville. Another important indicator of resistance activity - tobacconist robberies - was more prevalent around Bonneville (11) and the two arrondissements of Annecy (9) than that of Thonon (6) during the same period.10 Admittedly, the geographical distribution of attacks on village and town halls to appropriate ration tickets, which were then used to purchase bread and other necessities for the hors-la-loi rather than stealing supplies from local shops, were not significantly different before February 1944.11

Some peasants lost large sums during these armed robberies. For example, on Christmas Eve 1943, a peasant in the commune of St. Roch (Sallanches) was robbed of 72,000 francs and a gold watch by an armed man aged between 20 and 25. The next day, Mile S., a peasant farmer at La Chapelle-Rambaud (La Roche), was robbed of 13,000 francs in cash and a further 80,000 francs in negotiable government bonds. On 17 January

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9 These figures include robberies, as well as attempted and successful murders. However, there was no doubt considerable under-reporting. Many of the police reports for the period note that incidents had been reported late because those attacked or robbed had been told not to notify the authorities. For example, after an Italian farmer at Rivière-Enverse (Taninges) had been robbed of seven cows, three calves, butter, cheese and 56,000 francs worth of cash in October 1943, he was told he would be killed if he complained to the police. The incident, which was not untypical, was only discovered when he left the country and crossed the border into Switzerland. When incidents were reported, it was mostly by the victims. Tobacconists and garage owners had an interest in reporting robberies, because their products were rationed - hence the high level of thefts from these institutions. However, when a peasant reported an incident it was a deliberate, and sometimes dangerous, act, and as such must be seen as an indication of hostility to the maquisards. These incidents therefore offer an useful, if limited, measure of opinion.

10 Tobacco was often used by those hiding in the mountains to barter for food with the peasants, and high concentrations of robberies at tobacconists serve as indicators of resistance efforts to integrate into the local communities. Admittedly a few refractaires were also actively involved in the black market, crossing the frontier into Switzerland to buy cigarettes and tobacco. The trade could be lucrative: one trafficker made 70,000 francs in three months: intercepted telephone call cited in report of Contrôle Téléphonique, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 298, 7 September 1943. There were three substantial tobacco robberies before February 1944. Two were in Annecy from the depot on the Avenue de Parmelan (14 October 1943 and 10 January 1944) and one in Thonon (22 January 1944): all three involved thefts of at least one tonne of tobacco, worth about 360,000 francs.

11 Bonneville, 9; Cluses 14; Evian, 10; Thonon, 9. It has not possible to estimate the numbers of maquisards operating in any particular area, merely to gain some measure of their impact on the localities. See map 9.
The culture of the outlaw in practice

HAUTE-SAVOIE: resistance-related robberies per commune, February 1943–June 1944
The culture of the outlaw in practice: the Chablais

1944, G..., a peasant at Magland (Cluses) lost 100,000 francs in a similar raid. Livestock was also a favourite target for some groups.

Peasants could lose more than merely their savings or animals, however. M..., an Italian farmer at Faverges who refused to hand over a pig he had slaughtered, was shot dead in December 1943. Similarly, P..., a peasant from Lullin (Thonon) was killed on 25 October 1943 after being robbed of 30,000 francs. At Bernex (Abondance), a peasant, A..., and his wife were killed on 31 January 1944 while trying to prevent their cattle being stolen. Before the state of siege was instituted at the end of January 1944, it would seem that twenty-seven peasants had been killed by maquisards. Five of the victims were women.12

Admittedly, some of those targeted in the early months were Italians or had a reputation for looking too favourably on the Government. D..., for example, a peasant at Habère-Lullin (Boëge) lost 35,000 francs worth of goods and 8,200 francs in cash when he was robbed on 22 January 1944. He was reported to be a member of the PSF, the far right political group.

However, many of the groups carrying out such attacks were independent of organised resistance groups and their targets had little to do with resistance. Indeed, some of those involved in such actions were not embarrassed to deny their allegiance to the resistance. When S..., a peasant from Samoens was told 'la bourse ou la vie', his assailant explained, 'je ne suis pas du maquis résistant, je suis du maquis voleur.'13 Because of similar activities, some maquisards were expelled from the resistance. One group of réfractaires based in the chalets de Tiron, about 4km from Bernex (Abondance), was caught on 19 October 1943 after robbing a widow at Larringes (Evian) on the 17. Her guard-dog had been shot, the family tied up, and 36,000 francs taken as well as a horse, a car and 90 litres of eau de vie. The car was spotted by the police two days later being driven on the road between Bernex and Thollon. In the ensuing actions ten réfractaires were killed or captured. All were from outside the department.14 Their ages ranged from 18 to 24. The group justified the attack on the widow and her family by arguing that, 'cette ferme appartenait à des collabos qui faisaient du marché noir.' The Renseignements Généraux reported,

12 All but one of these murders was north of the Vallée de l'Arve where the FTP was most active. Seven of them were in the arrondissement of Thonon alone, another four were in Evian.

13 Police report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 90, 14 October 1943.

14 The departments of origin included, Marne, Rhône, Somme, Nord, Seine and Cher.
The culture of the outlaw in practice

HAUTE-SAVOIE: resistance-related murders per commune, February 1943–June 1944

Legend:
- 0.5–0.08
- 0.66–1.29
- 1.30–2.59
- 2.60–4.25
The culture of the outlaw in practice: the Chablais

Il s'agissait de réfractaires du STO qui avaient fait partie des organisations dites 'de résistance', d'où ils furent expulsés en raison de leur passé trouble (plusieurs étaient recherchés par la police pour délits de droits communs), ou de leurs conceptions politiques nettement bolchevisantes. Ils opéraient maintenant de leur propre initiative, donnant libre cours à leurs mauvais instincts, ils terrorisaient les populations.\(^\text{12}\)

Many maquisards justified this sort of activity by arguing that they were merely imposing taxes on those peasants who had profited from their activities on the black market\(^\text{16}\) - a justification that will not have been hindered by the pre-war town-country prejudice which had been re-affirmed by the mechanics of black and parallel markets.\(^\text{17}\) The effect of such activities, however, was to re-emphasise the already strained relations between peasant and maquisard.

The reaction of the local population to these developments was muddled. On the one hand it applauded the principle of avoiding obligatory work service on the basis of its undoubted anti-Germanism. On the other, it increasingly deplored the implications and consequences of that decision. A report from the SCT explained the dilemma:

Les insoumis du STO réfugiés dans les montagnes de la Haute-Savoie, sont à l'origine d'un certain nombre d'attentats qui provoquent l'indignation unanime: enlèvement du Maire de Thorens, assassinats crapuleux, pillage de chalets et de magasins de vivres, des Centres de Jeunesse et Montagne, détournement d'un détachement du Chantier No.7. Les plus fervents de leurs sympathisants constatent qu'un tel esprit de rébellion 'gâche la cause du maquis.'\(^\text{18}\)

The report continued:

\(^\text{15}\) Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10, 23 October 1943. Three other members of the group avoided capture because they had recently passed into Switzerland to buy tobacco. It is interesting that none of the names involved appear on the monuments aux morts at Bernex. See: Comité de Haute-Savoie de l'Association Nationale des anciens combattants de la Résistance française (ed.), Mémorial de la résistance en Haute-Savoie, Ambilly, 1971, 154-5.

\(^\text{16}\) A justification which covered more or less every peasant.

\(^\text{17}\) The Renseignements Généraux explicitly linked what they called the scandalous profits and cynical egoism of the peasants and réfractaires' willingness to steal from them. Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 2 February 1944.

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Les intéressés se refusent à travailler pour 'les ennemis du pays'; leurs familles continuent à crier à la 'déportation.' La soumission est rarement conseillée. Cependant, la sympathie pour 'le maquis' est en sérieuse régression: 'C'est un remède pire que le mal.'

The reaction of those living in the towns who did not have to bear the brunt of the demands of the réfractaires was rather different from that of the peasants in the countryside. The report from the SCT added, 'La population d'Annecy cependant a fait des funérailles très remarquées à un jeune parisien réfractaire qui aurait été tué au cours d'une échauffourée avec un détachement italien.'

It was the peasants providing the interface between the population and the réfractaires who were most concerned about their growing lawlessness. Many were shocked by attacks on members of the police and other organisations. The first death caused by the resistance - that of a member of the Garde Mobile de Reserve (GMR) near Thonon shot by two members of the 'Groupe des Allobroges' - caused surprise among the local population. The Renseignements Généraux noted, 'Sitôt connue, la nouvelle de cet attentat a produit une vive émotion dans tout le département... la majorité de la population réprouve ce crime et le considère comme une lâcheté.'

But it was not only the growing evidence of disorder which accompanied the réfractaire phenomenon that worried the peasants. They were also concerned about the political implications of resistance. As early as March 1943, the Renseignements Généraux first raised the possibility that réfractaires might be harnessed by the Communists and used as a mechanism for seizing power. By July, they reiterated the point,

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21 Report by C., Commandant de la compagnie de la Haute-Savoie, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 23 April 1943.

22 Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 25 April 1943. Admittedly, a report two days earlier admitted that some on the left felt the killing was justified because of alleged brutality of the GMR against the réfractaires: report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 19 April 1943.

23 See also for an early expression of this fear: report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy A.D., 12 W 10bis, 29 March 1943.
The culture of the outlaw in practice

HAUTE-SAVOIE: resistance-related robberies of ration tickets and Mayor's stamps per commune, February 1943–June 1944
The culture of the outlaw in practice: the Chablais

De nouveau se manifeste la double crainte chez les partisans de l'ordre, d'une part, que des éléments révolutionnaires soient mêlés aux réfractaires, qui ont pour mission d'en faire des troupes 'de choc' rompus aux méthodes extrémistes et à la 'guérilla' en vue d'une éventuelle prise de pouvoir par les communistes au moment de la libération du territoire, et d'autre part, que ces pratiques, appelant une sérieuse répression, ne compromettent gravement la faveur populaire dont jouissent les réfractaires. 24

In June 1943, the Renseignements Généraux told the prefect that there was a risk that the increasing number of violent incidents in the department involving hors-la-lois could compromise the undoubted popularity of the réfractaires. Haut-Savoyards' sympathy risked being alienated. 25

The peasants reacted to these events by increasingly differentiating those réfractaires who were of local origin and who had been, for the most part, quickly assimilated into the local economy, and those from outside the department. The latter were seen by many peasants as outsiders from the towns who were using the réfractaires for political ends. During the summer, the Renseignements Généraux stressed:

La population, si elle sympathise avec les réfractaires, veut cependant faire la différence entre ceux-ci et les terroristes qui se sont glissés dans leurs rangs ou qui les encadrent et dont elle craint qu'ils n'aient qu'un seul but, celui d'exploiter le mouvement anti-STO à des fins subversives. 26

The increasing attacks against peasants' homes and belongings by réfractaires, as well as the growing violence against the farmers themselves, reinforced the belief that extremist elements were taking advantage of the maquis. The Renseignements Généraux argued that the popularity of such groups in these rural communities declined after a series of raids against crops and agricultural property. 27

After an attack on two gendarmes escorting a prisoner in Bonneville in August, the sous-préfet noted,

La réaction est très nette, chacun n'a pas hésité à condamner tel procédé et à considérer ses auteurs comme bandits et gens dangereux, ce qui confirmerait la distinction qui tend à s'accentuer de plus en plus entre les jeunes gens du pays.

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26 Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 26 July 1943 (In August file.)
The culture of the outlaw in practice: the Chablais

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26 Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 26 July 1943 (In August file.)
The culture of the outlaw in practice: the Chablais

hostiles au STO et ceux qui, venant des villes, armés et inspirés par certains groupements politiques, sont tenus pour peu intéressants et même à craindre des habitants des hameaux de montagne.28

The reaction of the Renseignements Généraux to the event was more blunt:

D'autre part, malgré toute sa sympathie pour les réfractaires, la population de notre région fait montrer d'un état d'esprit nouveau à l'égard de la question. Elle est, en effet, de plus en plus impressionnée par les actes de banditisme qui se produisent dans le cadre du STO. L'attentat [against the Gendarmes] ... lui a donné la certitude que des éléments troubles encadrent les jeunes du maquis, et qu'ils leur inculquent les méthodes du terrorisme révolutionnaire dans le dessein croit-elle, de les entraîner à l'action subversive qui devrait se déclencher dès la fin des hostilités, au profit de la révolution communiste et grace au prestige des Soviets victorieux.29

The SCT confirmed the growing fears of Bolshevism among Haut-Savoyards. In September, it reported, 'Un profond malaise et la crainte du bolchevisme gagne chaque jour du terrain. On s'accorde à redouter des "jours sanglants" au moment où la paix sera revenue en France.'30

Vichy propaganda played on peasant fears about outsiders from the spring of 1943 onwards. On 12 July 1943, Laval picked up these concerns in a speech in which he began to talk about the possibility of civil war.31 This was a theme to which Vichy propaganda consistently returned. In January 1944, the authorities launched a poster campaign warning, 'En France, la guerre civile sera inévitablement plus violente qu'en Russie.'32 and that, 'Les montagnes des Allobroges,' could become, 'le berceau de la guerre civile.'33 Vichy propaganda also emphasised the communist and foreign influences in the resistance. A tract published throughout France and


31 The decision of most of the Spanish refugees in the 517ème Groupe de Travailleurs Etrangers to desert their camp in Novel (Evian) during August 1943 did little to allay these fears. Report of C..., Commandant de la compagnie de la Haute-Savoie, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 22 August 1943. Some interesting work remains to be conducted into the way in which the notion of Bolshevism was consciously manipulated by Vichy in order to reinforce the population's fear of the resistance movements. Undoubtedly the way in which Bolshevism was perceived varied enormously between town and country.

32 'Le terrorisme dans les campagnes', Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, 4o 16.58 368.

33 Ibid.

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known as 'L'affiche rouge' carried the title 'L'armée rouge' and contained pictures of captured and dead 'terroristes'. They included a Spaniard, an Hungarian, a Polish Jew and an Armenian described as 'capitaine d'horreur, organisateur de 56 attentats'. The resistance was shown to be a communist and foreign conspiracy: 'Le banditisme n'est pas l'expression du patriotisme blessé, c'est le complot étranger contre la vie des Français et contre le souverain de la France.' Those youths and adults who had joined the FTP had no idea, argued the pamphlet, that, 'L'embryon FTP actuel est la matière de départ de notre future armée rouge et de notre police de structure.' Such fears were played upon by Philippe Henriot, the secretary of state for information. By the end of February, the Renseignements Généraux noted that his daily editorials were being listened to more and more, although they added, 'Il ne faudrait pas toutefois en conclure que la personnalité de M. Philippe Henriot et ses exposés soient admis par la masse.' Although, his programmes criticising Allied bombing were welcomed, it seems that the reaction to Henriot's broadcasts appears to have been much more positive outside the department than within it. Henriot's propaganda was given added impact by the successes of the Soviet troops on Eastern Front and the failure of the Anglo-Americans to land in Western Europe. The SCT quoted one intercepted letter from a correspondent who saw the war as a race to Germany between the Russians and Anglo-Americans and concluded: 'Si la Russie faisait cavalier seul, ce serait pour nous la catastrophe.'

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid.

36 The debate between Henriot and the Swiss media was carefully followed. His Swiss opponents were Paul de Bochet of the Tribune de Genève and René Payot at Radio Sottens. Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 19 February 1944; 22 February 1944.

37 His broadcasts seem to have been particularly unpopular in the towns of Haute-Savoie. The report noted that when a film was shown in Annecy of Henriot at Lille, there were shouts and whistles in the cinema. The report concluded, 'Ces manifestations n'en paraissent pas moins significatives de l'état d'esprit de la population ouvrière à l'égard de M. Henriot.' Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 22 February 1944.

38 Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 23 April 1944; 30 April 1944.

39 See, for example, the comments of Hélène Eck: 'Pour Henriot, il s'agit systématiquement, jour après jour, d'assimiler les maquisards à des terroristes. Il sait qu'il y a durant cet hiver 1944 une profonde lassitude en France, qu'on n'en peut plus d'attendre la libération; il sait aussi que les maquisards sont contraints de vivre sur le pays, que des excès sont commis et que si la majorité de la population leur est favorable, certains Français éprouvent des sentiments partagés ou même hostiles.' Eck, H. and Crémieux-Brilhac, J-L., (ed.) La Guerre des Ondes, Lausanne, 1985, p.120-2.

40 Report of Contrôle Mixte de Contrôle Technique d'Annecy, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, August 1943.
As winter approached in 1943, Vichy propaganda was increasingly helped in its attempts to mobilise public concern about the Bolshevik menace by the growing disorder in the department. The growing number of murders in the department added further weight to the argument that the area was rapidly heading towards civil war. Before the state of siege was put into effect, there were 146 murders by the resistance in the department.\textsuperscript{41} Some of those killed by the communist-led FTP were even well-known Gaullists, although such murders were rare.\textsuperscript{42} Other activities of the resistance also increased. The number of notified robberies grew from 19 in October 1943 to 182 by January 1944. The number of reported attacks on railway lines, factories and pylons increased from four in August 1943 to 62 in January (See figure 4). The number of raids on town and village halls for both tickets and the mayor's seal\textsuperscript{43} also rose from four in September 1943 to 32 by the following January.

The reports from the various agencies of the administration in the department demonstrated the increasing panic among both the authorities and the population. In September 1943, the SCT commented,

\begin{quote}
Une 'psychose de terreur', soigneusement entretenue, semble-t-il, par des éléments de désordre, règne dans la plupart des localités de Haute-Savoie. Les attaques à main armée, les 'exécutions' de Miliciens, de membres du PPF, ou de dénonciateurs français et italiens se multiplient et sont présentées comme des 'représailles.' Elles sont précédées fréquemment de menaces de mort accompagnées de divers attributs tels que cercueils, cordes, boites d'allumettes, symbolisant le sort réservé aux destinaires. ... Le public, dans sa presque totalité, réprouve ces manifestations d’une 'veritable guerre civile' et visant à favoriser l’éclosion d’une 'révolution sanglante.'\textsuperscript{44}
\end{quote}

By Christmas 1943, the population of Haute-Savoie was becoming increasingly divided, fearful and disorientated. The social divisions exacerbated by the black and parallel markets had never been greater. In December 1943, the Contrôle Postal reported that it had read 53,980 letters during the month. Of those, 1,727 (3.1 per cent.) were defined as demonstrating, 'malaise et découragement général: inquiétude pour l’avenir.' One intercepted letter read, 'La vie continue dans une lourde atmosphère d’angoisse. La tension sociale est

\textsuperscript{41} Seventeen were women.

\textsuperscript{42} For instance, G..., a gaullist who helped Jews across the Swiss frontier, was killed at Bernex on 27 November 1943. After the war, the Prefect wrote that of 'la population de ce village [Bernex], vivant sous la terreur répandue par une bande du "maquis" d’appartenance FTP.' Prefect's report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 88, 16 July 1945.

\textsuperscript{43} These were used to stamp identity cards.

\textsuperscript{44} Report of the Contrôle Mixte de Contrôle Technique d’Annecy, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256 September 1943.
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telle que personne ne se réjouira beaucoup au moment de la paix, sachant qu'elle sera suivie d'une révolution sanglante.'

As the security situation deteriorated it had a marked effect on the popularity of the resistance. There were 6,583 letters (12.2 per cent.) which mentioned a general fear of the 'terroristes,' and of these, 4,872 (9 per cent) disapproved of their actions. The SCT quoted a number of letters:

C'est une véritable terreur dans les campagnes. On parle de la 'grande peur'; 'Un régime de terrorisme et de cruauté règne dans la région où les attentats se multiplient'; 'Une chose est certaine: la révolution est commencée, les actes de terrorisme se multiplient autour de nous, et on est plongé dans une atmosphère de terreur. Ceci est un prélude de guerre civile.' 'Pour venir dans le département il faut une cote de maille et une voiture blindée.' 'Le secteur est agité: pistolets et mitraillettes sont rois, c'est triste de voir ainsi les Français s'entretuer.'

As Darnand, newly appointed to the position of secretary of state for the maintenance of order, prepared to institute martial law in the Haute-Savoie, the Renseignements Généraux had little doubt that a large proportion of the public believed that civil war was on the horizon,

Il n'est pas douteux que la grande majorité de la population réprouve les exécutions et actes de sabotage, mais elle le fait moins parce qu'ils sont dirigés contre les collaborateurs ou les troupes d'occupation que par crainte qu'ils soient le prélude à une guerre civile. De plus en plus, elle redoute qu'après le départ des troupes d'opérations, les haines et les rancunes entre français se donnent libre cours, entraînant une situation analogue à celle qui caractérisa la terreur des périodes révolutionnaires.

45 The Renseignements Généraux argued, 'Il convient de souligner, encore une fois, le double sentiment qui anime la population à l'égard des bandes armées. En effet, si les actes de banditisme sont à la fois réprouvés et redoutés, l'on se demande qu'elle serait la situation intérieure de la France dans l'éventualité d'un débarquement Anglo-Américain; en revanche certains réfractaires ont la sympathie de nombreux Savoyards qui craignent que les "bons" payent pour les "mauvais."' Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 6 February 1944.

46 There were also widespread criticisms that many of the attacks were motivated by personal reasons (1,647 letters, equivalent to 3 per cent.) All information from report of Commission Mixte de Contrôle Technique d'Annecy, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, December 1943.

47 Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10, 19 December 1943. Also: report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 9 January 1944. Vichy administrators were persistently reminded by their superiors to call Axis troops 'troupes d'opérations' rather than 'troupes d'occupations.'
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RESISTANCE-RELATED INCIDENTS IN HAUTE SAVOIE

400 — Number of incidents

- Seizures of arms
- Sabotage
- Theft of tickets
- Robberies
- Attempted murders

0 100 200 300 400

Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec 1943
Jan Feb 1944
Mar Apr May Jun 1944

Note: Data taken from Annecy A.D., 12 W 7-11, 75, 79, 80, 82, 85-90, 138, 140, 228.
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The following month, the Renseignements Généraux reported "[une] sorte de panique qui s'empare du monde rural." The following month, they noted,

Compagnards et villageois vivent dans la terreur de se voir tout à coup dépouillés, ou même tués, sans secours, sans la possibilité de disposer d'armes de défense, ce qui accrédite peu à peu le sentiment que rien ne s'opposera à l'action destructive des bandes subversives dont ils craignent obscurement qu'elles ne se déchaînent au profit du bolchévisme lorsque sonnera l'heure de la libération du territoire.

Above all, there was a desire for peace. There were 4,908 letters (9 per cent.) mentioning hopes that the war would soon come to an end.

The liberation was still eight months away.

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52 All information from report of Commission Mixte de Contrôle Technique d'Annecy, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, December 1943.
CHAPTER 24: THE COUNTER-RESISTANCE: THE MILICE IN HAUTE-SAVOIE

As the security situation deteriorated in Haute-Savoie during the autumn of 1943, so the Milice, which had originally been created by Joseph Darnand in January 1943 as a paramilitary vanguard of the National Revolution, began to take on a growing importance. Increasingly, the organisation, which was a direct descendant of the unpopular SOL, saw its role as providing protection for the peasants against a growing Bolshevik threat apparent in the growth in the FTP’s activities. In doing so, the Miliciens hoped to win over the support of the rural sections of Haut-Savoyard society.

However, even from its inception, the Milice was aware that it generated little enthusiasm in the department. When Pétain announced its creation on 5 January 1943, the Renseignements Généraux wrote that the speech had passed almost unnoticed. At the organisation’s inaugural meeting in Annecy on 25 February 306 Miliciens attended, with about 200 others in the hall and a further 500 outside to listen to the speeches. The Prefect, Henri Tremeaudo, with whom the Milice would subsequently have so much trouble, opened the meeting. Although the SCT thought initially that the Milice might have more chance of being popular than its predecessor, the SOL, it was soon clear that there was little support for the movement in the department. The SCT indicated that in the early days of the Milice there were few references either on the telephone or in letters to the organisation, but did say that when the Milice was mentioned, it was with violence. The service explained in its report, ‘D’aucuns applaudissent à son oeuvre “sans mobile politique.” [...] Mais d’autres accusent les Miliciens de délétion et les vouent à de futures représailles.’ In part, this hostility was merely a manifestation of the growing hostility to the government in Vichy which was then introducing a series, in particular, the Service du Travail Obligatoire (STO). Like the STO, the creation of the Milice appeared to be linked to Germany and the policy of collaboration. C., the commandant in charge of the gendarmerie in the department explained, ‘Enfin pour les 3/4 des gens, la Milice a été créée

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3 On condition that it was able to stress its anti-communism, addressing growing worries about the possibility of Soviet victory after Stalingrad. Synthesis of reports of SCT, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, February 1943


5 Commission mixte de Contrôle Technique d’Annecy, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, June 1943.

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à la demande des autorités allemandes et cela suffit à la faire détester. The Renseignements Généraux agreed that the apparent links with the Germans formed one of the main reasons why the organisation had set off on the wrong foot, and quoted one man in St. Felix (Canton): 'les Miliciens sont des boches. Ils seront pendus.' The Milice was seen, quite simply, as a copy of nazi para-military bodies. One Milicien complained, 'tout le monde m'en veut parce que je suis de la Milice: on nous appelle "Milice Allemande."'

The Milice was also criticised for its lax recruitment standards. Admittedly, some saw it as a means of escaping the STO - the census for the programme was taking place in the first week in March, at the same time that the Milice was launching its recruitment drive. Many Miliciens were the sons of members of the PPF and the Légion who were trying to win the exemption offered by membership of the organisation. However, there were also complaints that criminals and black-marketeers had slipped into the organisation.

Although not all of its activities were completely unpopular, the Milice was also criticised for the behaviour of its members. After a slow start, the organisation launched a series of lectures called 'La Patrie en danger' in the main towns in the department during April 1943. The main theme of the lectures was the Bolshevik peril. It was argued that the cost of living bore no relation to the wages being offered to the workers and that there was serious risk of revolution. The role of the Milice, it was claimed, was three-fold. Firstly, to track down the doubtful (communo-gaullist and jewish) elements in society; next, to distribute propaganda to ensure that

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6 He also added that everybody in the department thought the Germans were going to lose. Report of C..., commandant de la brigade de gendarmerie de la Haute-Savoie, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 23 April 1943.
8 Quoted in synthesis of reports by the Contrôle Mixte d'Annecy, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, April 1943.
9 The Renseignements Généraux wrote, 'Cette attitude a été vivement critiquée par l'ensemble de la population, toujours farouchement hostile à tout ce qui peut favoriser la cause allemande.' Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 22 March 1943, in April file. It should be noted, that like much of the administration, many Légionnaires welcomed the creation of the Milice with 'crainte et réticence.' Report of the Agent Administratif de Reignier et Annemasse, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 20 June 1943. Not that there was much love lost between the Milice and the PPF: the Renseignements Généraux reckoned that PPF members believed that 'les miliciens sont "des pauvres types que le gouvernement amuse,... pour les miliciens le PPF est un "parti vendu à l'Allemagne."' Report of Renseignements Généraux on national congress of the PPF in Paris in August, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10, 6 September 1943.
10 Report of Police, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 23 April 1943. This may not have been entirely accurate. At least initially, the Milice appear to have been quite scrupulous in checking the backgrounds of potential recruits, even going to the extent of asking the Renseignements Généraux if they had previous records. Report of Prefect, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 76, 15 October 1943.

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Frenchmen knew of the threat; finally, and most importantly, to undertake what was described as 'action sociale'. This 'action sociale' was aimed at preventing revolution and would involve creating community restaurants for the workers, forcing the factory owners to share their profits with the workers and fighting energetically against the black market with immediate, though somewhat imprecise, sanctions. When put into practice some of these ideas to alleviate the plight of the urban poor proved effective. At Annecy for example, the Milice began buying vegetables directly from wholesalers and then undercut local traders by selling at the legally fixed price in the market. This was at a time when fresh vegetables were almost impossible to find at reasonable prices and, as the Renseignements Généraux noted, proved popular with the consumers if not the local retailers. The idea was also used in Thonon and Annemasse where it also proved a success.

However, such recognition of the Milice's activities was seldom repeated. More common were complaints about the behaviour of Miliciens. Its propaganda methods were viewed as incongruous. The mayor of Annemasse, Jean Deffaugt, the sous-préfet for Thonon, and the Renseignements Généraux all wrote to the Prefect asking why it was necessary for members of an official body to creep about at night to paint slogans on walls. In Neuvecelle (Evian) the bust of the Republic was removed, and RF was replaced by EF on the communal buildings. There were also complaints about miliciens brandishing arms in public. By December, the

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11 Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 19 April 1943; police report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 76, 16 April 1943. The speeches were at Thonon, St. Julien and Annecy. The idea of social revolution attracted a good many early miliciens elsewhere too. See: Luirard, M., La région stephanoise dans la guerre et dans la paix: 1936-1951, St. Etienne, 1980, p.413. See also below.


13 Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 5 July 1943. In the Loire, the main activity of the Milice was also to combat the black market: Luirard, M., La région stephanoise dans la guerre et dans la paix: 1936-1951, St. Etienne, 1980, p.416.

14 Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 26 April 1943; letter of Jean Deffaugt to Prefect, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 76, 16 April 1943. The propaganda was not particularly imaginative either. The following was found in Neuvecelle (Canton) 'Communistes, Republicains méfiez-vous, la Milice est née' and this on the slopes above Evian at Milly-sur-Neuvecelle (Evian): 'La France sans Milice c'est un bébé sans nourrice: vive la France, Vive Pétain.' Report of sous-préfet de Thonon, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 76, 28 April 1943.


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Secrétaire Général at the cabinet du Préfet wrote, 'Cette attitude risque d'avoir les plus graves conséquences pour le maintien de l'ordre.'

Given its membership, its links with collaboration, the behaviour of its membership and its privileges vis-à-vis the STO, it was hardly surprising that the Milice did not enjoy much support from Haut-Savoyards. 'Quant à la Milice, les commentaires la concernant sont rares mais violents,' wrote the SCT in June 1943. Few people attended its meetings in the towns. However, in the countryside - and particularly in the Chablais where by the autumn of 1943 the communist-led FTP was most active - fear of communism in these Catholic and conservative areas did help recruitment. Its members were often, however, the object of considerable opprobrium. 'La milice a beaucoup de peine à recruter des adhérents et se heurte à l'hostilité croissante de la majeure partie de l'opinion,' wrote the Renseignements Généraux. 'Ses membres, particulièrement dans les communes rurales, sont l'objet de vexations et de menaces fréquentes de la part des habitants qui leur reprochent leur fidélité au Gouvernement, et notamment à la politique de collaboration.'

Such threats against the Milice became a common phenomenon. The authorities believed this was one reason why many former members of the SOL living in the country were unwilling to join. They argued that in many communes fear of reprisals prevented anyone taking the initiative. Those who did join the Milice found themselves under increasing threats of violence. At the first public meeting of the Milice in Thonon, at the Etoile Sonore, a grenade was thrown through the window, although there were no casualties. Miniature coffins, broken matches and small nooses were regularly sent to miliciens. In May, a bomb was planted at a Milicien's house. As early as July 1943, four of the five miliciens in St. Paul-en-Chablais (Evian) had gone into hiding. By September, the SCT commented,

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20 Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 7 June 1943.


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La milice est en butte à l'hostilité de la plus grande partie du public: de divers côtés, des menaces sont adressées à ses membres dont on espère qu'ils doivent 'commencer à comprendre'. Le moral des Miliciens semble atteint par cet état d'esprit; certains Francs-Gardes se plaignent de leur isolement et des rigueurs de la discipline.23

That month, after the murder of a chef de centaine in Thonon, the Milice decided to suspend recruiting.24 Nevertheless, despite the widespread unpopularity of the movement, it still claimed to have 500 francs-gardes in the department and 400 miliciens ordinaires - a total of 900, compared with a membership for the SOL of about 1,200.25 Between 100 and 150 of these were in Annecy,26 and from later events it appears that much of the membership was concentrated in the hills and mountains of the Haut-Chablais above the shores of lake Geneva where the intensely Catholic communities were bearing the brunt of the activities of the communist-led FTP.27

The Milice reacted to its increasing marginalisation from Haut-Savoyard society with growing disarray. The movement became fundamentally split - a rift which became apparent when Gaston Jacquemin, the departmental head of the Milice in Haute-Savoie, together with another milicien were killed in Thônes on 21 November 1943.28 The murders of the two miliciens in Thônes had a double impact on the Milice. Firstly, it confirmed the view of many miliciens that being a member of the

23 Commission mixte de Contrôle Technique d'Annecy, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, September 1943.
25 Report of Prefect to Regional Prefect, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 76, 29 April 1943.
27 In all, 27 of the 43 local miliciens killed by the resistance before the liberation lived in the cantons of Douvaine, Thonon and Evian in the Chablais. It was also in this area that after the liberation a number of priests were killed and others had to flee the department because they had encouraged youngsters to join the Milice. The Catholic Church remained extremely important in the Haut-Chablais: between 60 and 74 per cent of adults in this area continued to go to mass each Sunday, as late as 1956. See: Callot, E-F., 'Geographie et sociologie electorale du departement de la Haute-Savoie de 1956 à 1968' (unpublished thesis for diplôme supérieur de recherches et d'études politiques, Paris, Science Pol., 1969), map 11. For the importance of Catholicism and the significance of the crusading ideal within milicien thinking, see: Gordon, B., 'Un soldat du fascisme: l'évolution politique de Joseph Darnand', RHDGM, 108 (1977), p.43-70, p.58. What is of interest is why the Chablais embraced the Milice so strongly and why the Vallée de Thônes, neighbouring the Plateau des Glières - an even more Catholic and conservative area than the Chablais embraced the resistance.
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organisation was becoming extremely dangerous. The attack on Jacquemin was part of a wider policy by the resistance of attacking members of the Milice. Two milicien were killed in September 1943 and a further three in October. But in November, the resistance stepped up its activity, with 17 attacks on the Milice during which nine were killed. Five of the deaths, including the murder of a Milicienne, were in the single canton of Douvaine, located in the Chablais. The Renseignements Généraux commented,

Les récents attentats dont ont été victimes divers membres de la Milice et du PPF ont entraîné de nombreuses démissions, au sein de ces groupements, rendues volontairement publiques par les intéressés. En outre, les militants les plus en vue de ces organisations, ont quitté leur domicile pour une destination inconnue.

The second effect of the killings was to trigger a series of violent ripostes from the more radical section of the Milice - ripostes which quickly antagonised and frightened the other, less militant, members. After the deaths, C., a milicien who had been with Jacquemin in Thônes but escaped, refused to make a statement to the police investigating the murders, stating, 'la Milice ferait la police elle-même.' The evening after Jacquemin's death, the Milice took their revenge, attacking six people at their homes in Annecy and killing three of them - none known for activity in the resistance, but at least one of whom was Jewish. Miliciens began to take the law into their own hands, walking the streets fully armed. At Jacquemin's funeral, the 150 miliciens who paraded through the streets with the cortege were armed with machine-guns - a gesture which, according to the police, was considered by most of the population as 'une véritable provocation.'

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29 Reports of Police, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 88-90.
30 Simon's group was responsible for the death of two brothers in the Milice in Cercier (Cruseilles) on 22 November 1943. Police report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 89.
31 By November, most of the Milice in the area of Douvaine had left the area because of these attacks. The response of one Milicien, C., was to attack someone in Loisin whom he thought was in the resistance, and then shoot at the gendarmes sent to prevent him. Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10, 27 November 1943, but in December file.
33 Police report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 76, 1 December 1943.
34 For example, the police complained that members had started checking people's identities in the streets of Annecy. Report of police, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 76, 1 December 1943.
35 Police report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 76, 24 November 1943.
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The reaction of most Haut-Savoyards to these developments was far from positive. The inhabitants of Annecy watched the funeral procession with indifference. The murder of Jacquemin in Thônes, wrote the police, had been approved, more or less openly. They added that its hostility towards the Milice increased when members had entered the town after the murders in the company of German troops.36 The population had been further antagonised by the Milice’s attacks the previous night in Annecy and the arrest of the Prefect, Henri Tremeaud.37 Emotions rose even more in early December when some 330 letters were distributed by the Milice to supposed members of the resistance movements. There were two versions: the first asked them to end their activity. The second informed them that for their attachment to ‘la République Juive, au communisme, au gaulisme’ they were sentenced to death.38

Faced with the growing unpopularity of the Milice and its increasing radicalism, the Milice found itself increasingly split:

Il semble bien qu’au sein de la Milice se dessine deux mouvements: le premier est partisan de sévères représailles pour faire cesser les attentats dont sont l’objet les membres de la Milice. Le second, élément pondérateur, se montre surpris de la tournure que prennent les événements et aurait tendance à se désolidariser de la Milice.39

In the town of Seyssel, half of which is in Haute-Savoie and the other half in the neighbouring department of the Ain, the head of Milice for the section in Haute-Savoie resigned towards the end of November after disagreements with his opposite number in the Ain over the political direction of the movement. Many miliciens followed his example. The Renseignements Généraux pointed out, ‘La plupart des miliciens

36 Police report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 76, 23 November 1943 and 24 November 1943.

37 The exact reasons for his arrest appeared obscure. He was rumoured to have been arrested because he had refused to hand over a list of refugees from Alsace and Lorraine or had refused to give Germans the names of escaped prisoners of war in the department. Another theory was that he had been blamed for the rising number of attacks by the resistance in the department. He was replaced by Paul Marion and deported to Germany: police report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 76, 23 November 1943.


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reconnaissent que leur mouvement a pris un caractère nettement politique, contrairement à ce qu'on leur a laissé entendre au début.\textsuperscript{40}

By the end of 1943, the Milice in Haute-Savoie was in severe difficulties. It not only faced the growing hostility of the population, but it was also experiencing an increasing number of resignations motivated partly by fear, partly by the dawning realisation by many of its members that it had set off down a path that they were unwilling to follow.\textsuperscript{41}

The events of 1944 were to exaggerate these problems still further. Between January and the Allied landings in Normandy on 6 June 1944, a further 21 local miliciens were killed in the department by the resistance.\textsuperscript{42}

Even those who had resigned remained under threat. On 28 January 1944, for example, C..., a Swiss former member of the Foreign Legion living in Sallanches, was attacked by the résistants, even though he had resigned from the Milice after receiving threatening letters in August and October the previous year.\textsuperscript{43} Similarly, G..., a retailer in Bonne-sur-Menoge (Annemasse), was shot at by the resistance on 21 February 1944, despite his resignation from the Milice in November. He was eventually killed in July.\textsuperscript{44}

The reaction of the population to these attacks was mixed. In general, it depended upon how highly the individual Milicien was esteemed in the locality and how accustomed the individual community had become to such killings. When G... was shot dead at Bonne-sur-Menoge (Annemasse), the police noted that the population was not unduly disturbed by the murder, explaining, 'comme il a fait partie de la Milice, cela lui a

\textsuperscript{40} Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10, 3 December 1943. The report added that the resignations were also partly motivated by the attacks on the Milice. There were also a large number of resignations around Reignier and Annemasse. See: report of Agent Administratif de Reignier et Annemasse, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10, 20 December 1943.

\textsuperscript{41} For a similar split in the Milice between moderates and radicals in the department of the Loire, see: Luirard, M., \textit{La région stephanoise dans la guerre et dans la paix: 1936-1951}, St. Etienne, 1980, p.415.

\textsuperscript{42} This does not include those killed in military-style actions against the resistance.

\textsuperscript{43} He escaped unharmed. Police report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 88.

\textsuperscript{44} Police report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 88. At least another eight miliciens were killed between D-Day and the liberation, though as communications broke down in the department, the reports become less reliable. In total some 47 local miliciens appear to have been killed before the liberation. This does not include those killed during the military-style operations against the resistance on the Plateau de Glières and elsewhere in the department.
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valu le mécontentement pour ne pas dire la haine de la majeure partie de la population. 45 Similarly, when Z..., head of the Milice in Bernex was killed at the funeral of his mother-in-law - who had also been shot by résistants - the local population appeared not to react: 'Son entrée dans la Milice et son attitude parfois provocante lui aurait valu la haine de ses adversaires politiques; puis finalement, le mépris de presque toute la population,' wrote the police. 46

Other attacks on the Milice were viewed less indulgently. When G..., a milicien from Vinzier (Evian), was shot through the head in a Thonon hospital while recovering from a wound received during the attack on Z... in Bernex (Abondance), the population was less impressed. The man had a better reputation than Z. He had already been attacked with his brother - also a milicien - in November, when, according to the police, 'la population, bien que critiquant l'activité des fils G... reprouve une telle agression.' 47 Some areas were unused to violence. When M... a peasant from Samoens where only five people were killed by the resistance during the whole of the pre-liberation period, was shot in March 1944, the police noted that the local inhabitants had been shocked, adding that, 'la population avait cet homme en estime malgré son affiliation au corps de la Milice.' 48 On occasions the resistance hit the wrong man. For example, when the brother of the Comte de F... was shot instead of his milicien brother, the Prefect wrote, 'Cet attentat a produit une profonde et pénible émotion à St. Jeoire [where the attack occurred]. 49 Similarly, when R..., a wood merchant, was killed in Massogny (Douvaine) during April 1944 for belonging to the Milice, the police noted that the man had had a good reputation in the area, despite being a member. 50

In general, however, there was little reaction to the murders of miliciens outside their home communities. The main reason for this was that the Milice antagonised the population still further during the first quarter of 1944 as it took part in the counter-insurgency operations against the resistance movements. Once the state of seige

45 Police report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 88, 12 April 1944.
46 Police report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 90, 27 January 1944.
47 Police report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 88. Their father, a peasant farmer, had a horse and three cows shot by the resistance in February. For a description of the attack on Z... and G... at Bernex from the resistance point of view, see: Rickard, C., La Savoie dans la Résistance, Evreux, 1986, p.217-222.
48 Police report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 89.
49 Prefect's report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 88.
50 Police report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 90.
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had been set up by Colonel Lelong on 31 January 1944, it became clear to many that the Milice was attempting to do the Germans' dirty work for them. The Renseignements Généraux commented,

Les opérations en cours dans la région ont confirmé l'impression de la population que le Gouvernement, après l'évacuation de tous les anciens collaborateurs du Maréchal, n'est plus qu'un organisme de réalisation des exigences allemandes.  

The Milice also continued to alienate the population through its methods. During the state of siege, about 24 people were shot in Annecy and Thonon by the Vichy authorities. After the first eight had been executed, the Renseignements Généraux noted that the population was anxious about the situation, 'L'exécution à Annecy de huit de ceux-ci [résistants], et le fait que des méthodes contestables sont attribuées à la Milice, sont principalement à la base de cette anxiété.' There were persistent rumours about the brutality of the Milice. The Renseignements Généraux commented, 'Déjà portée à ne manifester aucune bienveillance envers la Milice, la population éprouve maintenant à l'égard de cet organisme une hostilité grandissante. Des bruits courent, selon lesquels les miliciens useraient de méthodes très brutales et même déloyales dans leur action, surtout depuis les opérations de Thonon et de la région.'  

There were persistent rumours about the brutality of the Milice.  

The rumours about the brutality of the Milice were made all the more credible because, although a few individual members were still active, by the spring of 1944 the indigenous organisation in Haute-Savoie had more or less ceased to exist. The frequent attacks on local members together with the warnings had frightened many Haut-Savoyard miliciens to flee the department. The Renseignements Généraux noted,  

51 Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10, 4 April 1944.  
54 Report of Jacques Lespès, sous-préfet de Bonneville, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 1 May 1944. He was shot by the Germans on 15 June 1944 after ordering members of the GMR to hand over their weapons to the resistance in an effort to prevent bloodshed. Rickard, C., La Savoie dans la Résistance, Evreux, 1986, p.314. There were also worries that many of those arrested were being sent to internment camps and that those being arrested had nothing to do with the resistance, but had been involved in politics before 1939. Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 19 March 1944; 26 March 1944.  

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La milice française locale désagréée par la mort de quelques-uns de ses membres victimes d’attentats terroristes et par la fuite d’autres qui se sentaient menacés pour leur vie a, en fait, cessé d’exister sur le plan départemental.55

Many atrocities were blamed on men not from Haute-Savoie.56

By the first week in April the majority of the Milice francs-gardes - the military wing of the organisation - had left, leaving those remaining in the department to meet the revenge of the resistance.57 As early as 11 May 1944, six wives of mobilised miliciens, together with three children over seven and seven children under seven were sent to Annecy for their safety.58 The situation was sufficiently out of control by 21 June that it was decided to assemble all the families of the Milice in Thonon and finally, on 25 June, in Annecy.59

During the winter of 1943-1944, the Milice had hoped to win over the population by answering their fears of revolution. Those fears were real. In December 1943, the Commission Mixte de Contrôle Technique reported that it had opened 53,980 letters during the month. Of these, 192 mentioned hatred for the Milice. But there were also 6,583 (12.2 per cent) which referred to the writers’ fear of ‘terroristes’ and a further 4,872 (9 per cent) which mentioned ‘terrorisme’ with disapproval. In contrast, there were only 430 letters which mentioned the maquis with approval (0.7 per cent). This compared with 60 who disapproved.

The problem for the Milice was that although many Haut-Savoyards were terrified by the résistants, they were unwilling to compromise their hatred of the Germans by supporting the Milice in their struggle against the


56 Though it should be added that the Renseignements Généraux reported, ‘Les membres de la Milice départementale participent toujours activement, aux côtés des francs-gardes, aux opérations de Police actuellement en cours dans la Haute-Savoie.’ Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 21 February 1944. The population was reported to be increasingly differentiating between the Milice and the traditional forces of law and order. Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 12 March 1944.

57 There was still a little activity at Allinges (Thonon): report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 28 June 1944.

58 Letter of prefect to the head of the Milice in department, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 76, 11 May 1944.

59 Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 25 June 1944. The decision to move the families may have been in preparation for a series of actions against the resistance between 26 and 30 June in the area to the west of Annecy around Lovagny (Annecy-sud), Etercy (Rumi11y) and Chilly (Frangy). These were presumably an attempt to keep open the lines of communication out of the department along the RN508 to Bellegarde in the Ain, and the RN201 to Aix-les-Bains.
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communist-led FTP. The Renseignements Généraux were quite frank when they pointed out that those in the towns were hostile to the Milice. But in the countryside, suffering the worst effects of having to support the réfractaires and the maquisards, the position was more complicated. In March, a report commented, with a certain amount of cynicism, 'Les producteurs ne sont pas fichés des opérations qui sont faites à la campagne, car l'appât du gain étant une des caractéristiques du paysan savoyard, celui-ci estime que ces opérations le débarassent des bandits qui, régulièrement venaient s'approvisionner ou piller ses fermes sous la menace des armes.' Nevertheless, however great the desire of the peasants to be rid of the 'bandits', the authorities noted that the forces for the maintenance of law and order were not generally supported in their efforts: 'C'est surtout chez les agriculteurs que l'on souhaite une disparition effective du banditisme dans la région. Mais on ne peut y noter cependant, aucune bonne volonté à l'égard des forces de l'ordre.' After the operations against the resistance movements had finished, many of the rural communities seem to have been relieved by the fall in the number of actions by the maquisards: 'Sans que rien ne soit changé à ses sentiments de sympathie pour le maquis, la population qui, d'autre part, éprouve une réelle satisfaction de la nette régression des actes de pur banditisme.'

The other problem was that in order to be effective, the Milice believed it had to use methods which it knew would alienate it from the very people it was trying to protect. Its campaign in the Chablais, to the north of the department around Evian and Thonon, was, in the Milice's terms, remarkably successful. On the 19 February, it made 27 arrests. And the following day it captured 20 people in Fétères (Evian) together with the treasury of the FTP and a list of the names of all FTP members along the shores of Lake Geneva, from St. Gingolf on the border with Switzerland in the east through to Annemasse directly across the frontier with Geneva. On 22 February, the Milice attacked a farm-house at Fuges, above Lully (Douvaine), after

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61 Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 27 February 1944. The capture of the head-quarters of the FTP at Fétères was the result of a tip-off however.


63 A commune where in January, within the space of seven days, four people had been in killed by the resistance, including a 66 year-old peasant and a 32 year-old woman who had been raped before being shot: police reports, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 88, 89.

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receiving a tip-off from a young peasant and killed seven maquisards. Although the number of résisants killed in these actions are difficult to gauge accurately,\(^65\) in the Milice's terms these operations were highly successful. Between January and February, after the institution of a state of seige in Haute-Savoie, the number of murders committed by the resistance movements in the department fell from 75 to 14. The following month the figure fell to 11. And in the arrondissements of Thonon and Evian where the Milice was particularly active during February 1944, the numbers of murders or attempted murders fell from 24 in January to nine in February; by March the maquisards did not attempt to assassinate anybody in Evian, limiting their operations to a single attack in Thonon.\(^66\)

A substantial proportion of the rural population recognised the need for such operations, wrote the Renseignements Généraux: 'par le fait que depuis qu'elles [opérations] étaient entreprises, le nombre des attentats de toute sorte a considérablement diminué, ce dont elle se réjouit.'\(^67\) Yet despite these successes, the Milice won little praise. Although some peasants did not lament the deaths of some of those men operating in armed bands, for the most part, the praise offered to the Milice was grudging. When three réfractaires, A..., P... and C... were killed on 1 March 1944 at Pont de Fillinges (Reignier), the Renseignements Généraux wrote,

Bien que désapprouvant généralement l'action des troupes d'opérations, la population semble éprouver un certain soulagement à la suite de la mort d'A...
Il était considéré comme un individu dangereux et si la population semble avoir une certaine indulgence vis-à-vis des véritable réfractaires, elle a une crainte de ceux qui sont considérés comme des 'tueurs.'\(^68\)

Given both their success against the maquisards, and their unpopularity among much of the population, it is little wonder that after the liberation former Miliciens became the favourite target for retribution during the

\(^{65}\) The Renseignements Généraux reported that 10 résisants and five Miliciens had been killed: report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 27 February 1944. Cf: Comité de Haute-Savoie de l'Association Nationale des anciens combattants de la Résistance française (ed.), Mémoire de la résistance en Haute-Savoie, Ambilly, 1971, p.137-9, which argues that the Milice lost 26 men. For a description of this action from the point of view of a milicien, Jacques Ponsolle, and a résistant, Maurice Garrot, see: Rickard, C., La Savoie dans la Résistance, Evreux, 1986, p.224-226.

\(^{66}\) Statistics compiled from reports of the Police, Prefect and Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 7-11, 75, 79, 83, 86-90, 228, 234.

\(^{67}\) Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 19 February 1944.

\(^{68}\) Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 3 March 1944. Interestingly, the names of both A... and P..., who were from Haute-Savoie, are not included on the monuments aux morts in their home communes. See: Comité de Haute-Savoie de l'Association Nationale des anciens combattants de la Résistance française (ed.), Mémoire de la résistance en Haute-Savoie, Ambilly, 1971.
The counter-resistance: the milice

69 For a detailed description of events leading up to the execution of some 77 miliciens at Grand-Bornand on St Bartholomew's day - 24 August - in 1944, see: Lottman, H., L'Épuration: 1943-1953, Paris, 1986, p.196-203. Although only 76 of the 109 miliciens were condemned to death, one 16 year-old milicien, Léon Lacroix, is supposed to have insisted that he should be executed with his two older brothers: for an emotional account of these events see: 'Le Livre Noir de l'Épuration', in Lectures Françaises, Paris, 1964, p.37-39.
CHAPTER 25: PRE-LIBERATION HAUTE-SAVOIE: LAW AND ORDER

IN THE FEW months between the end of the state of seige in April and the liberation in August, Haute-Savoyards became increasingly disorientated by the events around them. The population appeared weary of violence and war. In May 1944, Jacques Lespes, the sous-préfet in Bonneville, concluded in his first report after arriving in the arrondissement that more than anything else the population wanted to be left alone to work in peace.  

As D-Day approached, however, there was an unwonted calm in the department. In April there were only 32 attempted murders by the resistance (of which 22 were successful) and a further 36 in May (21), compared with 101 (75) in January. The number of reported attacks on peasants fell from 18 in January, to four in April and six in May. The bands of maquisards also appeared to have cut back their other activities. The number of attacks on village and town halls for ration tickets fell from 32 in January to 22 in March, seven in April and six in May. A fall in the number of robberies was also registered by the authorities. From a high point in January of 182 operations carried out by the resistance movements, by April there were only 32 and in May only 39. 

In his last report to the regional prefect in Lyon, General Charles Marion, the prefect in Annecy, analyzed the reasons for this relative calm, concluding, 

Contrairement à ce qu'on aurait pu redouter, la Haute-Savoie est calme en comparaison de certains départements voisins. Il ne faut pas certes voir dans cette situation la conséquence des opérations menées au début de l'année par les Forces du Maintien de l'Ordre, mais plutôt le respect d'un mot d'ordre donné par les Chefs de l'Armée Secrète - mot d'ordre auquel seuls les FTP n'obéiraient pas - et aussi [la] crainte des représailles exercées par les Troupes d'Opérations. 

1 As a result, he wrote, the population was opposed to banditry. He added, however, that if banditry was to be controlled it should be based on French methods and principles, in contrast to some of the methods that had been used in the past. Report of sous-préfet de Bonneville, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 1 May 1944.

2 Almost all of those in the late spring and early summer were concentrated along the Vallée de l'Arve. The fall in the number of attacks on village halls may also have been influenced by a new system for distributing ration coupons in April 1944. The distribution system involved locating the coupons at the mayors' offices for only one day a month. The prefect's figures for the coupon thefts differ somewhat from those collated by the author from contemporary sources and may have exaggerated the system's effectiveness (author's figures in brackets): March, 11 (22); April, 21 (7); May, 3 (6); June 5 (10). Prefect's report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 4 July 1944.

3 There was a smaller decline in the number of sabotage operations which fell from 62 in January to 32 in April and 44 in May.

4 Prefect's report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 4 July 1944.
Pre-liberation Haute-Savoie: law and order

This relative calm was most evident in the towns and helped ease the fears of many Haut-Savoyards living in built-up areas. Indeed, during these months, the gendarmerie was persistently surprised by the attitude of much of the urban population towards the maquisards. Despite all of the troubles in the countryside and Vichy's persistent propaganda, non-rural Haut-Savoyards appeared, on the whole, to continue to sympathise with the résistants. The inhabitants of the town of Evian, located in the Chablais, were reported to be impressed by the resistance groups in the region. The local gendarmerie noted that they appeared militarily well organised and were directing their attacks at 'éléments suspects' rather than the random members of the public. In addition, the efforts of the police du maquis - set up to take control groups working on their own account - against 'pilleurs et détrousseurs de grand chemin,' together with the maquisards attempts to force peasants and commerçants to sell meat and other products at reasonable prices also impressed the town's population. If the objective of these efforts to create an alternative structure of government was to win over the local population, then, in the towns at least, they were successful. The report concluded, 'l'opinion publique ne considère plus le maquis comme un groupement de partisans combattant pour un parti quelconque, mais comme un mouvement général de résistance ayant un but patriotique, celui de libérer le pays.'

The period of relative calm reported by the Vichy authorities just before and after the Allied landings in Normandy must be qualified, however. The administration no longer had much idea of the situation in the countryside where the maquisards still remained highly unpopular. In early June 1944, the gendarmerie abandoned most of the department, retreating from their exposed outlying bases in the countryside to their headquarters in the four main towns in the department. Thereafter, what little point there had been for the peasants to report incidents disappeared completely. After D-Day, the gendarmes appeared willing to leave the towns only when a murder was reported. The peasants felt abandoned and, as a result, ceased notifying the gendarmerie when they had been robbed. The undoubted risks involved in contacting the authorities appeared to have no counter-benefits. In the middle of June, the Renseignements Généraux noted,

L'impression dominante c'est que les Forces de Maintien de l'Ordre en Haute-Savoie ne sont plus maîtresses de la situation... Le rassemblement des

5 What the peasants thought of it is another matter. At Samoens, maquisards raided an épicerie in the town on 20 June and then distributed its stocks to the population.


7 Many of the gendarmeries had been the subject of maquisard attacks, during which the gendarmes were disarmed. It should be noted that a number of these incidents occurred with the connivance of the gendarmes themselves.
Pre-liberation Haute-Savoie: law and order

Although the population in the towns remained relatively untroubled, the situation in the countryside became increasingly anarchic. The best indicator of the position outside the towns is the number of murders in the department, which, it may be presumed, continued to be reported to the gendarmerie both before and after the liberation. In June 1944 there were 31 assassinations in the department, and the following month the number increased to 48. These are extremely high compared to other departments and did little to endear the resistance to the population in the areas where most of the executions occurred.

Most of these incidents were concentrated in the areas dominated by the communist-led FTP. In the cantons where the less active AS was still operating, such as Thônes, there were only two murders - both of which were committed by a group of FTP. As usual it was the peasants who bore the brunt of this activity. Between the end of the state of siege in April and the liberation in August at least 15 peasants were killed by armed bands.

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8 Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 18 June 1944.

9 The figures assembled by the author from the archives differ slightly from those compiled by Pierre Mouthon the correspondent départemental de l'Institut d'Histoire du Temps Présent. His figures are (author's in brackets): 1943: 71 (71); 1 January 1944 - 6 June 1944: 113 (143); 6 June 1944 - 19 August 1944: 95 (86); after the liberation: 37 (37). In total exactly 300 people were killed by the resistance before the liberation. This compares with a figure of 279 compiled by Pierre Mouthon. The former figure appears to be supported by an undated telegram sent to Paris from the prefecture after the liberation which estimates the number of those killed before the liberation at 299. Annecy, A.D., M919 16506. The same telegram estimates the number of extra-judicial executions after the liberation at 41 compared with Pierre Mouthon's estimate of 37.

10 There were between 316 and 341 extra-judicial killings in the department attributed to the resistance between 1943 and 1947, compared with 207 in the Isère, 260 in the Haute-Vienne, 276 in the Côte-d'Or, 278 in the Drôme, 49 in the Var, 40 in the Aisne, 10 in the Haute-Marne, 6 in the Mayenne and none at all in the Deux-Sèvres. When deaths are divided by the population in 1936, the estimates in Haute-Savoie provide figures of 12.1 deaths per 10,000 and 13.1 deaths per 10,000. Ariège: 8.26; Gers: 7.31; Haute-Garonne: 2.27; Lot: 7.35; Hautes-Pyrénées: 5.30; Tarn: 1.81; Tarn-et-Garonne: 3.10; Nord: 0.81; Deux-Sèvres: 0.00. See: Labédan, G., 'La répression à la libération dans la région de Toulouse', RHDGM, 131 (1983), p.105-112., p.106-9.

11 In July 1944, there were 12 murders in Bonneville and Taninges where the group led by C... was operating; 8 in Annemasse; 6 in St. Julien; and 8 in the three cantons of Douvaine, Evian and Thonon on the shores of lake Geneva.

12 Five of these were in the arrondissement of Thonon and three around Bonneville. Many more of the victims were probably peasants, but their professions were not given in the reports.
Although many of the police reports noted that the population was indifferent to the slayings, some incidents nevertheless shocked Haut-Savoys. In the month of July, 14 women - some as young as 18 - were killed by armed groups. On 1 July 1944, three women were killed at Bossey (St.Julien). The women, one of whom was 75 years old, were thought to be collaborators. They were robbed of 200,000 francs before being shot. The police report noted unsurprisingly, 'Cet attentat a causé une vive émotion dans la région. La population semble le reprouver.' The population was similarly disturbed by the murder on 15 May 1944 of a 44-year old deaf and mute agricultural labourer at Lullin (Thonon) who was mistaken for the Milicien nephew of his employer. Many peasants appeared to resign themselves to the violence. When D..., a peasant at La Côte d’Hyot (Bonneville), was approached at his farm by four men wearing khaki trousers, blue jackets and tricolour armbands on 17 June he made no attempt to escape. In the company of the four men he went to his neighbour, J... who later related to the gendarmerie that D... had told him, 'Vous direz à ma femme que j’ai rangé la clef de la porte d’entrée de la maison à sa place habituelle. Je regrette de ne pas pouvoir l’embrasser avant de partir. Vous le lui direz quand elle viendra. On va me tuer et je ne reverrai plus. Au revoir J...' The FTP and AS may have driven the representatives of Vichy into the towns, but they were not always able to replace them with an alternative structure of law and order. Although a culture of the outlaw existed in areas such as that around Thônes, that was not necessarily the case elsewhere. Indeed, the fears of the Milice that the department was heading towards civil war appeared increasingly justified by the anarchy in some parts of the countryside.

13 St. Julien was a canton with little experience of resistance activity. Until June, there had previously been only two killings in the canton - one in February and one in May 1944.

14 Police report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 88, 8 July 1944.

15 Police report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 88.

16 It is not clear from the archives what he had done to merit such punishment. Police report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 88.
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CHAPTER 26: THE RESISTANCE MOVEMENTS - STRUCTURE AND DISCIPLINE

One of the main reasons why the resistance movements were not always able to establish an alternative system of law and order during this crucial period was that they had difficulties in controlling the activities of their own groups. During the months before the liberation, the command structure of the resistance organisations in Haute-Savoie was, to say the least, chaotic. There were at least three different official resistance command structures in the department whose relationship with each other was, in varying degrees, strained.

The first of these command structures was a mission from London led by Jean Rosenthal, code-named Cantinier, and Richard Heslop, known as Xavier, which was first parachuted into the area on 18 October 1943. Heslop concentrated his efforts in the neighbouring department of the Ain, while Rosenthal worked in Haute-Savoie. Rosenthal eventually took control of activities in the department after a series of arrests decimated the leadership of the AS. Rosenthal returned to London in May after the siege of the Plateau de Glières and was subsequently parachuted into France on 7 June with an American officer called Leon Ball, code-named Niveau.

Ball's debriefing in October 1944 gives a vivid description of the tensions between the various groups in the department. One of the tensions highlighted in the report was that between Rosenthal who had been parachuted from London and Joseph Lambroschini (Nizier), the leader of the second main power in the department, the Armée Secrète (AS). According to Ball, Rosenthal had considerable problems with Lambroschini, who had only been sent into the department on 15 May to take over command of the AS, after its previous leader, Humbert Clair (Navant) had been forced by pressure from the occupation forces and the Milice to leave.

Soon after meeting, Lambroschini and Rosenthal found themselves in conflict. Ball explained that, Lambroschini's personality was 'experiencing loads of trouble in trying to take over command, as the Savoians [sic] do not react to strangers and Nizier (Corsican) was a complete stranger to this part of the country....

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1 Not Helsop. A typographical error in a 1975 article in the Revue d'Histoire de la Deuxième Guerre Mondiale has since been repeated in a number of books about the resistance in Haute-Savoie.

2 RF section history in OSS/London: Special Operations Branch and Secret Intelligence Branch war diaries, microfilm collection published by University Publications of America, Frederick, Maryland, Vol. 3, p.56.

3 For an amusing description of Nizier's difficulties in handling local Haut-Savoyards, see the unpublished memoirs of Jacques Berr, a member of the AS in Bonneville, Paris, Archives of the IHTP, 72 AJ 189, p.62-65.
Pre-liberation Haute-Savoie: the resistance movements

Cantinier was considered the real leader of the resistance in Haute-Savoie. According to Ball, Lambroschini attempted to take advantage of a speech made by Rosenthal in the middle of July to the AS sédentaires castigating them for their lack of activity. The speech was poorly received by the audience and, according to Ball, Lambroschini contacted the AS leaders at regional level and used Rosenthal's unpopularity with the sédentaires to undermine his authority. Ball believed that after this event, Rosenthal had difficulty in having his orders executed. However, despite Lambroschini's success in undermining Rosenthal's position, the Corsican's relationship with the local AS continued to be strained, and in an incident which remains obscure, he antagonised some members of the AS to such an extent that some AS men were reported by Ball as being willing to shoot Lambroschini as a traitor. Rosenthal realised that Lambroschini could not remain in charge of the AS and the Corsican was replaced by Jean Godard (Jean). Lambroschini was promoted on 8 August as head of the Forces Français de l'Intérieur (FFI), an organisation which in theory provided the structure for the union of the FTP and AS. The reality was, however, rather different.

Although there were considerable difficulties between Rosenthal and Lambroschini, these were negligible compared to those which existed between the AS and the communist-led FTP. It was soon apparent that Lambroschini had only nominal control over the FTP. Although the FTP should, in theory, have been under

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5 These were members of the movement who were supposed to remain part of the community until they were summoned to assist with special operations. They were also supposed to mobilise for the liberation of the department.

6 Ball adds, 'In which his [Rosenthal's] views proved to be right as the maquis formations carried out practically all the Haute-Savoie action later on.' Ball's debriefing, RF section history in OSS/London: Special Operations Branch and Secret Intelligence Branch war diaries, microfilm collection published by University Publications of America, Frederick, Maryland, Vol. 3, p.1409.

7 Ball's debriefing, RF section history in OSS/London: Special Operations Branch and Secret Intelligence Branch war diaries, microfilm collection published by University Publications of America, Frederick, Maryland, Vol. 3, p.1409.

8 Lucien Rose, code-named Poirier, who was the sub-regional head of the Mouvement Unis de la Résistance (MUR), wanted Godard to be head of the FFI. At a meeting of 11 August, André Augagneur (Grand), one of the local leaders of the FTP refused. The compromise was Lambroschini. Report of Rose to Vistel, personal archives of M. Mouthon, correspondant départemental of the IHTP, dated 12 August 1944.
Pre-liberation Haute-Savoie: the resistance movements

the control of the FFI, in reality the joint organisation did not even exist before the 11 August in Haute-Savoie, let alone actually wield any power.\(^9\)

Admittedly, Haute-Savoie was not unique in this respect. The union of the FTP and AS into the FFI faced similar problems outside the department. A British officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Brooks-Richards, reported a similar situation during a visit to France after the liberation. He noted, 'The FFI remained a formula, rather than an army until after the liberation,' and reported that in all areas apart from the Vaucluse and in the Aveyron, the FTP remained aloof from the FFI as late as the end of September. He concluded here was 'a serious conflict, sometimes concealed, sometimes overt, between communist controlled Front National\(^10\) and FTP and non-communist elements in the FFI.'\(^11\)

The reasons for the uneasy relationship between the two groups were both political and tactical. Politically, the two organisations had quite different origins. Many of the leaders of the AS were former army officers to the right of centre, while the leadership of the FTP, if not its members, tended to be communists.\(^12\) Among the Catholic and conservative résistants in the department, there is little doubt that there were considerable worries about the political aspirations of the communists after the liberation - worries that motivated an unwillingness to provide the FTP with significant quantities of arms and monies.

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\(^9\) Report of Rose to Vistel, personal archives of M. Mouton, representative of the IHTP, dated 12 August 1944.

\(^10\) The FTP was the military wing of the Front National.


\(^12\) The FTP's members came from throughout the political spectrum. Jacques Berr argued in his memoirs that, 'les Francs-Tireurs ne compaient pas que des fanatiques, et l'Armée Secrète avait dans ses rangs de futurs électeurs de gauche.' See Berr, J., Unpublished and untitled memoirs, Paris, Archives of the IHTP, 72 AJ 189. Louis Martel, the former right-wing deputy and future deputy for the Mouvement Populaire Républicain (MRP) who had voted for Pétain's full powers in 1940, stated after the liberation that he had encouraged youths in his village, Thairy (St. Julien), to join the local FTP. The decision to join one organisation or another appears to have been motivated by chance, friendship or geography rather than politics. Cyril Lazare, for example, a pilot, joined the a resistance group in the Chablais from Switzerland late in January 1944. It was only after he had been wounded while attacking a milicien Z... in Bernex and had been sent to a hospital in Evian that he discovered he had joined the FTP. Lazare, C., 'Un Aviateur au Maquis', in ed. Remy, La Résistance dans le Dauphiné-Savoie, Paris, 1975, p.190-233; also quoted in Rickard, C., La Savoie dans la Résistance, Evreux, 1986, p.217-222.
Pre-liberation Haute-Savoie: the resistance movements

The suspicions of the AS were reciprocated by the FTP. As late as 12 August, Lucien Rose, a sub-regional head of the MUR and future prefect of the neighbouring department of Savoie, reported to his superiors that not only was the AS in Haute-Savoie distrustful of the FTP, but the FTP considered the AS as a police at the service of the forces of reaction. He noted that the FTP leadership was particularly worried about recent and surprising recruits to the AS who came from well to the right of the political spectrum. Pierre Baronne, a lieutenant in the FTP in the Chablais echoed these concerns after the war, ‘Je puis dire toutefois que certains chefs de l’AS (officiers de l’armée à tendance partisane et antirépublicaine) n’avaient pas bien compris le rôle et l’importance de l’armée populaire que représentait les FTP armée [sic].’ Whether the fears of the FTP and AS leaderships were valid or not is irrelevant: they were believed at the time and had an undoubted and unfortunate effect on their relationship.

Moreover, the FTP and AS were separated by more than just politics - they were also divided by the tactics which would be best to rid the department of Axis forces. The objectives of the AS included building up stocks of arms to be used by local volunteers, called sédentaires, who would remained at home until mobilised. The AS also sought to protect the réfractaires from the STO. The organisation aimed to refrain from any action that might draw attention to itself or the local population. Eventually, when the order was given in London or Algiers, the sédentaires and maquisards would be mobilised to assist in the liberation.

The philosophy of the FTP was very different. Its tactics were to attack the local infrastructure, collaborators and Axis forces as often as possible. The result of these differing philosophies was that most of the offensive activity of the resistance movements before the liberation were carried out by the FTP. The organisation

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13 The AS was the military wing of the MUR.

14 Report of Rose to Vistel, personal archives of Pierre Mouthon, representative of the IHTP, dated 12 August 1944.


16 It was hardly surprising then that Humbert Clair, Navant, a former officer of the 27th Battalion Chasseurs Alpins and head of AS in Haute-Savoie before Lambroschini, had a particularly poor relationship with André Augagneur, Grand, one of the leading officers of the FTP in Haute-Savoie. Jacques Berr, a member of the AS in Bonneville, evoked Clair’s suspicions of Augagneur when he wrote in his memoirs, ‘Le capitaine Clair se plaignait souvent de ses dérobades, de ces vaines discussions où la mauvaise foi, ni la puerilité n’étaient exclues.’ Berr, J., Unpublished and untitled memoirs, Paris, Archives of the IHTP, 72 AJ 189, p.62.

17 This fell in line with British objectives. See Stenion, M.M., London’s Europe, forthcoming publication, 1991. The author of this study would like to thank Michael Stenion for allowing him to consult this work.
Pre-liberation Haute-Savoie: the resistance movements

accused the AS of 'attentisme' and argued that it was necessary to be active if Axis forces were to be chased from France and if morale was to be maintained among the maquisards. This desire of the FTP to harass the enemy was also motivated by other factors: the FTP simply had to be active in order to survive. The organisation needed to attack Vichy and Axis forces so it could obtain arms denied them by the interallied mission led by Rosenthal. It also found it necessary to attack other targets, such as banks and tobacco stores, to fund its operations.

This difference in approach caused considerable friction between the two movements. As far as the AS was concerned, the activities of the FTP drew the attention of the Vichy and Axis authorities while contributing very little to the overall war effort. At the same time, such actions antagonised the local population with which the AS tried to maintain close ties. A further cause of friction between the two organisations was the ability of the FTP to recruit members of the AS who were disenchanted by the right-wing organisation's relative inactivity.

18 See, for example, R.I.3.: Francs-Tireurs et Partisans de la Haute-Savoie, Annecy, 1946, p.30.

19 Most of the FTP's weapons came from the occupying forces, peasants, the police and customs officers. FTP activists were so short of explosives during the summer of 1943 that in order to sabotage some pylons, saws were used: see R13: Francs-Tireurs et Partisans de la Haute-Savoie, Paris, 1946, p.37. Some of the FTP were eventually armed after a parachute drop at the beginning of August 1944. However, the distribution was not without difficulty. As for funds, both Pierre Baronne and the anonymous authors of R13: Francs-Tireurs et Partisans de la Haute-Savoie, insist that none of the money parachuted from London or supplied from Switzerland reached their organisation. In part, the large number of attacks carried out by the FTP on peasants for food and money will have been motivated by need. The budget for the area R13 in April 1944 was only 30,000 francs. See interview of Pierre Barrone with Mlle. Gaudelette, Paris, Archives of the IHTP, 72 AJ 189, 2 January 1946, p.11; also R.I.3.: Francs-Tireurs et Partisans de la Haute-Savoie, Paris, 1946, p.170. What happened to the 20,000,000 francs reported stolen from the Banque de France at Thonon in July remains a mystery.

20 The activities of FTP groups such as those led by Lamouille and C... around Bonneville have already been discussed.

21 See for example the camp on the col de Bluffy which shifted from the AS to the FTP: R.I.3.: Francs-Tireurs et Partisans de la Haute-Savoie, Annecy, 1946, p.56, 126. This is supported by Pierre Barrone, a lieutenant in the FTP who was severely wounded in the attack on St. Gingolph on 22 July 1944. In an interview after the war he explained, 'En mai 1944 j'adhère aux Francs-Tireurs et Partisans Français. L'importance de ce mouvement, sans contredit le plus puissant de France parce que composé d'éléments du peuple, doit vous être connu pour que je n'insiste pas sur son organisation absolument remarquable et à certains points de vue supérieure pour la circonstance, à l'organisation militaire et par trop centralisée de l'AS. Ici un dynamisme sans limites.' Interview with Mlle. Gaudelette, Paris, Archives of the IHTP, 72 AJ 189, 2 January 1946. This occurred elsewhere. In the department of the Lot, for example, one of the leaders of the maquisards, Jacque Chapou, changed allegiance from the MUR to the FTP taking almost the complete contingent of maquisards in the department. The reason given was the 'attentisme' of the MUR. Laborie, P.,
Pre-liberation Haute-Savoie: the resistance movements

The result of these various points of conflict between the FTP and AS was that in the weeks leading up to the liberation, there was no overall control of the resistance movements.\(^{22}\) Lambroschini's power over the FTP was certainly limited.\(^{23}\) Indeed, Lambroschini's main task turned out to be trying to iron out the considerable differences between the FTP and AS.\(^{24}\) As late as 15 August, at the liberation of Thonon, when troops from the AS and FTP fought together for the first time since Glières, the two groups would only obey orders from their respective commanders.\(^{25}\) In the meantime the struggle between Lambroschini and Rosenthal continued.

On 5 September, Rosenthal sent a message to Special Forces Headquarters (SFHQ) noting that Nizier, head

\[\text{Résistants, Vichyssois et autres, Paris, 1980, p.311-12. See too in the Haute-Loire, where the AS complained after the liberation that the FTP had attempted to recruit maquisards belonging to the AS during the occupation. See: Luirard, M., La région stéphanoise dans la guerre et dans la paix: 1936-1951, St. Etienne, 1980, p.535.}\]

\[^{22}\] After the war there has been a tendency for anciens résistants to stress the unity of the resistance. See, for example, the conclusions of Patricia Bidal in her study of the post-liberation press in Haute-Savoie: 'Sans qu'il soit vraiment fait mention de divergences entre FTPF et AS auparavant, tous s'accordent à souligner qu'ils ont à cette époque [after 19 August and before January 1945] oubli leurs querelles.' Bidal, P., 'Les journaux de la libération Haute-Savoyarde', (unpublished mémoire, université des sciences sociales de Grenoble, 1985), p.23.

\[^{23}\] Indeed, Ball felt that Lambroschini's appointment had only been sanctioned by the FTP leader Augagneur, because he thought he could be manoeuvred. Ball stated that Lambroschini's weakness had been demonstrated during an incident on the Plateau de Glières on 1 August when Lambroschini had given way and distributed parachuted arms to the FTP - against the wishes of Rosenthal. See: Ball's debriefing RF section history in OSS/London: Special Operations Branch and Secret Intelligence Branch war diaries, microfilm collection published by University Publications of America, Frederick, Maryland, Vol. 3, p. 1409; Michel Germain states that shots were nearly fired between the FTP and the AS: Germain, M., La Libération est au bout du chemin, Nantes, 1985, p.238; there were about 400 armed members of the FTP there, and 2,800 members of the AS, according to Georges Guidollet, Ostier, the future head of the Comité Départemental de Libération. Guidollet argued that he did not regret the decision to give half of the arms to the FTP, 'car il fallait à tout prix éviter une grave scission dans nos rangs qui n'aurait pu que faire le jeu des allemands.' Guidollet, G., 'Contribution à l'Histoire de la Résistance', unpublished memoirs in hands of author, p.17-18.

\[^{24}\] As will be seen that task was not completed until well after the liberation. The president of the CDL, Guidollet, complained on 7 September 1944: 'Il faudrait en finir avec la question FFI. Il faudrait convoyer les chefs FFI, AS, FTP pour qu'ils s'entendent une fois pour toutes sur ce qui les sépare.' Minutes of meeting of Comité Départemental de la Libération, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 279, 7 September 1944.

of the FFI ‘had never fought and had only been there for two months, was doing SFHQ an injustice which might harm the prestige of General de Gaulle.’

Although the greater activity of the FTP had undoubted benefits, one of the main consequences of its operations and the indiscipline of its groups was to alienate the population in areas where the maquisards were generally supported. Around Bonneville, for example, where the maquisards were willingly supported by much of the population, the behaviour of independent groups such as C...’s created considerable strains between maquisards and community. J... who commanded the gendarmerie at Bonneville, explained,

La présence de C... dans le voisinage laisse peser une certaine inquiétude sur la plupart des habitants, qui souhaitent ardemment qu’un terme soit mis d’une façon ou d’une autre aux exploits de ce dangereux maudit.

26 Report on Rosenthal’s mission, signal, A.3577/200, RF section history in OSS/London: Special Operations Branch and Secret Intelligence Branch war diaries, microfilm collection published by University Publications of America, Frederick, Maryland, vol 3, p.1405. The failure of the FTP and AS to unite was not a phenomenon limited to Haute-Savoie. In the Haute-Loire, for example, there were no contacts between the two groups at departmental level in the Haute-Loire until after the liberation, when the FFI was finally established. Luirard, M., La région stephanoise dans la guerre et dans la paix: 1936-1951, St Etienne, 1980, p.536. Around Toulouse, even after the liberation, there were difficulties between members of the FFI of different origins. A colonel Schneider wrote later, ‘Entre les formations de l’AS, les réseaux du BCRA et le Front national des milices et FTP communistes, l’opposition est foncière.’ He added that the nervousness of members of the BCRA was demonstrated when, during a meeting in late August 1944, they took out their pistols after there had been a knock at the door. Schneider, Le sens de leur combat, Dole, 1974, quoted in Goubet, M., ‘Une “République Rouge” à Toulouse à la libération: mythe ou réalité?’, RHDGM, 131 (1983), p.25-40, p.29.

27 One peasant who was an adjoint to a mayor in a commune just above Sallanches in the Vallée de l’Arve both during and after the war repeatedly called the maquisards ‘les terroristes’ during an interview in 1986, even though he was repeatedly corrected by the author.

28 The maquisards in the area were reported to have accomplices in much of the countryside who warned them of police operations. Report of J... commandant de la section de gendarmerie de Bonneville, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 80, 16 May 1944.

29 Report of J... commandant de la section de gendarmerie de Bonneville, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 80, 26 April 1944. C... was nominally under the control of the FTP.
OF ALL the activities of the resistance movements before the liberation, it was when their members attacked the Axis forces that the population became most agitated. The potential consequences were all too well known.

Haute-Savoie had a rude introduction to German occupation when the Italians left the department precipitously in September 1943. The population was not accustomed to supporting an exigent occupying force: certainly, the Italian occupation which began in November 1942 had not been particularly harsh, even though there was considerable hostility from Haut-Savoyards towards their neighbours. That hostility was such that the Renseignements Généraux considered that the installation of Italian units in the Faucigny, along the Vallée de l'Arve, towards the end of the month, was accepted probably less well than if the Germans had arrived.

When, the following month the German border guards were replaced by Italians, the Contrôle Téléphonique reported,

Le départ des troupes Allemandes de notre région s'est effectuée dans le calme de la population qui a apprécié leur excellente tenue, par contre leur remplacement par des troupes Italiennes a provoqué de l'ironie, tant la correction et la présentation de ces deux troupes est dissemblable. L'Italien est méprisé, et il n'est pas rare d'entendre 'nous aurions préféré que les Allemands restent.'

The reasons for this hostility are not too difficult to uncover. Antipathy towards the Italians in Haute-Savoie dated back as early as 10 June 1940, when Mussolini rather belatedly declared war on the Allies. This antipathy did not diminish after the Armistice. The flights of RAF bombers heading through the night over the Alps into north Italian were 'accompagnés de vœux ardents,' and the Contrôle Postal commented that news of Italian military reverses was received with a scarcely hidden joy mixed with derision, quoting one letter, 'les Italiens ont pris à charge d'amuser le pauvre monde si triste.' Another mocked, 'les noms de Bardia et de Tobrouck pourront s'ajouter honoriablement à celui de Caporette.' At a time when there was little good news for the

1 The troops had entered Annecy with bands playing before them.
3 Report of contrôle téléphonique d'Annemasse, A.D., Annecy, 12 W 256, December 1942.
4 Report of Contrôle Postal d'Annecy, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 257, 15 December 1940; for similar reports: report of Contrôle Téléphonique d'Annemasse, Anancy, A.D., 12 W 256, October 1942; Synthesis of reports of the SCT by cabinet du préfet, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, October 1942.
majority of the population, the campaign during the spring of 1941 in the Balkans was followed closely, and whenever Italian forces were in difficulties, there was barely restrained reaction from Haut-Savoyards.

The population in Haute-Savoie had particular reason to be hostile towards the Italians. Concern about Mussolini's claims to sovereignty over Savoy and the area around Nice, both of which had only been annexed by France in 1860, formed a continual theme through the administration's reports on the state of opinion in the area. Although the Italian population in the department was relatively small, and geographically the area was separated by the Alps, there were a number of articles in the Italian press demanding that the house of Savoy, which now provided the kingdom of Italy with its monarchs, should regain its original territories. The cancellation of a proposed visit by Pétain to the department in May 1941 led to persistent and wild rumours that Italy was about to occupy the area. Indeed, one of the few factors about the policy of collaboration with the Germans that proved attractive to some of the population was the hope that Italian demands for the reintegration of Savoy into Italy would not be met.

The population of Italian origin in the department bore much of the brunt of the consequent hostility. The Italian community made up the vast majority of the foreign-born inhabitants in Haute-Savoie, some 15,390 of a total 22,254 foreigners counted in the census of 1936, and were mostly concentrated in the towns. In some areas, such as Faverges, they were well integrated and at the outbreak of war in April 1939, there was a meeting of L'Emigrazione Italienne attended by about 790 Italians, who voted to form a Legion Italienne in France. However, as early as September 1940, an anonymous source based in St. Gervais reported to A., the head of the centre départemental d'Information, a growing animosity to Italian subjects in his area. By May

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7 For instance an article in El Nizzardo created some stir in the department after it appeared: report of Contrôle Téléphonique d'Annemasse, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, March 1942.

8 Report of Surêté Nationale, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 10 May 1941.

9 Prefect's report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 5 November 1940; report of Surêté Nationale, commissariat spéciale d'Annemasse, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 7, 26 June 1942.

10 Raymond, J., La Haute-Savoie sous la IIIe République, 2 Vols, Seyssel, 1983, Vol 1., p.505. By August 1940, the Surêté Nationale estimated that the figure had declined to about 14,000: report of Surêté Nationale, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 10 August 1940.

11 Report of Surêté Nationale, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis. Many of the Italians in Haute-Savoie had fled their own country because they opposed the regime there. The offer of an Italian legion was not taken up. When fascist government in Italy fell, the agent administratif des cantons de Reignier and Annemasse noted that most of the Italians in the department had welcomed the event: report of agent administratif des cantons de Reignier et Annemasse, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 20 August 1943.
1942 there was almost unanimous hostility, and the situation in the department for those of Italian origin became increasingly difficult even before the occupation: in January 1942, the gendarmerie reported that eighteen families had returned over the Alps.

Once the occupation began in 1942 attitudes towards Italian civilians hardened yet further. The involvement of Italian troops in the capture of réfractaires from the STO, in often violent actions quickly antagonised the local population, who believed that the soldiers were too quick in the use of their weapons. Some Italian civilians also helped their soldiers find réfractaires among the chalets in the mountains, evoking threats to be carried out after the liberation. One letter quoted by the Contrôle Postal complained, 'les Savoyards grondent et se promettent de régler les comptes le moment venu'. Later on the same report noted, 'Les Italiens résidant en Haute-Savoie expriment leurs craintes en face des événements de Sicile; ils redoutent les réactions violentes des Français en cas de défaite de leur pays: "ça devient critique pour nous."' It was hardly surprising that many Italians were worried about the ramifications of a withdrawal of their forces from the department. Threatening letters were sent to Italian citizens who were suspected of fascist sympathies, their windows broken and during the spring of 1943, there was a series of bomb attacks on the homes and businesses of those of Italian extraction. Some were the victims of arson. In an increasingly violent climate, the troops stationed locally reacted by arming some of those who had been attacked, such as D... from Marignier (Bonneville), who was provided with a pistol after an attempt on his life in June 1943.

Nevertheless, in spite of the increasingly insecure position of Italian nationals in the department, Italian forces remained remarkably restrained in their behaviour during the occupation. Until the end of April 1943, the occupying forces appear to have left the hunt for réfractaires to the French authorities. During May, however, operations by Italian forces against the réfractaires were stepped up. At the end of the month, there were reports that Italian forces had burnt some chalets in the area around Cluses and above Bonneville on a

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14 Though it was noted that the behaviour of Italian troops was less aggressive after the defeats of the spring and summer of 1943: report of sous-préfet de Bonneville, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 23 July 1943.
17 Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 3 May 1943. They carried out searches in the area around Bernex and Abondance on Easter Monday.
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mountain called le Môle. Two arrests were made in Marignier, and a 45-old butcher called François Pernoud was killed at St. Gervais when he failed to stop his lorry when requested. A passeur from Archamps (St. Julien) was also killed on the frontier.

The attacks on réfractaires were, for the most part, bloodless. An operation against two chalets near Seyssel on la montagne des Princes (commune of Crempigny) resulted in 23 réfractaires captured of which two were wounded. The first réfractaire to be killed by Italian troops was on the Désert du Platé (St. Gervais) in the second week in June. Between 3 July and the middle of August, the hunt for réfractaires appears to have been left once more to the French authorities. However, on 20 August, Italian forces launched an attack on a group of the massif de Merdassier (La Clusaz) when they captured 23 réfractaires and killed two others.

At the time, the local population did not recognise how lucky the department had been during the Italian occupation. During 11 months of Italian presence, there were only 15 deaths caused by Italian troops, while the occupation forces lost four men. This was despite the fact that the department was known for being


19 Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 31 May 1943 (In June file.) An operation in the area of Petit Bornand at the beginning of June was fruitless. See report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 9 June 1943.

20 In the same week there were 10 arrests in Marignier of those suspected of helping the réfractaires. Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 14 June 1943. Two more maquisards were killed near Thônes in the third week in June: report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 21 June 1943. During an operation at Alex (Annecy-nord) 60 réfractaires were captured and two killed on 17 June. One was an unknown Parisien, one was from Alex. About 3,000 people turned out for the funerals in Annecy and there were more than 50 wreaths with tricolours at the funeral: report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 29 June 1943; report of C., commandant de la brigade de gendarmerie de la Haute-Savoie, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 9 June 1943.

21 About 800 people turned up for the funeral: see Challamel, J-B. (ed.), La vallée de Thônes et Glières pendant la 2e Guerre Mondiale, 2 vols., Vol 1, Thônes, 1984, p.50-3. Four more réfractaires were killed at Passy when at least a further 40 were captured: report of sous-préfet de Bonneville, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 23 August 1943. C., commandant de la brigade de gendarmerie de la Haute-Savoie, estimated that 53 réfractaires were captured, while two Italians were killed. Report of C., Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 22 August 1943; two other Italian soldiers were killed at Novel (Evian) on 2 August 1943: police report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 22 August 1943.

22 Statistics gathered by Pierre Mouthon, correspondant départemental of the IHTP. The deaths of the réfractaires were extremely unpopular: the Renseignements Généraux concluded one report, 'En tout cas, l'animosité de l'opinion contre les troupes d'opérations grandit assez vite.' Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 22 June 1944.

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one of the most popular haunts for réfractaires to hide. Nor were the Italians given much credit for their protection of Jews in the area from the French authorities. In February 1943, the Italians set up a military zone around the prison where foreign Jews were being assembled for deportation and demanded their release. They then installed 400 Jews in hotels at Megève and refused to hand over 12 of them who were wanted by the French police.23

As Italian troops fled the department for Switzerland during the first week of September, the population had little idea that the occupation had been, until then, light-handed.24 If the dismissal of Mussolini in July 1943 had resulted in an 'explosion de joie' among the population of the department,25 it was hardly surprising that the departure of the Italian units in the department caused no less emotion. The Italians had remained extremely unpopular.

La fin de l'occupation italienne a été accueillie en Savoie par une profonde satisfaction; des sentiments de rancœur et de vengeance se sont exprimées nombreux à l'occasion du départ des troupes italiennes qui, en six mois, ont semé, dit-on, 'plus de haine que les Allemands en trois ans.'26

The sous-préfet for St. Julien noted, l'arrivée des troupes allemandes a été accueillie, sinon avec plaisir, du moins sans aucune crainte.27

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24 Although the Italians were unpopular, there were, as would have been expected, some friendly relations between Italians and the local population. The Renseignements Généraux complained that Italian soldiers were learning French and making friends with French women: report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 5 April 1943. Compare Richard Cobb's study of the two German occupations during the First and Second World Wars, which suggests that a certain level of social interaction between the community and occupying troops was inevitable: Cobb, R., _French and Germans, Germans and French: a personal interpretation of France under two occupations 1914-1918 / 1940-1944_, New England, 1983.

25 Report of Renseignements Généraux, A.D., Annecy, 12 W 10bis, 26 July 1943; Ibid. 2 August 1943.


27 Report of sous-préfet de St. Julien, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10, 20 September 1943. It was little surprise that some Italian civilians in the department attempted to accompany their retreating troops into Switzerland: they knew and feared the animosity that existed among the Haut-Savoyards. Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10, 23 September 1943.
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However, when the Germans arrived, the population was soon surprised by the behaviour of the new occupying forces. A curfew was imposed on Annecy from 19 August 1943 and the frontier was closed. Although the Germans released a number of prisoners held by the Italians, they also arrested 66 people between 13 and 15 September. The Renseignements Généraux wrote after less than three weeks of German occupation, 'Non habituée aux méthodes allemandes, la population de notre région est vivement émue par ces mesures.'29 There was no honeymoon. The following week, they added simply, 'Il est évident que notre population a été surprise de la différence des méthodes employées par les troupes d'opérations italiennes et allemandes.'30

In November, the Germans began operations against the maquisards. At an increasing cadence, the occupying forces checked identities, searched houses and burnt chalets that might be useful for the réfractaires. Both réfractaires and non-réfractaires were killed during these operations, and the Renseignements Généraux reported, 'Une atmosphère qui apparaît de jour en jour plus irrespirable.'31 At Bernex (Abondance), an operation against réfractaires left at least nine dead and as many houses burnt.32

On the whole, the population was not in favour of resistance operations against the Germans. The German forces did not need excuses to demonstrate how ruthless they could be. The Renseignements Généraux reported after a massacre on Christmas night at Habère-Lullin (Boëge) that the German repression was creating an almost permanent state of fear among the population. German forces had surrounded a small castle in the village Habère-Lullin where an illegal ball was taking place attended by a number of réfractaires and local villagers. Twenty-five men were shot and their bodies burnt in the building in which they had been dancing. A further eight were deported of whom at least six did not return.33 The report of the

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33 Comité de Haute-Savoie de l'Association Nationale des anciens combattants de la Résistance française (ed.), Mémorial de la résistance en Haute-Savoie, Ambilly, 1971, p.83-5. It was here that 40 German soldiers were to executed on 2 September 1944 by the resistance. The firing-squad was led by Joseph Duret, a reserve colonel who had lost his brother, nephew and another relation on Christmas night. The men shot were not
Renseignements Généraux concluded, 'A ce point de vue, l'attaque de Château de Sonnaz à Habère-Lullin, qui a provoqué la mort et l'arrestation d'une soixantaine de personnes de la région, a provoqué un véritable affolement.' Such incidents were not isolated. Following the capture of two Germans at Annecy-le-Vieux on 24 January 1944 in an unsuccessful attempt to exchange them for some résistants, the Germans reacted two days later by launching an operation around Thônes. This resulted in the capture or death of some 31 réfractaires and maquisards as well as the destruction of a number of peasants' chalets.

The Renseignements Généraux believed that most of the population thought that such attacks on isolated members of the Wehrmacht were both pointless and dangerous. After the attack on the village of Bernex (Abondance) and the deaths of five men trying to escape from prison in Annemasse in December 1943, the Renseignements Généraux noted,

On estime que l'attitude passive de la population ne justifie pas de semblables mesures, car la majorité blâme ces agressions isolées qui la mettent en fâcheuse posture et l'on dit couramment que 'ce ne sont pas ces quelques coups de mitraillettes qui feront finir la guerre.'

The following month, their report went further:

La situation actuelle est caractérisée aussi par la désapprobation quasi-unanime de la population au sujet des agressions dont étaient victimes quelques soldats allemands et 'payés' au centuple par le département. Même les gens assaisonnés de victoire anglo-saxonne, pensent que les actes isolés sont blâmables et n'amènent en rien la position des allemands alors qu'ils rendent combien critique celle d'innombrables innocents.

The main reason for the population's disapproval of attacks on the Germans was that they made the local population vulnerable to reprisal. After an fire-fight between maquisards and German forces near the

33 Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10, 1 January 1944.


37 Even when they approved of such attacks, it was not without afterthought of the possible consequences: after an attack against some German customs officers at Domancy (Sallanches) on 15 April, J..., who commanded the gendarmerie at Bonneville, commented that 'la majeure partie de la population se réjouirait de ces agressions si elle n'éprouvait pas en même temps la crainte de représailles.' Report of J..., commandant
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The main reason for the population's disapproval of attacks on the Germans was that they made the local population vulnerable to reprisal. After a fire-fight between maquisards and German forces near the hamlet of Pouilly (St. Jeoire) on 28 January 1944 which left two resistance and one German dead, the Germans set fire to the village and killed at least 11 inhabitants. About 40 people were left homeless after the incident. In March, 39 people were arrested at St. Jeoire and five shot. The result was that after an attack on a German lorry on 11 June, during which one civilian and three Germans were killed, the population was reported to be horrified when the maquisards abandoned the town, leaving it to face the wrath of the occupying troops. Most of the male population left for the mountains because they feared another massacre.

Dans certaines localités de l'Arrondissement de Bonneville notamment St. Jeoire et St. Julien, la population masculine sans vouloir se joindre aux forces du maquis, mais obéissant à une véritable panique, a gagné les bois redoutant à chaque instant l'intervention des Forces de la Wehrmacht à l'occasion des attentats dont cette région est le théâtre.

Admittedly, the relationship between the occupying forces and the population were not always so poor. After the population had been battered during the state of siege the most ill-disciplined Axis troops left for Croatia at the end of March. At times a modus vivendi was achieved between the population and Wehrmacht.

38 Even when they approved of such attacks, it was not without afterthought of the possible consequences: after an attack against some German customs officers at Domancy (Sallanches) on 15 April, J..., who commanded the gendarmerie at Bonneville, commented that 'la majeure partie de la population se réjouirait de ces agressions si elle n'épouvait pas en même temps la crainte de représailles.' Report of J..., commandant de la section de gendarmerie de Bonneville, Annecy, AD., 12 W 11, 30 January 1944.

39 The Renseignements Généraux estimated that there were 18 dead; cf: Comité de Haute-Savoie de l'Association Nationale des anciens combattants de la Résistance française (ed.), Mémorial de la résistance en Haute-Savoie, Ambilly, 1971, p.111; report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 30 January 1944.


41 Police report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 75, 13 June 1944. In the event, although more than 200 German troops surrounded the town, only two houses were burnt. See also report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 11 June 1944.

42 Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 18 June 1944. The author of the report was a little muddled here. St. Jeoire is actually in the arrondissement of St. Julian, as is, of course, St. Julien.

43 Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 16 April 1944.
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and even sometimes Wehrmacht and resistance. The population noted with relief that there was no reaction from the Germans after an attack on German personnel at Fillinges (Reignier) on 25 April.

In general, however, the population feared the worst - and often with justification. In the weeks before the landings in Normandy the Germans launched a series of round-ups in the Chablais, during which the whole of the adult male population aged 18-40 was checked by between 4-500 troops. On 22 May there were 180 arrests in Thonon alone, of whom 110 were kept in custody and six executed. Large numbers of chalets and houses were burned in the villages above the town such as Bernex, St. Paul and Vinzier. The effect of this vast operation was to terrify the population. A similar programme was put into effect in Annemasse two weeks later, during which 70 people were deported. The Renseignements Généraux evoked the mentality in the town: 'Le départ de cet important convoi a causé dans toute la région, une réelle consternation et le public vivement ému ne peut s'empêcher de formuler des craintes nouvelles pour l'avenir.'

During May around Chamonix, for example, the Germans treated those found breaking the curfew with exceptional leniency. Those caught were forced to a 200 francs fine which was then handed over by the Germans to the Bureau de Bienfaisance. Similarly, a restaurant at the Hôtel Mont-Blanc was fined 1,000 francs for being open after 9pm on 29 April 1944. For both examples see report of sous-préfet de Bonneville, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 8 May 1944.

According to a story in the Cluses edition of the Dauphine Libéré on 17 August 1982, a certain Hauptman Kolb, the commandant in charge of the garrison in Cluses between September 1943 and February 1944, informed the AS and FTP that he knew the location of most of the réfractaires' chalets and asked the groups not to kill people in the back. Kolb's contacts with the resistance movements were discovered in February. He was arrested by the Gestapo and shot.

After a fire-fight between maquisards and three German customs officers on 10 May 1944 at Vacheresse (Abondance), the Police commented, 'La population est vivement émue, non seulement par cet incident lui même et la crainte de représailles qu'il peut entraîner, mais aussi par les exactions de toutes sortes qu'elle subit du fait de ces "hors la loi".' Police report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 75, 11 May 1944.

Of these 31 were Jewish - the report of the Renseignements Généraux commented, 'on suppose qu'elles seraient conduites dans un camp'. Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 23 May 1944.

There were similar operations around St. Julien, Cluses, Scionzier and Marnaz between 8 and 9 June, during which 50 people were arrested. Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 11 June 1944. And on 16 and 17 June the Germans attacked resistance groups around Abondance and Chapelle d'Abondance. On this occasion the Germans were reported to have sustained nine casualties (This was the first time that the Germans
The German repression was harsh. In total, 672 people were deported from the department (including 38 women), of whom 307 did not return, and 335 people were imprisoned. The number of résistants who were shot or killed has been estimated at 433 and the number of civilian dead is estimated at 54. In the meantime, Axis forces lost 161 men in Haute-Savoie during the occupation.\textsuperscript{51}

It was hardly surprising then that the population was less than enthusiastic about the attacks by the resistance movements on German troops, which generated reprisals by the occupation forces. In June 1944, the Renseignements Généraux commented that the demands and activity of the maquis and the subsequent reprisals by the Germans were creating 'une angoisse véritable.'\textsuperscript{52} The Prefect concluded his monthly report for June:

\begin{quote}
En résumé, le département de la Haute-Savoie reste profondément divisé mais demeure calme. Dans leur ensemble mes administrés restent favorables aux Alliés mais redoutent les activités terroristes génératrices de représailles allemandes. Tous estiment cette action inopportune et... une source inquiétude se transforme en hostilité ouverte contre ceux qui, sous couvert de résistance, font courir les plus grands risques à des populations qu'ils oppriment et qu'ils n'hésitent pas à abandonner lorsqu'ils peuvent être en danger.\textsuperscript{53}
\end{quote}

The rural population was, then, terrified on the one hand by the resistance and on the other by the Germans. The phenomenon of being caught uncomfortably between these two forces was not uncommon.\textsuperscript{54} It would be interesting if Roger Austin's conclusion about the situation in Hérault during the long months before the liberation were applicable to much of the rest of France: 'Hating the Germans, frightened by communism, suspicious of the resistance and cruelly let down by Vichy, the Hérantais were at a loss whom to turn to in the

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\textsuperscript{51} Of these four were Italian and 157 German. A further 80 Germans were shot after the liberation on 2 September 1944. Figures collated by M. Gambier, the former correspondant départemental du comité d'histoire de la 2ème Guerre Mondiale.  
\textsuperscript{52} Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 25 June 1944.  
\textsuperscript{53} Prefect's report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 24 June 1944.  
\textsuperscript{54} Paul Silvestre, who has studied the problem in the department of the Isère, described the situation when a group of résistants were trying to set up an ambush on the Route Nationale 75 at Voreppe. The leader of the group explained afterwards that the population had asked the group not to take any action, and some had threatened to lead the Germans to their hide-out if they did. Silvestre, P., 'STO, Maquis et Guérilla dans l'Isère', \textit{RHDGM}, 130 (1983), p.1-49, p.45 n.102.
\end{flushleft}
Pre-liberation Haute-Savoie: the Axis occupations

final months of the occupation. But the French population was to be let down by one final actor on this unhappy stage - the Allies.

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CHAPTER 28: PRE-LIBERATION HAUTE-SAVOIE: ATTITUDES TO THE ALLIES

THE BRITISH did not always enjoy the unqualified support of many Haut-Savoyards. As the war swung to the Allies' favour during the winter of 1942-43, so support for them strengthened considerably. However, the Anglo-Americans' failure to help the maquisards on the Plateau de Glières during the spring of 1944 came as a particular disappointment. The population had enjoyed unrealistic expectations as to both the ability of the résistants to resist trained and heavily armed troops as well as the level of aid that might be available from the Allies. These expectations were encouraged by the lack of reliable information from the French media. In addition, once the state of siege was put into operation the department was cut off from the rest of France - telephone calls and telegrams were forbidden, as was all road movement. Not surprisingly, the wildest rumours gained currency. The Renseignements Généraux reported that the public believed the maquisards on the Plateau were inaccessible, heavily armed, supplied with food and equipment, and commanded by officers of the 27th Batallion Chasseurs Alpins. There were also rumours that a section of artillery from the 1st Régiment de France were there as well. By the end of the month, there were further rumours that there were as many as 1500 men on the Plateau and that the RAF would help them. These rumours were encouraged by a number of broadcasts from London. One in particular, made by Maurice Schumann on 6 February 1944, which began 'S.O.S., S.O.S. Savoyards, Savoyards, le maquis de Haute-Savoie', was without precedent and appeared to order a mobilisation of the sédentaires in the department to join the maquisards. Although there was a volte-face the next day, stating that the aim of the Germans was to concentrate the maquisards to destroy them, the damage had been done. Firstly, the expectation had been created that the Allies would support the plateau, and secondly, the attention of France had been drawn to Haute-Savoie by the propaganda war waged on the airwaves between Philippe Henriot and Maurice Schumann.

Given these expectations it was hardly surprising that the population was disappointed when the Plateau was successfully attacked and the maquisards bloodily dislodged. The Renseignements Généraux commented,

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1 Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 5 March 1944.


4 A Foreign Office directive for 14 to 27 February stated that Haute-Savoie had become almost legendary, London, P.R.O., FO 371 41885. The author would like to thank Michael Stenton for this reference and his help in guiding me through the maze of Foreign Office documents at the Public Records Office.

5 The 465 maquisards on the Plateau lost 41 men killed and 183 prisoners between 26 March and 1 April 1944. See: Crémieux-Brilhac, J-L., 'La bataille des Glières et la "Guerre Psychologique,"' RHDGM, 99 (1975), p.45-72, p.71. In broadcasts on 7, 8 and 11 April, Maurice Schumann made the improbable claim that the
L’annonce par M. Ph. Henriot à la radio de la reddition de l’ensemble des réfractaires massés dans la région de ‘Glières’ a provoqué une véritable stupefaction notamment parmi ceux qui croyaient de la valeur de l’organisation, à l’inviolabilité de la position et au cran des occupants... Dans la majorité du public, notamment et surtout dans les milieux ‘Gaulistes’, la déception est grande. Il en résulte de sévères critiques à l’adresse des Anglais qui, après avoir tout fait pour inciter les jeunes à la résistance, se sont froidement désintéressés de leur sort. De sévères critiques s’élèvent également à l’encontre de ceux qui avaient pris la responsabilité de l’organisation de ce ‘Comité de résistance’ et qui, dit-on, auraient abandonné leurs troupes à la veille du combat.\textsuperscript{6}

The following week, the Renseignements Généraux repeated the complaint: ‘Les récents événements survenus dans le département ont eu une répercussion assez curieuse dans les milieux qui s’étaient montrés, jusqu’à ce jour, farouchement partisans des Anglo-Saxons. On constate, en effet, dans ces milieux un certain mécontentement à l’égard des anglais qui, après avoir exhorté les jeunes Français à la Dissidence, n’ont pratiquement rien fait pour leur porter secours.’\textsuperscript{7}

The population had another reason to be critical of the Anglo-Americans. As the Allies prepared to make landings on mainland France, many French people began to become concerned about the damage that would occur were France to become a battlefield again. To reach Germany, the Anglo-Americans would have to cross France. Memories of the First World War and the failure of the Allies to make rapid progress in either Tunisia

Germans had sustained 400 dead and 300 wounded, compared with 100 dead among the maquisards and 150 wounded. There is still considerable debate about the actual losses inflicted by the maquisards on the Germans. For a balanced discussion of the issues, see: Amouroux, H., \textit{Un Printemps de mort et d’espoir: novembre 1943 - 6 juin 1944}, (Vol.6 of \textit{La Grande Histoire des Français sous l’occupation}), Paris, 1985, p.221-304. A report by the Renseignements Généraux on 9 April 1943 suggested that nine German soldiers were killed compared to about 100 maquisard casualties and 140 captured. Although this typed report has, added in pen, ‘Mais ces chiffres n’ont rien d’officiel,’ this figure appears to confirm, more or less, a German report quoted by Amouroux which stated that between 12 and 31 March there were six German dead and 18 wounded during operation Fruling (the action against the Plateau des Glières). Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 9 April 1944; Amouroux, H., \textit{Un Printemps de mort et d’espoir: novembre 1943 - 6 juin 1944}, (Vol.6 of \textit{La Grande Histoire des Français sous l’occupation}), Paris, 1985, p.292, n.213.

\textsuperscript{6} This last accusation was not actually true, but was what Henriot had stated during one of his broadcasts. Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 30 March 1944. A few days later the Renseignements Généraux commented that the population did not believe that officers of the 27ème Batalion Chasseurs Alpins were capable of ‘une telle lâcheté.’ Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 2 April 1944.

\textsuperscript{7} Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 2 April 1944.
or Italy suggested that such a campaign might be long as well as damaging to the infrastructure and social fabric of the country. There were considerable feelings of ambivalence towards the landings.\(^8\)

In particular, the population began to focus their complaints on the Allied bombing on French targets. Before 1943, the population in Haute-Savoie at least saw such action as legitimate. Even when Annecy was hit little effect on opinion was noted. After the first raid on Annecy, the Renseignements Généraux noted that the funerals of those killed had not seen any anti-British outbursts. The incident was viewed as an unfortunate accident, and there were rumours that the bomber was in difficulties and had only dropped its load to lighten the aircraft.\(^9\)

However, the toleration of the population appears not to have been infinite. The following year in 1943, the reaction to bombing was more mixed: some reports suggested that bombing in areas far from the department left the population indifferent.\(^10\) Others, however, began to report laments which become relatively common elsewhere in France in the twelve months before the D-Day. The Renseignements Généraux wrote in April 1943 that the bombing of Paris and other towns in the north had provoked indignation: the pilots were described as assassins and bandits.\(^11\) The SCT noted that there had been, 'une très grosse émotion

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\(^8\) Contemporary German sources support this view. See: Paxton, R.O., 'Le régime de Vichy en 1944', in La libération de la France, actes du colloque international tenu à Paris du 28-31 October 1974, Paris, 1976, p.323-342, p.326. This disillusionment with the Allies and concern about the consequences of any landings appears to have been general through much of France. Certainly, this was the case in Normandy. After the Allies disembarked on mainland France, American troops captured two sets of reports prepared by the SCT in the Calvados as well as some intercepted mail, all of which were quickly sent back to London for analysis. From these reports, it became clear that the Germans were far from popular in the area, but that this Germanophobia had not necessarily resulted in pro-allied feelings during the pre-invasion period. They demonstrated that from a high point in the spring of 1943 when the Allies had taken Sicily, the population had been repeatedly disappointed by the failure of the Allies to make the expected landings on mainland France. London, PRO, FO 371 42017 Z/4444; FO 371 42018 Z/5105. The first synthesis was made up of 513 extracts sent between 1st and 7th June 1944, and provided evidence of feelings immediately before and after D-Day in the department itself. The second analyzed 1,179 extracts from mail captured in the whole of Normandy between the Allied landings and the middle of July and although the majority of the interceptions in this synthesis were from the Calvados, there were also letters originating in the Manche and Paris.


\(^10\) Report of agent administratif des cantons de Reignier et Annemasse, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 21 April 1943; for similar reaction to bombing in Bordeaux, see report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 24 May 1943.

\(^11\) Synthesis of reports prepared by the SCT, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, April 1943.
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soulevée par les bombardements répétés, though its report balanced this by adding, 'certains cherchent à minimiser les pertes et disent que devant la position prise par la France, 'il est normal que nous soyons bombardés.'\(^{12}\) Opinion undoubtedly appears to have hardened against Allied bombing during the summer of 1943. By September, the bombings in the north of the country were causing 'une émotion de plus en plus vive, particulièrement dans les régions de la Nord.' The report added, 'Les milieux les plus anglophiles marquent eux-mêmes leur dégoût et prévoient le "retournement complet de l'opinion publique."\(^{13}\) Moreover, even those who admitted the necessity for bombing, regretted the lack of accuracy of Allied aircraft.\(^{14}\)

Further bombing of Annecy in November 1943 - this time deliberately aimed at the SRO ball-bearing factory - provoked a different reaction to that of December 1942, when the town had been hit by mistake. Twelve people were killed in the raid, and a further 19 wounded. The Renseignements Généraux noted in its weekly report:

C'est évidemment le bombardement d'Annecy qui est l'objet de toutes les conversations. Il ne trouve aucune justification parmi les partisans des anglo-saxons, placés au lendemain de ce raid en assez fâcheuse posture... On peut en conclure que dans la capitale de la Haute-Savoie, les Anglo-Saxons n'ont pas amélioré la cote dont ils bénéficiaient jusqu'ici.\(^{15}\)

\(^{12}\) Synthesis of reports prepared by the Service de Contrôle Technique, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, April 1943.

\(^{13}\) Report of Contrôle Postal d'Annecy, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, September 1943.

\(^{14}\) Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 9, 27 April 1943.

\(^{15}\) Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10, 14 November 1943. The geographical extent of the hostility created by the bombing of Annecy must be questioned, however. The agent administratif in Reignier and Annemasse wrote, 'Le bombardement d'Annecy n'a pas provoqué dans la région qui nous intéresse une émotion bien marquée; l'opinion ne réagit désormais qu'à ce qui la touche très directement.' Report of agent administratif de Reignier et Annemasse, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10, 20 November 1943. By March 1944, the Renseignements Généraux wrote, 'La certitude que des bombardements terribles accompagneraient un débarquement Allié en France, est désormais générale. Mais il faut souligner qu'elle ne gêne pas les irréductibles qui s'en tiennent à cette formule: "Tout, même la ruine totale des installations industrielles et ferroviaires du pays pourvu que les allemands soient écrasés et nous débarrassent de leur présence."' Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 5 March 1944.
Indeed, the depth of antagonism towards Allied bombing during 1943 does not seem to have been as deep in Haute-Savoie as in other regions of France which were more closely touched. A momentary snap-shot of opinion, when the population in Annecy was able to show its sympathies, was provided at the funerals of British flyers killed in August 1943, when dropping supplies and leaflets in the area. The Contrôle Postal noted that month that there had been large crowds at the funerals of the réfractaires killed that month by the Italians:

Foule nombreux aux obsèques; dépôt de gerbes tricolores; chants de l'hymne national et cris hostiles aux occupants. Des incidents semblables ont eu lieu à Annecy et à Monluçon pendant l'enterrement d'aviateurs anglais et canadiens tombés respectivement près de ces villes. Un petit nombre de correspondants s'étonne de telles 'aberrations' qui témoignent des sentiments profonds de la masse du public.

The Contrôle Postal in Annecy did, however, pick up echoes of complaints in other departments. The depth of feeling elsewhere could be considerable. In one report, the Contrôle Postal stated:

La fréquence des raids anglo-américains sur la France cause une émotion de plus en plus vive, particulièrement dans les régions du Nord où la population montre une lassitude attristée et une angoisse profonde... Malgré les 'terribles nécessités de la guerre' on n'admet pas, dans l'ensemble, de tels 'actes de sauvagerie' et les aviateurs alliés sont appelés les 'assassins'.

By the spring of 1944, however, even Haut-Savoyards, who were at least spared the misery of continual Allied bombing, began to question the necessity of such destruction. The Renseignements Généraux argued,

16 Admittedly, there were complaints about the bombing of Rome in July 1943. The Contrôle Postal d'Annecy remarked, 'Le bombardement de Rome a provoqué une profonde émotion; son opportunité sur le plan militaire est discutée. On déplore la destruction de magnifiques œuvres d'art, et, pour beaucoup 'la honte d'un tel forfait rejaillit sur l'humanité toute entière. Report of Contrôle Postal d'Annecy, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, July 1943. However, this is the sort of reaction that was to be expected in a department which was, and still is, fervently catholic.


18 In December 1943, there were 1,998 letters intercepted in the department complaining about Allied bombing and 4,908 which stated a desire for the end to war. This was out of a total 53,980 and represented 3.7 per cent and 9.1 per cent of all letters respectively. There were 157 letters complaining about German behaviour (0.3 per cent): report of the Service de Contrôle Technique, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, December 1943.
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En même temps qu’une émotion grandissante, l’aggravation des bombardements Alliés sur les villes et banlieues ouvrières françaises, provoque peu à peu un ressentiment certain de l’opinion publique moyenne contre les Anglais et les Américains... Si donc on enregistre qu’il y a une minorité de la population qui approuve l’utilité militaire et le destruction de certains objectifs, l’opinion publique dans sa majorité réprouve le fait que ces opérations se traduisent par les nouvelles misères dont elles accablent notre pays.20

On 9 May 1944, Annecy itself was bombed - an event which showed the growing ambivalence towards the phenomenon among Annéciens. The target, the SRO ball-bearing factory was completely destroyed, while the station and railway lines put out of action and 140 homes badly damaged, of which about 40 were completely destroyed. There were 14 dead of whom ten were civilians.21 Although some felt that the bombing by 15 aircraft had shown commendable skill in destroying so much of the factory while damaging so little of the town,22 others were more doubtful.

Whatever the doubts or hostility engendered by Allied bombing, Haute-Savoie escaped the worst of such activity, and it is certain that the antipathy created by the Allied air forces never reached the levels attained in other areas of the country which were not so lucky. This antipathy could be considerable. In the area around Normandy, for example, the Allies discovered that their preparations for D-Day had alienated a large part of the population in the months before 6 June. Intercepted SCT reports captured by the Americans in the Calvados were, as one Foreign Office official minuted on the document, 'not very cheerful reading.'23 The predominant theme in the intercepted letters was one of complaint about the destruction that was already being caused by Allied air-raids. Although there were 57 extracts with good morale and pro-Allied feeling, 140 reflected bad morale and criticism of the Allies. At times the Allies were caustically referred to as 'Les Libérateurs' [sic].24 The image repeated in so many post-war films of peasants tilling their fields who

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21 One was an air-raid warden, two were gendarmes and a single German soldier was killed. There were 27 wounded of whom seven were reported to be in a bad state. Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 14 April 1944.


23 London, PRO, FO 371 42017 Z/4444. FO 371 42018 Z/5105. Despite the disintegration of communications during June caused by bombing and sabotage, it appears that the French postal service continued to function effectively, even at times within the battle zone. American comments about the reports noted that there was considerable outspokenness, little censorship consciousness, and that it appeared that little interference had been expected.

24 As opposed to Libérateurs.
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looked up to cheer the RAF was not reflected in the letters. The report mentioned that the British were referred to more often with opprobrium than the Americans: 'I can tell you that they spat at the passing planes on Whit Sunday' read one extract. Another from Caen on 3 June 1944 ran:

A fighter has been hit and believe me I was very pleased about it, these scoundrels don't deserve any pity, they make our blood boil, to hell with all of them, it is best to get rid of them.

What is apparent is that the clear dichotomy of pro-allied and pro-German is insufficient to explain the state of opinion. The report mentioned that, 'simultaneous dislike of both Allies and Germans is not uncommon' and quoted a letter: 'one side kills us, the other makes us die of hunger'.

The Americans also carried out their own analysis on some letters they captured. These made little better reading and contained the same complaints about the damage being created. Of the 535 interceptions in the battle-area only 91 contained signs of courage, cheerfulness or pro-allied feeling, and of those only a third - around 30 - actually mentioned any sympathy for the Allies. In contrast there were 60 expressions of fear, low-spirits, resentment, and anti-allied feeling, of which two-thirds, about 40, contained anti-Allied sentiment. The authors of the report commented that there was little reaction by the local inhabitants to the events that were taking place around them. Though the violence was mentioned, there were few opinions about it: 'it is almost as though people have been battered into a frame of mind in which expressing a coherent thought is difficult.' However, when the violence was mentioned, it was with some bitterness. Once again there were accusations made about the accuracy of Allied bombing. This time it was the USAF which bore the brunt of complaints for their high-level day-light raids. The Americans had been particularly criticised before the invasion: an extract from a letter from St. Etienne complained that:

The American airforce is causing a reign of terror, as they strike without rhyme or reason... A fortnight's liberation has sufficed to to destroy what remained intact after the beginning of the war. It is abominable for we get the impression that these blows are directed chiefly against us... The American planes must be piloted by gorillas or by freed convicts who have to fly a certain distance while dropping

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25 London, PRO, FO 371 42017 Z4444.

26 The report was compiled by the Interservices Research Bureau and covered the period between 6 June and 15 July 1944. The author of the report divided the interceptions into two types - those in the battle area which numbered 535, and those outside of which there were 662. Again it was commented that there was little trace of censorship-consciousness.
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a certain number of bombs at random. Anyhow, it isn't healthy for a French peasant to work in his field unless he doesn't mind being machine-gunned.27

The antagonism was not only aimed at the Americans. Despite the anglophilia which had undoubtedly existed in 1943 before widespread bombing of French industrial and railway targets had begun, RAF raids did not permit such feeling to survive intact during the period immediately before and after D-Day. 'How many Frenchmen longed for the arrival of the English and are now waiting to throw stones at them,' ran one extract. Another lamented, 'Poor Normandy! I think they are making her pay for the conquest of England.'

The batch of correspondence, originating outside the battle zone, and which was intercepted and interpreted by the Americans, shows that disillusionment with the Allies was more than just a local reaction. In Normandy, the American author of the report commented on the interceptions from outside the battle area: 'The inevitable loss of life and property resulting from Allied sorties is responsible for much bitter anti-British sentiment, in some cases amounting to hatred.' He went on to quote a letter: 'They are making a nice hash, cowards and murderers. They have no excuse, as they hit everywhere, like brutes.'28 Another read: 'Ah, our friends the English are swine, the days of Jeanne d'Arc are coming back. Perfidious Albion remains unchanged. She is tasting her vengeance and despises us, she will not spare us and will give us the finishing stroke so that we will not rise again.'29 In all, about 60,000 French men and women were killed by bombing throughout the war.30

In the weeks before D-Day both Haut-Savoyards and the others elsewhere in France were at the end of their tether. The landings which had been expected in the spring of 1943 had still not materialised by the spring of 1944. In April, the Renseignements Généraux in Haute-Savoie reported 'un sentiment d'attente un peu nerveuse et d'impatience grandissante' among the population.31 The following month it noted 'la fatigue

27 22 June 1944.
28 Rouen, 6 June 1944.
29 29 June 1944.
nerveuse et morale éprouvée devant la durée du conflit,' and argued that the popularity of the Anglo-Americans was suffering as a result. By 4 June their report went further,

En ce qui concerne les perspectives du débarquement anglo-américain à l'ouest, une certaine lassitude commence à se faire jour dans l'esprit public... Quoi qu'il en soit, on note une certaine irritation à l'égard des anglo-saxons, prodigues de promesses. 33

The impatience of Haut-Savoyards was given further motivation by the growing chaos around them. French men and women were being bombed by their former Allies, had been abandoned by their own government, and faced the double jeopardy of being terrorised by the Germans and the resistance movements. In addition, the effect of this growing chaos was a break-down of the already fragile and insufficient food distribution system - a break-down which threatened to exacerbate already delicate social tensions. A Belgian lawyer and resistance member in his home country and stayed for six weeks with friends in Paris, commented,

Civil war and revolution are very near the surface in France. Many people are so sure of it that they are mesmerised into inaction and when asked their views about the future just shrug their shoulders and say the revolution will come, so what can they do? This mixture of apathy in the middle, fear above and hatred below is a dangerous one. 35

This apathy appears to have been a frequent reaction to an increasingly desperate situation. The population was reported to be more and more indifferent and withdrawn. In Montpelier, the regional prefect noted

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33 Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 4 June 1944.

34 A Swiss ship captain who regularly visited Marseilles and was interviewed by a British Foreign Office official summarised the problems facing much of the French population: 'He considers, perhaps with some reason, that he who resists the Germans risks being attacked by the Germans, by Vichy, and by the bandits who have stolen arms from the resistance groups and then traitorously broken away - whereas he who does not resist is liable to be attacked by those who do. In the circumstances, it is exceedingly difficult for Frenchmen to make a cool and collected choice, and it must be admitted that in the general state of confusion it is far from easy for them to know what is right and what is wrong. Interview in Lisbon with Captain Hess, a Swiss captain of an American Red Cross ship who sailed regularly to Marseilles, London, P.R.O., FO 371 41860 Z 1436/2/17, 16 February 1944.

35 Interview of Belgian lawyer in the resistance who travelled from Belgium to Spain via France. London, PRO, FO 371 41861, Z 4239/2208, 14 June 1944. The report was described by one Foreign Office official as valuable. The consequences of the failure of the landings were horrific. See: report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 14 May 1944.

36 One Frenchman who came out of France in March 1944, reported that 'the French are very down-hearted; they have given up hoping, and do not know what to expect next.' Interview with Robert Munro, London, PRO, FO 371 41861, Z 2288/2/17, 22 March 1944.
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in April, 'The public is completely disorientated and is ready to throw itself, like a lost child, into the arms of those who will bring peace.'

One man who could offer an element of stability in an increasingly frightening period was Pétain, who benefited from a resurgence in support. Admittedly, during 1943, the combination of a deteriorating economy, harsher measures against the Jews and the implementation of the STO, made even Pétain's reputation vulnerable.

In February, C., the commandant de la compagnie de Gendarmerie de la Haute-Savoie, pointed out that the situation had reached a point where, 'le Maréchal même n'était plus inattaqué.'

In general, however, the most common response to the growing dissatisfaction with Vichy was not to criticise the Marshal, but simply not to talk about him. In February, the SCT wrote, 'L'opinion est à peu près muette dans ses appréciations et ses jugements sur le Chef de l'État,' at the same time noting that the government itself was increasingly being criticised. Criticisms were, in general, not as numerous as the declarations of support. In Haute-Savoie when Pétain was mentioned in letters and telephone calls, it tended to be without animosity: 'Le Maréchal est toujours vénéré par une grosse majorité de l'opinion, mais on regrette de ne plus l'entendre et on en déduit qu'il n'est plus libre,' wrote the Contrôle Téléphonique d'Annemasse in February

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38 This trend existed elsewhere: see for example reports from the Hérault during 1943 which suggested that the government was becoming so unpopular that even Pétain was being criticised: Austin, R.S.P., 'The Education and Youth policies of the Vichy Government in the Department of the Hérault, 1940-1944' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Manchester, 1981), p.333-9.

39 Report of C., commandant de la compagnie de Gendarmerie de la Haute-Savoie, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 23 February 1943. The previous month the SCT had reported 'quelques opinions isolées se montrent plus réticentes et font timidement grief au Maréchal de sa politique. On lui reproche aussi l'abandon des pleins pouvoirs à M. Laval.' Report of the SCT, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, 31 January 1943.

40 Report of the SCT, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, February 1943.

41 By April, the Renseignements Généraux noted that Pétain's speech about the bombing of French towns by the Anglo-Americans had not been met by the usual warmth that his broadcasts usually created. Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 12 April 1943. The agent administratif for Reignier and Annemasse confirmed that the speech had passed almost unnoticed: Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 21 April 1943; also report of the SCT, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, April 1943.

42 For example, in one month during 1943, the Contrôle Postal in the department of the Loire, noted forty-one letters mentioning of the Marshal of which eight were critical and thirty-three were supportive. Quoted in Luirard, M., La région stéphanoise dans la guerre et dans la paix: 1936-1951, St. Etienne, 1980, p.324.
February 1943. In June the Service repeated the view that, 'la grande majorité lui témoigne confiance, admiration et vénération.'

By the late summer of 1943 and spring of 1944 as fears of revolution began to re-emerge with the increase in activity by the resistance - and in particular communist-led resistance - so the administration began to register a growing number of comments about Pétain. Astute use was also made of the Marshal during visits to areas bombed by the Allies in preparation for D-Day. In Haute-Savoie, the Renseignements Généraux noted a favourable response to the Marshal's visit to Rouen after the city had been bombed: 'Il est également à souligner que les visites du Maréchal aux populations sinistrées par les bombardements ont provoqué un regain de l'intérêt de la majorité pour la personne et les actes du Chef de l'Etat.' As the environment became increasingly terrifying, the population appears to have continued to disassociate the Marshal from unpopular policies and see him as a symbol of stability. As a result, even in 1944, Pétain continued to draw large crowds, as he did both in Paris and Lyon in the months before the invasion. Indeed, it appeared as though the Chef de l'Etat was enjoying what one Foreign Office official called 'an Indian summer' of popularity.

Apart from this sympathy for the Marshal, the population remained dominated by apathy and lassitude. Claude Lévy has written of 'une masse atteniste, soucieuse avant tout de ses intérêts matériels et prête à rallier le camp des vainqueurs dès que l'occasion s'en présenterait.' As for Haute-Savoie, the Renseignements

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43 Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, February 1943; also report of the Service de Contrôle Technique, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, April 1943. It should be noted, however, that the popularity of Pétain was greatest in the areas with large agricultural communities such as Haute-Savoie.

44 Report of the SCT, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, June 1943. It should be noted, however, that the SCT did report in July that the Marshal had been criticised for lengthening the war and for his 'orgueil infini'. The report concluded, 'la silence d'un grand nombre, enfin, laisse impression que la popularité est moins grande que dans le passé.' Report of the SCT, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, July 1943.


46 John Sweets has some interesting comments on the reasons for these crowds. He argues that people attended his visits less because of Pétain than as a way of displaying their patriotism. He also points out that visits by Pétain to Aurillac and Saint-Flour in the autumn of 1943 were cancelled because of an expected hostile reaction. See, Sweets, J.F., Choices in Vichy France: the French under Nazi occupation, Oxford, 1986, p.152-3.

47 Comment of Foreign Office official on MI9 interrogation of Belgian lawyer, London, PRO, FO 371 41862, Z 4239/2/G17, late June 1944.

48 He says the exceptions were Brittany, the Limousin and Haute-Savoie. Lévy, C. 'L'opinion française devant le régime de Vichy', in La libération de la France, actes du colloque international tenu à Paris du 28-31 October 1974, Paris, 1976, p.343-356, p.350-1.
Pre-liberation Haute-Savoie: attitudes to the Allies

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Généraux depicted a population that was morally and nervously exhausted. As far as Rosenthal and the resistance movements were concerned, the vast majority of the population was 'indifférente, apathique.'

More than anything else after the liberation Haut-Savoyards wanted peace and economic security - both of which they believed would swiftly follow the allied landings. They were to be disappointed.


CHAPTER 29: THE LIBERATION

HAUTE-SAVOIE was the first department in France to liberate itself without the direct help of the Allies. Its liberation began on 16 August 1944, the day after the Allied landings in the South of France, when the posts along the Swiss border at Bossey (St. Julien)\(^1\) and Collonges-sous-Salève (St. Julien) were attacked by the AS, while those at Viry (St. Julien) and Valleiry (St. Julien)\(^2\) were stormed by the Brigade Rouge Internationale. German prisoners were then used as hostages to obtain the surrender of the forces in the town of St. Julien.

On the same day, a joint force of AS and FTP launched an assault on the German garrison at Thonon which surrendered the following day (17 August). On 18 August, some of the garrison at Annemasse - which numbered about 180 - surrendered to another combined force of AS and FTP, while others fled into Switzerland at Gailard (Annemasse).\(^3\) The FFI then took Fort Ecluse on 20 August which guards the entrance to the department over the Rhône and leads to Bellegarde in the neighbouring department of the Ain.

To the south, in the Vallée de l'Arve, the liberation was equally rapid. On 16 August, a group of 30 Germans attempting to retreat from Chamonix to Le Fayet was stopped by resistance forces at the Pont Ste. Marie. Six were killed and a further 13 surrendered. The following day, on 17 August, the 120 remaining Germans at Chamonix surrendered. Lieutenant Ball, a member of the interallied mission in the area, succeeded in obtaining the surrender of the German garrison at Le Fayet the same afternoon.\(^4\) Meanwhile, a German relief column comprising about 14 trucks which had been sent from Annecy to Cluses was attacked on the point where the Route Nationale twists as it rises to the col d'Evires near Daudens in the commune of Groisy (Thorens). The exact number of casualties sustained is difficult to estimate. It is also unclear if the convoy reached its objective. Ball argued that it failed to arrive.\(^5\) Without offering sources, Michel Germain states that two lorries did reach Cluses. However, it does appear as though the Germans sustained considerable losses.

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\(^1\) Where the Germans retreated into Switzerland.


\(^3\) Handwritten report of the liberation of Haute-Savoie from 14 June 1944 onwards, written by Clément Gardet after interviews with various resistance leaders after the liberation, Annecy, A.D., 2 Mi 2.

\(^4\) The Germans there had refused to surrender to resistance forces. However, Ball, accompanied by three Frenchmen dressed in American uniforms enthusiastically speaking pidgin English, succeeded in convincing the 82 Germans that their cause was hopeless. See: Ball's debriefing in OSS/London: RF section history in OSS/London: Special Operations Branch and Secret Intelligence Branch war diaries, microfilm collection published by University Publications of America, Frederick, Maryland, Vol.3, p.1419-1422. RF was the Allied section links with the Gaullists ending people into France.

\(^5\) Ball's debrief, RF section history in OSS/London: Special Operations Branch and Secret Intelligence Branch war diaries, microfilm collection published by University Publications of America, Frederick, Maryland, Vol. 3, p.1422.
The liberation

here.\(^6\) The convoy was certainly sufficiently mauled enough that the 225 members of the Waffen SS at Cluses surrendered\(^7\) the next day, 18 August, to about 500 of the FFI who had surrounded the town.\(^8\) A number of the SS did succeed in escaping round the sides of the valley along the mountain above Bonneville called Le Môle, but were subsequently caught at La Tour. The north of the department was secured. On 18 August, Rosenthal was able to send two messages informing London that Thonon, St. Julien, Annemasse, Cluses and Valleiry had been liberated.\(^9\) The liberation of Annecy on 19 August 1944, when between 300 and 400 résistants captured 1,200 Germans was, according to one regional historian, 'le haut fait, non seulement de la résistance savoyard, mais de toute la région Rhône-Alpes.'\(^10\)

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\(^7\) Ball's debrief, *RF section history in OSS/London: Special Operations Branch and Secret Intelligence Branch war diaries*, microfilm collection published by University Publications of America, Frederick, Maryland, p.1423.

\(^8\) Handwritten report of the liberation by Clément Gardet, Annecy, AD., 2 Mi 2.


\(^10\) Rude, F., *La libération de Lyon et de sa région*, Paris, 1974, p.73. The exact numbers of prisoners taken in the department remains something of a mystery. In his report after the liberation, Ball reported that during the whole liberation 1,785 prisoners had been taken and 400 Germans killed. Ball's debrief, *RF section history in OSS/London: Special Operations Branch and Secret Intelligence Branch war diaries*, microfilm collection published by University Publications of America, Frederick, Maryland, p.1423. This figure is, however, contradicted by Pierre Mouton at the IHTP, who argues in his description of the *opération* - purge - that 2,900 Germans were made prisoner in the department at the liberation. This figure appears to be corroborated by a number of sources. During a radio report on 18 August - before the liberation of Annecy, where about 1,200 Germans were about to surrender, Rosenthal said that 1,300 prisoners had been taken. Augagneur's post-liberation report recorded that 2,462 prisoners had been taken, while it was stated at a meeting of the CDL on 29 September, that there were 2,500 prisoners in the department. None of these figures appear to include the 1,000 Germans captured at recuperation centres in Evian who were swapped for French prisoners of war via Switzerland. If these are included, the resistance may have captured as many as 3,900 Germans during the liberation. Whatever the total, it was a significant achievement.
THE LIBERATION OF HAUTE-SAVOIE, August 1944

KEY:

1 = 16 August
2 = 17 August
3 = 18 August
4 = 19 August
5 = 20 August
The liberation

However, it should not be imagined from the undoubted success of the resistance movements that they were relatively numerous. The troops they faced were by no means front-line troops. Many of the Axis troops captured by the resistance forces were in hospital recovering from wounds received elsewhere. At Evian, for example, only 113 of the 1,000 Germans captured in the town were considered as combatants and not exchanged for French prisoners of war. Of the 2,500 Germans in the department at the beginning of the second week of September, only 1,450 were available for work - 800 were designated by the French authorities as being invalids. Moreover, those that were on the active list were hardly shock troops. Many of the Germans in the department were middle-aged border-guards. Others were members of the 157th Reserve Division which at this time was scarcely a crack division. One history of the German mountain troops describes it as principally a home-based depot formation and a substantial proportion of its troops were either middle aged and or were not even German. It was, moreover, poorly equipped - the troops in Annecy found that they had only 15 rounds a head. The morale of the Poles and Russians in German uniform appeared to be extremely poor and was seriously undermined by the successful efforts of the FFI to isolate the garrison. The leadership of the FFI may well have been aware of the Germans' faltering morale: René Dépollier wrote in his diary for 11 August 1944 that nine Poles had been shot at Saccconges (Annecy-sud) for rebellion. Six days later a further three German troops of unknown origin were also shot. There appears to have been little

11 Minutes of the Comité Départemental de Libération (CDL), Annecy, A.D., 12 W 279, 19 August 1944.
12 Minutes of the CDL, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 279, 9 September 1944.
13 Quarrie, B., German Mountain Troops, Cambridge, 1980, p.11. The 157th Reserve Division later became the 8th Mountain Division. Interestingly, it was the only mountain division not to form a veterans association after the war. This may have been because of its role in repressing the resistance at Glières and at Vercours, or it may have been because the division was badly mauled retreatting over the Alps and on its journey to Turin: a letter sent on 7 November 1944 by a Major Eggers who escaped related that 80 per cent of his battalion was dead, including lieutenant-general Pflaum and his colonel Michel.
14 A German major by the name of Eggers noted in a letter written after the war that the troops in Annecy only had 15 rounds each - enough to last about quarter of an hour. See: Rickard, C., La Savoie dans la Résistance, Evreux, 1986, p.351. The original text of Major Eggers letter can be found in the archives of the IHTP, Paris, Haute-Savoie: A.17.I.
15 There had been ambushes at Groisy (Thorens) on the Annecy - La Roche road on 12 August, as well as firefights at Alby on the Annecy - Aix-les-Bains road on 11 and 12 August. Efforts on 14 and 15 August by the Germans from Aix-les-Bains to relieve Annecy were foiled by a group of AS. Handwritten report of the liberation by Clément Gardet, Annecy, A.D., 2 Mi 2. All telephone contacts with Lyon, Grenoble, Vichy, Aix-les-Bains and Chambéry had been cut by 6 August. See: diary of René Dépollier, 1 mi 162, 6 August 1944. For further reports of the poor morale of the Axis forces see: Rosenthal's debriefing, RF section history in OSS/London: Special Operations Branch and Secret Intelligence Branch war diaries, microfilm collection published by University Publications of America, Frederick, Maryland, Vol.3, p.1399.
16 Annecy, A.D., 1 mi 162, 11 August 1944, 17 August 1944.
contact outside the department after 11 August and the troops were further undermined by Swiss radio reports suggesting that there were between 14,000 maquisards in the mountains around Annecy.¹⁷

Faced with an apparently impossible situation, Colonel Mayer, the German officer in charge of the garrison in Annecy, decided to surrender without a fight. Only one group of Germans tried to break out from the departmental capital, and of these three were killed attempting to do so. The rest, together with about 100 Miliciens surrendered to the resistance forces.

However, despite the undoubted military successes of the resistance movements in Haute-Savoie during August 1944, it should not be thought that their forces were necessarily numerous. If a strict definition of resistance and collaboration is adopted, only a small minority of Haut-Savoyards militarily collaborated or resisted.¹⁸ It is unclear, for example, how many people were actually involved in the liberation of the department. At the liberation of the Chablais, Jean Diot, an officer of the AS in Thonon, argued that there were only 254 men available to liberate Evian - 100 AS and 154 FTP.¹⁹ Meanwhile, according to Commandant Augagneur, in the Vallée de l'Arve, there were 800 men at the liberation of Cluses, of which 530 were members of the FTP. Although there were troops guarding the entrances to the department at Seyssel, Alby, Bellegarde and the col de Tamié, as well as others helping liberate the neighbouring department of Savoie, there were no more than 400 résistants available at the liberation of Annecy, and possibly as few as 300.²⁰ The largest estimates come in a post-liberation account of the liberation by Clément Gaulet who suggested the FFI without the FTP to number about 2,000 men, and the FTP at about 3,500, though he fails to give a date to his figures. Given that

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¹⁷ *Aux Armes*, journal of the FFI, 7 April 1945. The German commander of the hospitals at Evian, for example, believed that he was surrounded by more than 6,000 men. Rickard, C., *La Savoie dans la Résistance*, Évreux, 1986, p.343-4.

¹⁸ As this thesis has demonstrated, the situation in France was far too complicated to be understood merely within the framework of a resistance-collaboration matrix. Once the definition on resistance or collaboration is extended into concepts such as functional resistance and functional collaboration, the terms become meaningless, the debate sterile and pointless. For a discussion of the notion of functional resistance, see Sweets, J.F., *Choices in Vichy France: the French under Nazi occupation*, Oxford, 1986, p.84. For a discussion of the scale of resistance in Haute-Savoie see Appendix III.

¹⁹ On the other hand, Commandant Valentin, head of the AS in Thonon reported that at the end of July he had managed to muster 510 men to Glières to help with the parachute reception. Typed report of the activities in the Thonon sector between 1 July and 12 September 1944, in private archives of Jean Diot. The report runs only to 17 August and is dated 31 August 1944.

²⁰ *Aux Armes*, a magazine of the CDL, Annecy, A.D., 5 J, issue five, February 1945; Minutes of meeting of the CDL, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 279.
The liberation

as the Allies swept up the Rhône valley, so the ranks of the resistance swelled, these were not large numbers. The military resistance was, then, a minority, and a small one at that.
CHAPTER 30: THE LIBERATION: LAW AND ORDER AND THE JUDICIAL PURGE

THE RELATIVELY small numbers of Haut-Savoyards who militarily assisted the liberation did not mean that the liberation was not welcomed joyfully by the population. There was every reason to rejoice. On its own, the resistance movements had managed to rid the department of Axis troops, some of whom had been more than brutal.

However, the scenes of joy at the liberation were marred by a number of unfortunate incidents in the departmental capital. These events, such as the shaving and taunting of women who were reputed to have slept with Germans - popularly known as 'horizontal' collaborators - hinted at a problem of deteriorating law and order. The problem of maintaining the internal security of the department was to haunt the liberation authorities and their failure to control the situation would do little to endear the resistance to an already suspicious rural population in the coming months. More than anything the population in the department wanted peace and an improvement in the economic situation. The resistance movements in power at the liberation found themselves unable to guarantee either.

Certainly, the security situation after the liberation remained fragile. The political antagonisms which had become increasingly acute during the occupation were in no way reduced after the liberation. Many Haut-Savoyards had suffered from the activities of the Milice during the occupation and there was an understandable desire in some quarters for revenge. Moreover, the social antagonisms which had existed during the occupation, between consumer and commerçant, population and administration, peasant and worker were unleashed after the liberation and were made manifest in the form of the épuration, or purge. The fears of the Vichy administration that sections of society would revenge themselves on those who had economically exploited them, was, in some respects reflected in events in the department after the liberation.

The purge took two forms. The first was the judicial purge, which took place more or less within a legal context and was fairly orderly. The most obvious manifestation of this aspect of the purge was the treatment of the 97 members of the Milice captured in Annecy during the night of 18 to 19 August. On 19 August, the day of the liberation of Annecy, at 19.45, the CDL in Annecy decided to set up a court martial under Commandant Augagneur, one of the leaders of the FTP, to decide the question 'exécution des miliciens.' Of the 97 miliciens to be tried, 86 (88.6 per cent) were from the department and 56 were peasants (57.7 per cent.). Their collective trial, which lasted less than 24 hours, was held at Grand-Bornand, deep in the Vallée de Thônes, away from any threat of German interference. After the trial had been completed, 77 were

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1 Minutes of meeting of the CDL, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 279, 19 August 1944.

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executed at Grand-Bornand on St Bartholomew's day. Later, on 7 September, 32 collaborators were judged in Annemasse, to the north-west of the department, and 18 executed, some of whom were miliciens. A further seven people were shot on 5 October after court martials in Annecy. In all, 102 people were legally executed in the department after the liberation.

The judicial purge took other forms as well. The court of justice for Haute-Savoie, which sat from November 1944 to 1945, tried 151 people of whom 43 were absent. Although many of those not present were sentenced to death, only one death sentence was pronounced when the defendant was present. This was against the former head of the GMR 'Jarez' who was seized by members of the resistance after sentence had been passed. His body found in the river Arve. The civic chamber also dealt with cases against suspected collaborators. Of the 196 people who were judged by the court, only 137 were found guilty. After June 1945, further cases were tried in Chambéry.

The administration was also purged after demands from résistants that those implicated in the implementation of Vichy policy should be punished. In December, the Prefect wrote, 'la population réclame une épuration plus rapide et insiste pour que des sanctions exemplaires soient infligées aux hauts fonctionnaires de Vichy qui sont encore à leur poste.' Of the 56 civil servants sanctioned by the courts during 1944, 31 belonged to the police, while nine were teachers, and eight were members of the post and telecommunications service.

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2 For a detailed description of events leading up to the executions, see: Lottman, H., L'Epuration: 1943-1953, Paris, 1986, p.196-203. For a more emotional account of events see: 'Le Livre Noir de l'Epuration', in Lectures Françaises, Paris, 1964, p.37-39. It was hardly surprising that of the 97 miliciens judged at Grand Bornand between 23 and 24 August 1944, 86 were from Haute-Savoie (88.6 per cent), and 56 were peasants (57.7 per cent) Figures compiled by Pierre Mouthon, correspondant départemental de l'Institut d'Histoire du Temps Présent.

3 This represented a conviction rate of 69.9 per cent compared with 86.7 per cent for the court of justice and 72.6 per cent for court martials. Pierre Mouthon has established that in those cases where professions are traceable, 55 per cent of those found guilty were artisans, commerçants or peasants.

4 For all cases concerning Haute-Savoie see Table 5.


6 The police became the main target of much of the purge of the administration. The local police and gendarmerie were mistrusted by the liberation authorities. Both were disarmed during the liberation, and the gendarmerie confined to barracks. Minutes of meeting of the CDL, in private archives of Mr. Galliot, 19 August 1944. Both Guidollet and Lambroschini complained about the failure of the gendarmerie to volunteer to fight against the Germans.
Post-liberation Haute-Savoie: the judicial purge

Customs officials were also investigated. By May 1945, of the 33 cases further cases against civil servants for their activities during the war, 28 were former customs officers.\(^7\)

THE JUDICIAL PURGE IN HAUTE-SAVOIE\(^8\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Court Martial</th>
<th>Military Tribunal</th>
<th>Courts of Justice</th>
<th>Civic Chambers</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Death sentence executed</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death sentence not executed</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard labour and solitary confinement</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prison</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confiscation of goods</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National degradation</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total found guilty</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquitted</td>
<td>38(^9)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5

\(^7\) Although not civil servants, mayors and their deputies were also investigated and on occasions dismissed. About 35 municipalities were replaced between September and mid-October 1944. As will be demonstrated, such dismissals were not always popular at communal level.

\(^8\) Information kindly supplied by Pierre Mouthon, departmental correspondent of the IHTP.

\(^9\) Approximate figure only.
Post-liberation Haute-Savoie: the judicial purge

Most of those sanctioned were not particularly significant members of the administration. However, not all members of the higher echelons of the administration escaped untouched. The former Prefect of Haute-Savoie, Paul Marion, was arrested and tried, as was Colonel Lelong, the officer in charge of the state of siege in the department during the spring of 1944. At least two former sous-préfets based in St. Julien and Thonon were also investigated or arrested late in 1944.10

Unsurprisingly, there were also calls from some sections of the community - and particularly those in the towns - for a purge of factory-owners, shop-keepers, hoteliers, restauranteurs, wholesalers and intermediaries who appeared to have particularly profited from the occupation and black market. The CDL launched itself energetically into the hunt for those who had excessively profited from the war. After some research, it imposed fines totalling 1,000,000 francs on 52 industrial and commercial enterprises in the department which were deemed to have fallen into this category.11 By 7 March 1946, 628 people had been investigated for having made illicit profits during the war. By that date, the courts had confiscated 69,959,000 francs and imposed a further 18,915,000 francs worth of fines.12

Such measures created mixed emotions in the population. Everybody agreed that a purge should take place. The question was who should be purged and how. The administration quickly realised that it did not have the infrastructure in place necessary to handle the flood of accusations and counter-accusations that were addressed to the authorities as the department took advantage of its freedom to turn against itself. Many of the arrests and investigations were said to be arbitrary or motivated by personal vendetta. The Renseignements Généraux commented that in the weeks immediately after the liberation,

De nombreux abus dans les méthodes de répression des délits de collaboration commencèrent à inquiéter certains milieux: 'Collaboration' devint pour beaucoup une étiquette sous laquelle se cachaient vengeances personnelles ou sectarisme étroit. Dans les mêmes milieux, en outre, naquit la crainte de désordres qui


11 According to Pierre Mouton, the departmental correspondent of the Comité d'Histoire de la Deuxième Guerre Mondiale, these fines were later declared illegal by Yves Farge, the Commissaire de la République at Lyon.

12 All information on the purge kindly offered by M. Pierre Mouton, departmental correspondent of the Comité d'Histoire de la Deuxième Guerre Mondiale.

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At times, even the judicial purge appeared to be out of control. While many appeared to have the right to arrest, few seemed to have the responsibility to provide people with their release. In all, about 1,500 people were touched by the purge in the department and it took a considerable time for the authorities to handle these numbers or rectify mistakes. The commission d'épuration was made up of only four inspectors and three assistants and simply did not have the means to deal with the number of cases presented to it. At a meeting of the CDL in September, the Prefect complained that at Montluc, in Lyon, where many prisoners from Haute-Savoie had been sent, there were 900 detainees and nobody knew why 700 of them were imprisoned. The situation in the department itself was little better. The Prefect complained that some people had been kept in prison in Chamonix for two months without knowing why.

The authorities were aware of the growing hostility to their increasingly inept attempts to find and punish those who they claimed had betrayed France during the occupation. In an editorial during December, headlined


14 One delegate of the CDL complained, 'Nous avons l'impression qu'il n'y a pas de responsables bien définis et cela sert à créer de la perturbation.' Minutes of meeting of the CDL, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 279, 14 November 1944.

15 Representing about 0.55 per cent of the total population. For figures on the purge see Pierre Mouton. In 1944 the population of Haute-Savoie was 273,000. See reports of Ravitaillement Général, Annecy, A.D., 808 W 4.

16 Minutes of meeting of the CDL, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 279, 14 November 1944.

17 Minutes of meeting of the CDL, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 279, 29 September 1944.

18 By the end of December, the Prefect reported that 101 people had been condemned to death by court martial, 16 had been condemned to prison sentences or hard labour by the courts, 28 were interned, 30 were under home arrest and 17 had been expelled from France, while 207 people had provisionally been set free, and 451 released without charge. Prefect's report, Paris, A.N., Flc III 1226, 16 December 1944; 31 December 1944.

19 Minutes of meeting of the CDL, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 279, 7 November 1944.

20 Metral, a delegate on the CDL complained on 14 November 1944, 'Nous sommes d'accord que l'épuration est trop lente à se faire, mais nous avons un gouvernement qui est l'expression de la Résistance Française, c'est donc à lui que nous faisons appel pour qu'il prenne les mesures urgentes qui s'imposent en matière d'épuration: civiles, militaires et administratives.' Minutes of meeting of the CDL, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 279, 14 November 1944.
Post-liberation Haute-Savoie: the judicial purge

'Gangsterisme', the Républicain Savoyard appealed to the Prefect and the CDL for the liberation authorities to put their own house in order. It asked,

Sommes-nous biens certains, quand nous faisons notre examen de conscience, que les Allemands, en quittant notre sol, aient emporté avec eux tout leur infernal bagage? ... Allons-nous, comme les nazis, enfermer un peuple de prisonniers dans les gêoles et les camps de concentration? Allons-nous établir un régime de suspects?21

In November, the Prefect admitted that the purge was the subject of considerable criticisms from the public. He explained that this was for two main reasons. Firstly, that there was too much purge and secondly that there was too little.22 He continued, 'Dire que l'épuration s'en fait trop c'est une erreur, il est plus juste de dire qu'elle fait mal... On a procédé au début à énormément d'arrestations. Trop souvent on a arrêté sans motifs.' Even the CDL admitted that it had made mistakes. An article in its official organ, Libération, which denounced ridiculous accusations being taken seriously, was headlined, 'Epuration, oui, calomnie, non.'

21 2 December 1944.

22 Minutes of meeting of the CDL, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 279, 7 November 1944.
CHAPTER 31: THE LIBERATION: LAW AND ORDER AND THE NON-JUDICIAL PURGE

However, if the official judicial purge was at times criticised by Haut-Savoyards, the extra-judicial purge was even less popular. Indeed, much of the local population quickly became alienated by the behaviour of the résistants in general, and their handling of the purge in particular. The main problem was that the series of murders which had become a familiar pattern in the department during Vichy did not end at the liberation. After 19 August, about 37 people were killed in the department extra-judicially. 23

Admittedly, many of the people killed by members of resistance movements were people who had taken part in actions against the resistance movements or had been members of the PPF or similar right-wing organisations. 24 Not all of these attacks were carried out by the communist-led FTP. Some were the work of the more conservative AS. The murders on 16 November 1944 of Charles Marion, the former Prefect of Haute-Savoie under Vichy, and Colonel Lelong, the man responsible for the state of siege during the spring of 1944, were both carried out by the AS. 25

However, although the conservative AS was responsible for a number of murders after the liberation, most appeared to be politically motivated, committed by the members of the Communist-led FTP. The series of threats and attacks directed towards Catholic parish clergy during the occupation continued after the liberation, causing considerable anger in catholic and conservative circles. In November and December 1944, three curés were killed in the department, 26 including a 68-year old priest from Cercier (St. Julien) who was kidnapped and found almost naked, drowned in a river. Three others found it expedient to flee the department after

23 For the number killed after the liberation, see the work of Pierre Mouthon. According to Mouthon, 337 people were killed in the extra-judicial purge between 1943 and 1947. When taken with the 101 people shot as part of the judicial purge this means that 438 people were killed as part of the purge - a figure representing 0.16 per cent of the total population. The 80-odd Axis troops executed on 2 September at Vieugy-Sacconges and Habère-Lullin have not been included in the total.

24 According to Pierre Mouthon, 22 of the 37 killed after the liberation fell into these two categories, representing 59.4 per cent. Members of the Italian community were also targeted because many were thought to have collaborated with the Italian authorities during the occupation. Prefect’s report, A.N., Fic III 1226, 31 January 1945.

25 During his trial, no case had been found against Marion, and Lelong had had his death sentence suspended while he appealed. The Renseignements Généraux argued that although there were few who opposed the execution of Lelong, a number of people believed that the former Prefect did not merit the same fate. Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 228, 18 November 1944.

26 They were the priests at Fessy (St. Julien), Chavanod (Annecy), and Cercier (St. Julien). The Prefect reported that all three were reputed to have encouraged people to join the Milice. Seven miliciens from Cercier who had been encouraged to join the organisation by the priest were shot at the liberation, for example. Prefect’s report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 85, 17 January 1945.
CHAPTER 31: THE LIBERATION: LAW AND ORDER AND THE NON-JUDICIAL PURGE

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receiving threats. The hunt for the curé of Massogny (Thonon), who had been a member of the Milice, involved the FFI searching the all of the rooms of the nuns at the convent in the village - an incident which resulted in a stinging letter from the Bishop of Annecy addressed to the Prefect. These incidents were not the work of local Haut-Savoysards: the five men involved in the killing of the priest at Chavanod (Annecy), for example, were all from outside the department and included an Italian. Moreover, although many of the incidents were directed towards priests who had had links with the Milice, some attacks appeared to be politically motivated. Abbé D., a curé in Annemasse, was forced to flee his parish for Switzerland, less than ten days after he had preached a sermon on 10 December 1944, telling women to register their vote for the coming elections so they could vote against the Left. Other attacks appeared to be motivated for more personal reasons: General Paul Doyen, a member of the CDL, had little doubt about the motive for threats against priests when he complained,

Il s'agit des exécutions clandestine qui suscitent une grande émotion parmi la population. Ces exécutions nous font le plus grand tort... Beaucoup de curés sont l'objet de menaces. Ces menaces ne semblent pas provenir de faits se rapportant à la collaboration. Ces menaces proviennent de vengeance personnelles... Il y a une espèce de terreur qui commence à régner. Il faut dire les choses comme elles sont.

The murders and personal attacks after the liberation were accompanied by increasing lawlessness as the department was hit by a wave of robberies and bombings. The robberies often took the form of armed requisitioning by the FFI. Around La Roche-sur-Foron, the situation became so bad that in October, the

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27 They were the curés of Brenthonne (Thonon), Etercy (Annecy) and Massongy (Thonon). Prefect’s report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 85, 17 January 1945.

28 Letter to Bishop of Annecy to the Prefect, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 85, 18 November 1944.


31 Minutes of meeting of the CDL, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 279, 12 December 1944. Doyen went on to describe the case of the curé who had been threatened because his sister had married a member of the milice. Priests were not the only target. The population was also shocked by attacks on church property. On 5 November 1944, members of the FFI were reported to have broken in the door of the church in Arâches (Bonneville), smashed the altar cross, stolen the sacramental silver and then mimed a religious procession with it. The bishop of Annecy subsequently complained about attacks on the Church in a public letter read from every pulpit in the diocese and which was later published in the Revue du Diocèse d’Annecy.

32 General Doyen gave the example of one widow who had been requisitioned four times by armed groups. Minutes of CDL, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 279, 7 September 1944.
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complete Comité Local de Libération for the canton, including the president, resigned over the issue.\(^{33}\) Between 16 January and 14 February, there were eight bomb attacks in the department, for the most part targeted at presumed collaborators.\(^{34}\)

The population, which had already been traumatised by pre-liberation violence, and which half-expected imminent civil war, did not appreciate the growing lawlessness that accompanied the épuration after the liberation. As early as 4 November 1944, the Républicain Savoyard, one of the post-liberation newspapers, complained in an article entitled 'Gangsterisme!'

![Image](https://i.imgur.com/5E2.jpg)

_Qué de sombres nuages ont passé sur la belle aurore du 19 août?_ _Qué de désillusions chez les patriotes avides de vivre enfin dans la légalité et l'ordre d'un vrai régime républicain!_

The administration was not unaware of the problem of lawlessness, nor of the effect that it might have on the prestige of the resistance, particularly in agricultural communities. In December, one member of the CDL admitted, 'Les journaux oublient également facilement que la Résistance n'est pas toujours bien jugée, que pour beaucoup des gens, en particulier dans le monde paysan, la Résistance apparaît comme une maffia.'\(^{35}\) At a meeting of the CDL, its president, Georges Guidollet, admitted that unfortunate incidents were beginning to assume substantial proportions in the department. General Doyen was more blunt: 'Si nous ne réagissons pas contre cet état d'esprit nous allons à une catastrophe.'\(^{36}\) The Renseignements Généraux confirmed that the department was heading towards a crisis as the security situation deteriorated further. One of their reports argued,

_...La population souhaite que les pouvoirs publics prennent des mesures radicales pour découvrir et punir les auteurs de ces attentats qui semblent assouvir souvent des vengeances personnelles en prétexitant des lenteurs de l'épuration._\(^{37}\)

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\(^{33}\) Minutes of CDL, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 279, 13 October 1944.


\(^{35}\) Minutes of CDL, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 279, 9 December 1944.

\(^{36}\) Minutes of CDL, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 279, 14 November 1944.

\(^{37}\) Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 228, 6 December 1944.
The authorities struggled for control of the department. A curfew was introduced in Thonon during November and the following month there was a series of arrests in both Thonon and Evian. However, the results were not encouraging. When de Gaulle visited the department in early November, the Renseignements Généraux commented that the visit had not had the success that it ought to have had because of the charged atmosphere.

Although the prefecture attempted to play down the disorder in the department and denied that Haute-Savoie was in a state of anarchy, the government in Paris became increasingly concerned about the situation in the region. On 9 February, the Minister of the Interior, Adrien Tixier, wrote to the Prefect, complaining about his monthly reports, pointing out that not only were they too brief, but according to these other, military, sources, they were also inaccurate. Tixier argued that these sources had written of 'une sensation de malaise dans votre département.' The picture he painted was grim:

Des bandes irrégulières circulant en auto, échappant à tout contrôle et opérant pour leur compte, se livreraient à des attentats ou à des exécutions. C'est ainsi que, vers la fin de janvier, l'une de ces bandes aurait, à Bonneville, fait sauter un bureau de tabac tenu par de paisibles commerçants. Les populations seraient terrorisées et les gendarmes n'oseraient plus sortir après le coucher du soleil... Les pouvoirs publics seraient dans l'impossibilité d'agir faute de moyens suffisants de coercition. D'aucuns craignent, dans cette atmosphère, que les élections ne fussent l'occasion de scènes dramatiques.

38 Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 228, 6 December 1944.


40 The prefect wrote that despite a few incidents, the peace in the department still existed, although he admitted that the situation could become more difficult during the winter. Prefect's report, Paris, A.N., Fic III 1226, 15 January 1945.

41 Prefect's report, Paris, A.N., Fic III 1226, 15 February. The prefect argued that the attacks were localised and the deeds of small isolated groups which had been disorganised by the arrest of their leaders.

42 Admittedly the Prefect did write, 'Il ne faut pas dissimuler cependant que beaucoup de haines de village, réveiller par les événements politiques, risquent de provoquer encore quelques excès qu'il est difficile de prévenir, étant donné la mentalité peu communicatrice des habitants de campagnes, et la précarité des moyens de police disponibles.' Prefect's report, Paris, A.N., Fic III 1226, 31 December 1944.

Although the Prefect argued this report was false and tendacious,\(^4^4\) the minister decided to travel to Annecy personally to see the situation himself.\(^4^5\)

The main problem facing the Prefect was that the FFI was completely out of his control. In early 1945, there were still more than 2,000 FFI troops in the department, many of whom were far from well-ordered.\(^4^6\) The FFI's indiscipline was partly caused by the failure of the AS and FTP to unite before the liberation.\(^4^7\) As the various pre-liberation groups were integrated into the FFI, the chain of command was not always clear. A member of the CDL from Bonneville asked in September who was in charge of the FFI in the town because there appeared to be five commandants in the town.\(^4^8\) The Prefect admitted in December that the division between the FTP and FFI had caused difficulties, but claimed,

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\text{La réorganisation des FFI a apporté un apaisement très sensible. C'est toujours de ce côté que doit cependant se porter plus particulièrement notre attention pour éviter des abus ou des illégalités qui risqueraient d'entraîner des critiques à l'égard des pouvoirs publics et du Gouvernement.}^{4^9}
\]

The Prefect did not believe that the robberies, at least, were motivated for political reasons. He argued rather that they were simply banditry. At a meeting of the CDL he explained that some of those arrested had been carrying millions of francs.\(^5^0\) Some had been members of the resistance before the liberation,\(^5^1\) and were

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\(^4^5\) The description of the department in the report compiled by the prefect after the visit from the minister was rather different from previous ones. The first section, which dealt with public opinion in the department, increased from a single side to five sides. Prefect's report, A.N., Flc III 1226, 14 February 1945.

\(^4^6\) The Renseignements Généraux noted, 'La population constate avec regret que de nombreux FFI font preuve d'indiscipline et de mauvaise tenue.' Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 228, 13 December 1944.

\(^4^7\) On 27 August, Rosenthal radioed to London, explaining that the political situation between the FFI and FTP was 'heavy', and that the best solution would be the quick creation of a united combatant force. Rosenthal's debriefing, RF section history in OSS/London, Special Operations Branch and Secret Intelligence branch war diaries, microfilm collection published by University Publications of America, Frederick, Maryland, p.1402.

\(^4^8\) Minutes of CDL, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 279, 4 September 1944.


\(^5^0\) Minutes of CDL, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 279, 30 January 1944. Hardly surprisingly, many of the FFI were also involved in the black market. Minutes of CDL, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 279, 13 October 1944.

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unused to military discipline, while others had joined up during or after the liberation. The Prefect admitted that a number of undesirable types had joined the FFI during this period. He believed that most of those responsible for attacks had not been in the resistance: 'Je crois que la plupart des "types" importants de ces organisations n'ont pas fait de résistance. Il est cependant incontestable que l'on a recruté après la libération un tas de gens,' he said.52

A further problem faced by the Prefect in trying to control the resistance forces was the Prévôté FFI, a body of military police formed to control the FFI, but which was as indisciplined as the troops it was supposed to monitor.53 René Dépollier, a local printer, noted in his diary, 'Les Prévôts ont interpellié insollemment les gens et leur attitude a provoqué des protestations... Ces incidents... ont provoqué une malaise.'54 When the Prefect described his problems, he wrote that he could not differentiate between the Prévôté and the FFI.55

51 At the second meeting of the CDL on 20 August 1944, one of the members from Thonon had complained of the FFI, 'Il y a des éléments très intéressants et des éléments épouvantables qu'il faut éliminer. Exemple de l'un d'eux qui a tué à Thonon il y a deux jours son beau père et sa belle-mère.' Minutes of CDL, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 279, 20 August 1944.

52 Minutes of CDL, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 279, 30 January 1945. Massive recruiting by the FFI after the liberation was common-place. At Marseille, for example, the FFI numbered about 1,600 men at the liberation. Within two weeks it had grown to about 4,500, and then fallen to 3,000 as all the original members returned to their normal pursuits, leaving 'the undesirable members as the great bulk of the organisation.' See: Coles, H.R. and Weinberg H.K., Civil Affairs: soldiers become governors, Washington, 1964, p.770. According to the Renseignements Généraux, the worst examples in Haute-Savoie were the Batallion de Mont-Blanc and the Batallion de Chamonix, which 'donnent l'impression de vivre dans une civilité noire.' Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 228, 31 January 1945. The Prefect argued that the officers were not keeping their troops, which were stationed at Chamonix, in control. Indiscipline was such that men were able to visit the town while armed without permission and return unpunished. He suggested the best way of dealing with the situation was to amalgamate the battalion into the army of the Alps, but admitted that if this occurred, many members of the battalion would desert. He added that the officers had so little authority that he believed they would be unable to disarm the deserters. Prefect's report, Paris, A.N., Fie III 1226, 14 February 1945.

53 In one report, the Prefect referred to an incident in which an officer of the Prévôté had led his men in an attack against the gendarmerie.

54 Diary of René Dépollier, volume 6, Annecy, A.D., 1 mi 162, 13 November 1944.

55 The prefect wrote that it was always the FFI or the Prévôté FFI 'qu'appartiennent des éléments troubles, susceptibles de créer des désordres. Deux graves attentats commis le 9 janvier, (enlèvement du commandant V...) et le 12 janvier (enlèvement à l'Hôtel Pax à Annemasse du détenu R...) ont été perpétrés par des Prévôts.' Prefect's report, Paris, A.N., Fie III 1226, 31 January 1945.

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The Prefect was further hamstrung because of the paucity of the resources at his disposal. The gendarmerie was badly under-strength: many of the 320-odd gendarmes in Annecy were being investigated by the comité d'épuration for their activities during the occupation and had been disarmed at the liberation. Even when they had weapons, the gendarmes were often less well equipped than the maquisards they were trying to disarm. Moreover, the former résistants often had little respect for the gendarmerie and proved quite content to pull off heists similar to those during the occupation.

Eventually, in December 1944, FFI from the department of the Loire were sent to the department to replace the Haut-Savoyard formations. This replacement was not achieved without difficulty: there were fights between the two groups. The local FFI Prévôt was also moved out of the department and permanently replaced by more disciplined platoons from Lyon. A number of the local Prévôt resigned in preference to moving. In addition, a special police team was set up specifically to deal with the FFI Prévôt. In February, extra reinforcements were dispatched following a request from the Prefect. These soon moved into action, arresting about 30 people around Annecy. Operations in the arrondissements of Bonneville and Thonon were also undertaken.

By the spring of 1945, the authorities had regained control of the department. In the meantime, the former resistance members, through their behaviour, had lost much of the limited support they had enjoyed from the population. The Renseignements Généraux commented,

Personne n'ignore en effet que les FFI du département sont beaucoup mieux nourries que la population civile. Celle-ci se montre jalouse de cette différence de

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56 He wrote, 'Il ne faut pas dissimuler cependant que beaucoup de haines de village, réveillées par les événements politiques, risquent de provoquer encore quelques excès qu'il est difficile de prévenir, étant donné la mentalité peu communicative des habitants des campagnes, et la précarité des moyens de police disponibles.' Prefect's report, Paris, A.N., Flc III 1226, 31 December 1944.

57 Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 228, 5 March 1945. Very few arms were actually recuperated.

58 On night of 10 January, a gendarme was attacked by a group of drunk FFI who were trying to free one of their number who had been arrested. Perfect's report, Paris, A.N., Flc III 1226, 14 February 1945.

59 Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 228, 6 December 1944.


61 Of these 15 belonged to the FFI Prévôt or the compagnie de gardiennage, two were members of the FFI, three were from the army, and 10 were civilians.
traitement que les jeunes gens des FFI ne soient pas incorporés sur place ou cantonnés à proximité de leur domicile. À la lumière de l’expérience constatée depuis la libération, elle se rend compte qu’il est difficile d’obtenir un minimum de discipline de la part des recrues locales, habituées à l’indépendance, à l’intempérance et souvent à la paresse.  

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62 Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 228, 1 December 1944. They were also accused of wasting petrol and fuel. Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 228, 23 January 1945.
IF THE LOCAL authorities, headed by resistance figures, proved unable to provide the population of the department with the security it craved, nor were they able to meet the other main concern of Haut-Savoyards - their material requirements.

Before the liberation, the population had believed that the shortages of food, heating and clothing had been caused by the demands of the German war-economy. Naturally, it concluded that once the Germans had left, those shortages would ease. Initially, this appeared to be the case. As soon as the railway network had been repaired there was an immediate improvement in the food supply as products from North Africa and the United States began to arrive in the department. In addition, Haut-Savoyards were able to take advantage of goods available on the alternative markets after the free distribution of 2,000 francs for each adult in the department.¹

However, within three weeks of the liberation, the economic situation in the department quickly began to deteriorate. The first sign that liberation would not signal an end to the department's problems was the disappearance of products from the market in Annecy. As early as September, shortages of products containing fat such as butter, milk and cheese were reported in the towns.² The black market returned as vigorously as ever. The Renseignements Généraux commented, 'Le marché noir que la libération avait fait subitement disparaître reparaît dans toute son ampleur, rien ne semble intimider les trafiquants.'³

Naturally, as shortages reappeared, so too did inflation. By 8 December, the price of black market butter had reached 500 francs a kilo.⁴ By April, the black market price of butter had reached 600 francs in the arrondissement of Annecy - the same price as before the liberation.⁵ Eggs were also impossible to find on the market, and when they could be found from under the counters of commerçants, prices were said to be scandalous.

¹ It is not clear in the report if it was made to women as well as men. Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 228, 5 January 1945.


³ Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 228, 6 February 1945.

⁴ Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 228, 8 December 1944.

⁵ Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 228, 13 April 1945.
The problem of controlling the local economy in Haute-Savoie faced by the authorities before the liberation was almost identical as that after. Nearly all the conditions necessary for the parallel markets continued to exist after the Germans had been expelled. Government and private demand continued to outstrip supply. The peasants believed, just as they had done before the liberation, that the prices set by the authorities were insufficient, while the consumers in the towns complained that either the products were not available in the market, or that the prices allowed by the authorities to attract the peasants to market were too high. Although the peasants were no longer able to justify their activities on the parallel markets through patriotism, the financial incentives remained valid. The change in government made little difference to most Haut-Savoyard peasants' perceptions of authority. The results were familiar. As early as the end of October, the prefect warned the CDL in Annecy, 'Pour le ravitaillement, je serais en peine de vous dire que cela va mal.' In early December, for the first time since the liberation, the shops were unable to honour ration tickets for meat, butter and cheese. On 5 December 1944, there was no bread in Annemasse. By the first fortnight in January there was, quite simply, nothing in the market at Annecy. People in the town were reported to be complaining they had had more to eat during the occupation.

The liberation authorities in Haute-Savoie were paralysed by the situation facing them which in some respects, was worse than before the liberation because of the breakdown of communications caused by Allied bombing. Admittedly, the liberation of Haute-Savoie had caused little damage in the department itself except in Thônes, which had been bombed, and in the villages of Valleiry and Chevrier (Cantons) where a convoy of Germans had revenged themselves for an ambush. However, communications with the rest of France, despite being reintroduced quickly after the liberation, soon broke down again leaving little contact with other parts of the

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6 The Renseignements Généraux noted, 'Les habitants des villes de la Haute-Savoie ont pris l'habitude, pendant les années de restrictions, d'aller se ravitailler sur place, chez le producteur, et ils continuent de le faire. Les prix des denrées sont en général plus élevés qu'avant la libération.' Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 228, 12 March 1945.

7 As late as 5 March 1946, the Renseignements Généraux noted that the peasants in the Bonneville area still refused to sell milk at the price fixed by the government - 7.20 francs - and continued to sell at a black market price at least 70 centimes more. Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 228 (green folder), 3 March 1946.

8 Minutes of CDL d'Annecy, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 279, 31 October 1944.

9 Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 228, 6 December 1944.


country. By 27 January 1945, almost all trains had been cancelled\textsuperscript{12} and were only to start again in the third week in March.\textsuperscript{13}

Without the possibility of supplying the department from outside, the administration was forced to fall back on the local peasants. The fonctionnaires were faced with almost identical problems to their predecessors under Vichy.\textsuperscript{14} Moreover, their problems were compounded by the fact local municipalities were made up, for the most part, of former résistants who had taken power at the liberation. In many rural areas, these were not the popular figures and had little chance of mobilising the agricultural population. The Renseignements Généraux commented,

Les paysans continuent à être convaincus qu'ils sont les maitres de la situation, ils n'ont pas manqué et ne manquent pas de respecter les anciennes consignes de la radio de Londres leur conseillant de ne rien livrer au ravitaillement. Elles servaient à merveille leurs intérêts, aussi ne songent-ils à prendre une autre attitude maintenant que l'occupant a été chassé.\textsuperscript{15}

Unable to win the consent of much of the rural population, the authorities certainly did not have the means to deal with the deteriorating economic situation by coercion. The gendarmes who might have helped in the struggle against the parallel markets were mistrusted by the resistance veterans, while the SCT, which had played such an important role against the alternative markets before the liberation, also remained discredited. Moreover, the prefecture recognised that the administration was not really in a position to fight against a practice in which its members were often involved. The Renseignements Généraux commented,

Les fonctionnaires, de leur côté, s'incliner devant les paysans s'ils veulent trouver leur nourriture et celle de leur famille. Il en est ainsi notamment dans les campagnes où l'argent de l'Administration est obligé de passer par l'intermédiaire de plusieurs personnes avant de se trouver à se loger, à se chauffer, à se ravitailler etc. Il est évident que ces services le rendent débiteur et l'obligeant. Son service ne peut qu'en souffrir.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{12} Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 228, 27 January 1945.

\textsuperscript{13} Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 228, 21 March 1945.

\textsuperscript{14} Of course, most of them were the same people.

\textsuperscript{15} Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 228, 2 February 1945.

\textsuperscript{16} Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 228, 2 February 1945.
Given these difficulties, the authorities did their best to crack down on the problem of parallel markets. In February, the Prefect attacked the problem of demand by sending all tourists in the department home.\textsuperscript{17} He also attempted to limit the supply of black market produce. In a monthly report to Paris, he pointed out that there had already been six convictions for black market activities for sentences ranging from one to six months. In addition, three shops involved in black market activities had been shut and four lorries allegedly used for clandestine purposes had also been requisitioned.\textsuperscript{18}

However, such government measures only scratched at the surface of what had become a profound and deeply rooted aspect of French society in the mid-1940s. The prefect, the administration and even the local authorities admitted they were unable to defeat the problem. In a speech at Thonon on 1 March 1945, the Prefect admitted, 'en matière de ravitaillement, la situation est catastrophique - il ne faut pas avoir peur de le dire.\textsuperscript{19} The inability of the CDL and its local committees to control the black market emphasised their lack of power. The Renseignements Généraux described the reaction of the CLL in Thonon to its failure to tackle the black market successfully:

\begin{quote}
Le CDL [sic] paraît traverser une crise intérieure sérieuse: des dissensions se sont fait jour entre certains de ses membres... Dans un avis paru dans la presse, le CDL de Thonon constate lui-même son impuissance: 'Nous sommes sans prise, dit-il, sur le marché noir qui sévit à nouveau et sur les transports frauduleux. Ne disposant d'aucun moyen de répression, d'aucune pouvoir de décision, ni de contrôle, nous tenons à décliner toute responsabilité. Nous ne pouvons plus, dit-il, que signaler les imperfections et les abus, sans pouvoir les réprimer ni les supprimer.' On ne peut être plus formel.\textsuperscript{20}
\end{quote}

Like the Vichy administration, the post-liberation authorities proved incapable of controlling the problem of the alternative markets and were forced to rely on social measures to help the less privileged sections of Haut-Savoyard society. As early as 3 December 1944, soup kitchens were being set up in the department.\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{17} No further stays by non-residents were allowed, unless they could justify their continued stay for medical or family reasons. Prefect’s report, Paris, A.N., Fie III 1226, 14 February 1945.

\textsuperscript{18} Prefect’s report, Paris, A.N., Fie III 1226, 14 February 1945.

\textsuperscript{19} Speech of prefect reported in \textit{La Républicain Savoyarde}, 3 March 1945. Curiously, he went on to argue that the shortages were the fault of the Germans who had destroyed the economy.

\textsuperscript{20} Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 228, 16 March 1945.

\textsuperscript{21} \textit{Le Républicain Savoyard}, 3 December 1944.
The impact of the lack of food in many Haut-Savoyard towns after the liberation was exacerbated by a cruel shortage of fuel during the particularly harsh winter of 1944-45. Snow had begun falling in Annecy as early as 10 November, and even at the onset of winter supplies of fuel appeared limited. Without adequate labour, the authorities were virtually impotent before the crisis. Official supplies were parsimonious, although, as usual, quantities of wood could be found on alternative markets - for those who had the money to pay. In January, the prefect reckoned a 'stère' on the black market cost between 900 and 1,000 francs, a price well beyond anything a worker could afford. The population was not only hungry, it was also cold.

The effect on the population's health of the authorities' failure either to motivate the peasants and or to ensure adequate supplies of food and heating from outside Haute-Savoie was extremely serious. There was a sharp deterioration in adult mortality from .01376 per 100,000 in 1943 to .01534 in 1944. The impact on infant mortality was delayed by about a year, but nevertheless soared from 6.5 deaths per thousand births in 1944 to 9.6 the following year. As usual, the burden of hunger and cold fell unevenly within the department. For those with contacts or relations in the countryside, life was more or less bearable. But for those who had little mobility, few contacts in the country and limited resources, the situation soon became difficult. As usual, it was institutions such as sanatoria which suffered the most. At a meeting of the CDL in Annecy in October, a delegate complained that the sanatoria near Chamonix were already in a serious position:

La situation du Plateau d'Assy et Passy est tragique. Il y a 7,400 habitants dont il est impossible d'assurer la nourriture sur place, la campagne ne produit rien. Pour les denrees de base telles que le lait, le beurre, la viande, il faut un approvisionnement exterieur,' declare le Chef de Cabinet [du Prefet].

The authorities were well aware of the likely political consequences of their failure to feed a significant proportion of the population adequately. Before the liberation, the Germans could be blamed for shortages. Commandant Valentin explained the incomprehension of the population after the liberation: "Il y avait les Allemands dans le departement à ce moment-là, on disait aux gens: 'les Allemands prennent tout," mais à présent ce n'est plus cela, et les gens ne comprennent pas." As early as January, the Renseignements

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22 One cubic metre of firewood.


24 See table 3 and 4.

25 Minutes of CDL d'Annecy, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 279, 31 October 1944.

26 Minutes of meeting of the CDL, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 279, 28 November 1944.
Généraux reported that prices had reached such a point that there was a possibility of strikes in the department. The winter was clearly going to be a difficult one. On 15 January, the Prefect wrote,

Malgré quelques incidents signalés en leur temps, l’apaisement indiqué dans nos précédents rapports est encore très réel dans le département. Il n’est pas exsatif, cependant, de prévoir à de nombreux indices, qu’une période plus difficile pourrait s’ouvrir et donner lieu peut-être à des manifestations dont il est encore impossible de prévoir le caractère.

He concluded, 'Cette situation, crée une atmosphère favorable aux critiques, aux mécontentements, et aux solutions excessives.' The Renseignements Généraux agreed that the situation in the department was becoming extremely difficult, writing in February, 'Si une amélioration substantielle ne survient pas rapidement, il n’est pas exagéré de s’attendre à des manifestations sur la voie publique, voire même à des troubles plus graves encore.'

Those fears of demonstrations were soon realised. In Passy, where many of the badly-hit sanatoria were located, there was a demonstration of 600 people on 24 March shouting 'A bas Ramadier [the Minister of Food], mort aux affameurs.' There were also demonstrations in Annecy and Annemasse because of shortages of butter, meat and sugar. The targets of the demonstrators were the administrators in charge of the food supply, the Swiss who were receiving goods across the border, and the commerçants and middle men who were supposed to be earning millions of francs from sales of butter and sugar designated for children and old men. They called for the resignation of Paul Ramadier, a purge of the administration and the confiscation of the assets of those who were profiteering from the situation. Not surprisingly, the CDL, which was closely identified with the resistance movements and had taken on responsibility for the food supply, was also blamed for shortages. Its popularity, already strained by its failure to control wayward members of the resistance, was also affected by its inability to feed the department. The Renseignements Généraux wrote, 'En ce qui

33 Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 228, 6 December 1944.
concerne les CDL, leur membres sont loin d'être tous estimés par le public, aussi est-il peu probable que ces organismes puissent jouer un rôle aussi important qu'ils se le proposaient à leur origine.\textsuperscript{34}

\textsuperscript{34} Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 228, 5 March 1945.
CHAPTER 33: POST-LIBERATION POLITICS AND RESISTANCE

ALMOST EVERY manifestation of the resistance after the liberation antagonised the local population. At a local level, FFI troops on the ground were indisciplined, disorderly and probably responsible for a series of bombings and murders in the department. At departmental level, the CDL was blamed for its inability to control the more wayward members of those FFI and its impotence in handling the economic problems in the department after August 1944.

There was one final aspect of post-liberation resistance activities that alienated the population - the interference of the cantonal Comités Locaux de Libération (CLLs) in the running of the municipalities. This interference, most apparent in the changes the CLLs made in the composition of the municipal councils after the liberation, was more radical than any instituted by Vichy. Between the Armistice and 1944 about 65 (20 per cent) of mayors in the department were changed, either deliberately by the administration or through resignations, not all of which will have been motivated by political reasons. Moreover of those 65 communes, 18 came under the category of towns with a population over 2,000 inhabitants which had to have their regimes changed according to a law on municipalities passed on 16 November 1940. The contrast between this relative stability and the post-liberation situation was marked. Between the liberation on 19 August 1944 and 1 February 1945, there was a veritable revolution imposed on the municipalities, with 165 of the 315 (52.4 per cent) communes in the department being given new municipal authorities. Only 123 mayors (39 per cent) were allowed to stay in place. All of the mayors installed by Vichy were dismissed except that of La Clusaz (Thônes). These changes represented a far more radical upheaval in the municipalities than anything envisaged or implemented by Vichy.

It was not simply the change of municipal councillors that antagonised the population. Rather, it was the identity of their replacements that caused more friction. The replacements were chosen by the presidents of the CLLS. Since the CLLs had been created in clandestinity, it was inevitable that they seldom reflected local politics. Of this, the resistance was well aware: one member of the CDL admitted that, ‘A certains endroits

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1 The CLLs had been set upon a cantonal basis by the resistance movements during the occupation. Their responsibilities had always been rather vague, but one of their duties was to determine the character of the municipal councils in each commune.

2 In all, 23 of those replaced in 1940 were reinstated. This represented about a third of those dismissed by Vichy. In February, four communes were still being run by a délégation spéciale. Hand-written note by the Prefect, Annecy, A.D., 3 W 39, February 1945.

3 The sous-préfet de Thonon pointed this out to the prefect. Report of sous-préfet de Thonon, Annecy, A.D., 3 W 39, 15 November 1944.
Post-liberation politics and resistance

le Comité [local de libération] ne représente absolument pas la population.\(^4\) However, despite the unrepresentative nature of the membership of the CLLs, they nevertheless frequently tried to impose their own candidates on the conseils municipaux.\(^5\) All four sous-préfets in the department agreed that such candidates were not always selected in the most objective of manners.\(^6\)

The prefect admitted,

>> Dans certains cantons, cependant, j'ai dû constater avec regret que le Comité de Libération s'était laissé influencer par des mobiles périphériques de politique partisane, pour introduire sous le couvert de la résistance, dans quelques assemblées des hommes ne représentant pas ou plus les tendances de la population. Ces hommes ont vu en la circonstance, avant toute considération d'intérêt général, l'occasion de prendre une revanche et d'imposer leur ambition personnelle à une opinion, sachant que celle-ci les rejeterait dès qu'elle aurait le moyen de s'exprimer par la consultation populaire.\(^7\)

The prefect explained that the installation of many new members of the municipal councils had caused complaints, although they had been muted by the announcement that municipal elections would take place in February the following year.\(^8\) Nevertheless, the problem of insensitive choices of councillors by the former members of the resistance was sufficiently serious that, on occasion, the sous-préfets were forced to intervene.

The sous-préfets for Thonon and St. Julien, both felt obliged to take action against municipalities installed by

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\(^4\) Which was in itself an admission that the resistance did not always have the support of the local population. Minutes of CDL, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 279, 21 February 1945.

\(^5\) Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 228, 6 December 1944.

\(^6\) The sous-préfet de Thonon argued that the CLLs did not always have enough time to gather the necessary information when making their choices. He explained that in some cases he had had to intervene: 'Il valait mieux agir ainsi, contrairement aux principes républicains, plutôt que de conserver certaines nouvelles assemblées qui auraient discrédité la Résistance.' Report of sous-préfet de Thonon, Annecy, A.D., 3 W 39, 15 November 1944.

\(^7\) Prefect's report, Annecy, A.D., 3 W 39, 13 November 1944. Many disagreements between the population and the new councillors reflected traditional village hatreds. For example, during the spring of 1945, the town of Boëge was split by a bitter power struggle between the mayor, a radical-socialist, and the head of the CLL, a grocer who had been in the resistance. The Renseignements Généraux noted that the CLL, which was made up of members of the resistance, did not really enjoy the community's support. Some of the CLL members had belonged to the FTP during the occupation and had taken part in 'certaines actes de pillage' which had done little to endear them to the population. Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 3 W 50 29 March 1945.

\(^8\) Prefect's report, Annecy, A.D., 3 W 39, 13 November 1944.
HAUTE-SAVOIE: geographical distribution of municipal councils changed by the resistance, August 1944-February 1945

Legend:
- 0–25%
- 26–49%
- 50–59%
- 60–74%
- 75–100%
Post-liberation politics and resistance

the resistance authorities in preference to former mayors and municipal councillors who continued to wield considerable influence over the part of the population.9

Haut-Savoyards also opposed many of the appointments because of their political nature. Many of the men appointed by the CLLs were far further to the left than either their Third Republic predecessors or what the population wanted. Before the war, the department had been one of the few departments to swing to the right during the 1936 elections. In the elections during October of the following year,10 the right had done particularly well in Haute-Savoie winning about 50 per cent of the votes. The Radicaux-Socialistes had gained about 25 per cent, the SFIO11 about 17 per cent and the PCF12 approximately 8 per cent.13 Haute-Savoie before the war had not been a left-wing department.

However, despite the conservative pre-war political composition of the department, the councillors put into place by CLLs after the liberation were of a rather different hue. There were far more left-wing councils in Haute-Savoie after the liberation than during the Third Republic. Of the 315 municipal councils, the SFIO controlled 44 communes and the PCF 16. The resistance movements in their own right held 24.14 The

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9 Report of sous-préfet de St. Julien, Annecy, A.D., 3 W 39, 30 October 1944. Admittedly, not all of the interventions were because the resistance had been insensitive. The sous-préfet de Thonon explained to the Prefect that mistakes had been made at Sciez (Thonon) and Péternes (Evian), where what he termed, 'le vrai résistance' had not been consulted and unworthy people had been put on to the council. He also added that he had also felt obliged to intervene at Chens, in the conservative canton of Douvaine, where a number of collaborators had found their way on to the post-liberation municipal council. See report of sous-préfet de Thonon, Annecy, A.D., 3 W 39, 15 November 1944.

10 The Entente Républicain was made up of the Radicaux Indépendants, Union Républicain Démocratique and the Démocrates Populaires.

11 Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière (socialists).

12 Parti Communiste Français: French communist party.

13 The votes cast were: Entente Républicain 27,071; Radicaux-Socialistes 13,926; SFIO 9,012; PCF 4,306. In the last municipal elections before the war, in 1935, the right had won about 35 per cent of the vote and the Radicaux-Socialistes about 60 per cent of the vote. There had been only 10 mayors belonging to the SFIO, and only a single communist mayor. Prefect's report, Annecy, A.D., 3 W 50, 30 April 1945.

14 The Front National and the Mouvement de Libération Nationale.
councils that can be defined as being to the right controlled 100 communes,\textsuperscript{15} while the Radicaux-socialistes held the remaining 129 communes.\textsuperscript{16}

Although there was some accommodation between the CLLs and the local population, there were significant variations in the geographical distribution of the councils' composition. The areas where most of the mayors who were allowed to stay in post can be divided into two types. The first included cantons to the west of the department where the maquisards had not been particularly active, such as the cantons of Alby, Rumilly, Frangy and St Julien; the second comprised of cantons, such as Thônes, where the resistance movements had been well integrated into the local communities and where many mayors had been members of, or supported, the AS.\textsuperscript{17}

In contrast, where the resistance, and in particular the communist-led FTP, had been active amid an often hostile population, there were widespread changes in the composition of the councils. The result was that in some conservative cantons, the SFIO and PCF on occasions dominated the councils. In the canton of Reignier, for example, where all but one mayor was replaced, the PCF and SFIO held sway over 70 per cent of the communes, while at Boëge they controlled 62 per cent. Other cantons where the two left-wing parties did well out of the post-liberation distribution of municipalities included Evian (42 per cent), Annemasse (49 per cent),

\begin{itemize}
  \item The right is defined as the Union Républicain Démocratique, the Démocrates Populaires, the Entente Républicain and the Independent Radicals.
  \item Admittedly, the extent of this swing should not be exaggerated. As many as 127 municipalities remained unchanged after the liberation. And not all of these were left-wing councils: 54 of the mayors who remained in place were Radicaux-Socialistes and 63 belonged to the pre-war right-wing parties. Moreover, many of the new councils could hardly be described as belonging to the far left. The resistance movements in many areas were mindful of the conservative nature of the local population. This meant, for example, that 74 of the 186 newly appointed councils (some 40 per cent) were dominated by Radicaux-Socialistes. They also controlled more than 40 per cent of the councils in more than half the cantons in Haute-Savoie. In Seyssel, again in the conservative west of the department, the Radicaux-Socialistes controlled 90 per cent of the municipal councils. Furthermore, as many as 38 of the newly appointed mayors even belonged to parties that could be defined as being right-wing. These were Union Républicain Démocratique, Entente Républicain, Démocrats Populaires and Independent Radicals. Many of these mayors were in highly conservative communes such as Manigod (Thônes), Morzine (Le Biot) and Chessenaz (Frangy) and the cantons of St. Julien and Annecy-nord. Some of the communes in rural areas were allowed to retain their conservative mayors or had new ones of a similar political persuasion appointed. Many of these were in cantons such as Annecy-nord (where 50 per cent of the post-liberation mayors belonged to pre-war right-wing parties), Faverges (58 per cent), Thônes (80 per cent), Cluses (60 per cent), Taninges (80 per cent), St. Julien (50 per cent) and Le Biot (44 per cent).
  \item The proportion of mayors who stayed at their posts in these cantons was: Alby (50 per cent), Rumilly (55 per cent), Frangy (46 per cent) and St Julien (55 per cent).
  \item At Thônes, the proportion of mayors who stayed in their posts after the liberation was 50 per cent.
\end{itemize}
Post-liberation politics and resistance

Faverges (40 per cent), Bonneville (39 per cent) and the right-wing canton of Douvaine (24 per cent). Although there had clearly been a swing to the left during the occupation - particularly among urban workers - caused by the failure of Vichy to control the power of money, the subsequent exacerbation in class tensions, and the role of the PCF in resistance movements, it was obvious that the appointment of so many left-wing councils exaggerated the scale of this swing.\(^\text{19}\)

The resistance authorities in Haute-Savoie had, then, done little to assuage the pre-liberation hostility of much of the rural population towards the maquisards. They had shown themselves incapable of providing law and order, had demonstrated themselves unable to supply the towns with sufficient quantities of food, clothing and heating while at the same time upsetting the peasants by their efforts to do so. In addition, they had antagonised many of the local elites and a substantial proportion of the population by imposing unpopular municipal councils.

The extent of the resistance movements' unpopularity in Haute-Savoie became more evident as the municipal elections of the spring of 1945 approached. The resistance had, in most areas, been a minority. There was little enthusiasm for these elections,\(^\text{20}\) particularly among Haut-Savoyard peasants. The Renseignements Généraux commented,

\textit{Cette question ne semble pas préoccuper beaucoup les Haut-Savoyards, si ce n'est ceux qui ont un intérêt quelconque à la chose. C'est du moins l'opinion des}

\(^{19}\) One further indication of the fundamental alterations made by the CLLs in the municipalities was the change in the age structure of many councils. The prefecture believed that many of the new mayors were a good deal younger than the previous incumbents. If the history of the occupation had been a struggle of generations, then the younger faction had won. In all, 88 of the 315 mayors in the department immediately after the liberation were now younger than 45, and all of them were former résistants. As for their deputies, 110 of the 360 adjoints were under 40. The Prefect explained, 'L'entrée mêmes de jeunes dans les assemblées locales est un fait réellement révolutionnaire, si l'on tient compte que dans les communes rurales principalement, les moins de 35 ans n'étaient dans le passé que rarement associés à l'administration communale.' Prefect's report on forthcoming elections, Annecy, AD., 3 W 39, 13 November 1944. Another revolution was the confirmation of women on municipal councils. There were 26 female CLL members in the department. The Prefect wrote, 'La participation féminine dans les assemblées actuelles s'apparente semble-t-il un peu trop à l'initiative timide de Vichy dans ce domaine. Elle paraît donc plus symbolique qu'efficace... Sur cette question, il serait d'ailleurs vain de sous-estimer les courants contraires et de nier qu'il n'existe pas principalement chez les ruraux, une certaine prévention contre l'immixtion totale de la femme dans le domaine des activités publiques.'

\(^{20}\) The Renseignements Généraux reported, 'La question des élections municipales et cantonales prévues pour février prochain, ne suscite que peu d'intérêt dans l'esprit de l'opinion. Celle-ci est avant tout préoccupée de l'amélioration du ravitaillement et des conditions de vie ainsi que de la restauration de l'ordre et de l'autorité.' Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 228, 2 December 1944.
The members of the resistance movements were passionately concerned about the elections, because they believed their unpopularity was such that in many rural communes their candidates risked losing. At a stormy reunion of all but two of the department's CLLs on 9 December 1944, some members argued they were fighting for the survival of everything the resistance had achieved. One member of the CDL in Annecy stated bluntly that 'les élections sont dangereuses,' while another announced to applause, 'Nous avons été une minorité qui a su vaincre, nous devons rester une minorité qui vaincre encore une fois.'

Although the résistants believed that they might do well enough among the urban population which had not suffered from the demands of the maquisards during the occupation, they were worried that the results in much of the countryside would be very different. One delegate suggested that a further six months of propaganda would be necessary before elections could take place: 'nous n'avons pas assez évangélisé les masses, les gens n'ont rien compris.' The meeting eventually voted to oppose the elections, justifying their opposition by arguing that it would be unjust to hold them while 3m prisoners of war, deportees and internees were still in Germany.

When it became clear that General de Gaulle was determined that elections were going to take place, no matter what the opinion of the local resistance movements, the CDL responded by organising common lists. This decision was not made without considerable debate. One CDL member warned that most Haut-Savoyards would oppose such lists, believing they had effectively been disenfranchised. He explained there was a substantial risk of widespread abstentionism in rural communities when the elections took place.

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22 One delegate complained, 'Si les élections municipales tournent mal cela détruira le C.N.R. (Conseil National de Résistance). C'est toute notre Révolution qui sera détruite, il faut réagir.' Minutes of combined meeting of CLLs, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 279, 9 December 1944.

23 Minutes of CDL, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 279, 9 December 1944.


25 Minutes of CDL, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 279, 21 February 1945. The CDL was also divided about the name under which the lists would be presented. Eventually, after the CDL had been split 15-15 about whether to gather their candidates under the banner of the liste d'unité française républicaine et anti-fasciste or the liste d'unité française partonnée par la résistance, it was decided to call it the liste républicaine d'unité française. Minutes of CDL, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 279, 24 February 1945.
Post-liberation politics and resistance

The extent to which post-liberation new councillors had been imposed on an unwilling population became increasingly apparent as the two rounds of the municipal elections - the first on 24 April, the second on 13 May - approached. The CLLs realised they would have to compromise their revolutionary ardour if the elections were not to turn into a fiasco with massive abstentionism.26

The extent of that compromise - which normally consisted of sharing lists with men who had been on municipal councils during Vichy - was a subject of often acrimonious debate in some communes. Bitter disputes soon broke out between the CLLs - which wanted to impose their own candidates - and the former and existing municipalities.27 The Renseignements Généraux explained, 'En résumé on constate que l'unanimité est loin de régner en bien des endroits et que le principe d'une liste unique ne sera pas accepté partout. Souvent les Comités de Libération sont en désaccord avec les municipalités.28

In most areas, however, the CLLs and municipalities were able to compromise29 - an important factor in success of the official lists winning outright in all but 45 of Haute-Savoie's 315 communes. The sous-préfet de Thonon explained that, in his arrondissement at least, 'Ce résultat n'a évidemment pas été obtenu sans concessions entre groupements et partis locaux.30 On some occasions the CLL proved willing to share the same slate with right-wing candidates who subsequently did better in the elections than anciens résistants. The sous-préfet for Thonon explained after the first round of elections on 24 April that in many rural areas, right-wing non-resistance candidates were often elected with more votes than the resistance candidates.31

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26 Electors were only required to vote a second time on 15 May when the most successful list had less than 50 per cent of the vote. This turned out to be a rare occurrence.


29 The common lists here extended politically from left to right, according to the sous-préfet. Report of the sous-préfet de Bonneville, Annecy, A.D., 2 W 50, 30 April 1945.


31 Report of sous-préfet de Thonon, Annecy, A.D., 3 W 50, 14 May 1945. The Renseignements Généraux also commented after the elections that many people - presumably former résistants - were shocked to see the same people in charge as had already been there in 1938 and 1939. Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 3 W 50, 7 May 1945. This was although many of these had been there throughout the liberation period. About two-thirds of the councillors holding office after September 1944 were still in position after the elections. Prefect's report, Annecy, A.D., 3 W 39, 30 April 1944.
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The willingness of the CLLs to compromise can be seen in the success of some of the parties who were not officially part of the common lists but were elected as part of them. The Radicals, for example, who were not officially part of the common lists, still managed to win 155 seats (compared with 323 in 1935) through pre-election bargaining. Although the prefect reported to Paris that the Radicals were the great losers of the elections, they nevertheless managed to maintain an impressive representation in the department, retaining control of 105 of the 315 communes in the department. The Renseignements Généraux explained the result of the Radicals:

En effet, bien qu’ayant de la sympathie pour les milieux résistants, les électeurs craintront parfois d’être entraînés dans une politique extrémiste et préféreront voter en faveur des radicaux socialistes qui font figure de républicains modérés.33

Even the Right was able to keep a number of councillors through pre-election bargaining. In the arrondissement of St. Julien, the number of right-wing councillors fell from 189 to 96. The right-wing vote also failed to collapse in the arrondissement of Bonneville and Thonon during the first round of voting, according to the sous-préfets there.34

In a few communes, former résistants proved unwilling to compromise when choosing candidates - a reluctance that did little to win the confidence of some local communities. The authorities expected high absenteeism in such communes. An undated report by the Renseignements Généraux before the elections warned that the expected turn-out in such communes could be between only 60 and 70 per cent among men, and between only 40 and 50 per cent among women.35

Such fears proved partially justified when the elections took place. In the few communes where the résistants proved unwilling to compromise with the local elites and imposed their own candidates for the common lists,
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or where opposition groups proved unable to set up alternative lists, absenteeism was remarkably high.\(^{36}\)

In one of the rural sections at La Roche-sur-Foron, where candidates had been imposed, only five of the 400 constituents turned up to vote.\(^{37}\)

In other communes where the CLLs proved intransigent and opposition lists were created, they simply lost.\(^{38}\)

Resistance lists failed to pass in 45 of the 315 communes in the department (9.5 per cent). A typical example was the canton of Alby to the south-west of the department, where the resistance movements had enjoyed little influence before the liberation\(^{39}\) and had tried to impose candidates on the population. Here, the official lists lost in four communes - a third of all communes in the canton.\(^{40}\) In some cantons, such as Douvaine\(^{41}\) where 'un esprit réactionnaire est quasi-traditionnel' and where the left-wing FTP had been active, it was clear that much of the population remained highly antipathetical.\(^{42}\)

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\(^{36}\) Prefect's report, Annecy, A.D., 3 W 50, 30 April 1945.


\(^{38}\) This was the case in the towns of Bonneville and La Roche-sur-Foron, where the resistance tried to impose candidates. Prefect's report, Annecy, A.D., 3 W 50, 15 May 1945.

\(^{39}\) There had been only one murder in the canton during the whole of the occupation.

\(^{40}\) The communes where official lists failed and a second round of voting was required on 15 May were: 4 in Alby; 5 in annecy-nord; 1 in Annecy-sud; 2 in Rumilly; 2 in Faverges; 1 in Thônes; 1 in Thorens; 1 in Bonneville; 1 in Chamonix; 1 in Cluses; 1 in La Roche; 1 in St Gervais; 1 in St Jeoire; 1 in Taninges; 4 in Annemasse; 2 in Cruseilles; 1 in Seyssel; 2 in Abondance; 1 in Le Biot; 3 in Boëge; 3 in Douvaine.

The Renseignements Généraux did not believe that the loss of these communes was necessarily a vote against the resistance, but rather a reaction against some of the measures taken after the liberation which had been inspired by political motives or had been taken too quickly. Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 3 W 50, 28 May 1945.

\(^{41}\) Three communes were described by the Renseignements Généraux in this way. They were Douvaine itself, Nernier and Yvoire. Other communes so-described included Saxel (Boëge) and Essert-Rommand (Le Biot), both of which were in the Catholic and conservative north-east of the department.

\(^{42}\) Some former résistants were unable to cope with such defeats. At Villaz (Thorens), for example, members of the CLL burnt the election ballot box in the village after the CLL had failed to form a list with the pre-liberation council. The list that passed at the second attempt on 15 May consisted of all but two of the members of the council before the liberation. The Renseignements Généraux commented, 'En définitive, le Conseil Municipal sortant, en fonction depuis la libération, n'a pas obtenu la confiance de la majorité des électeurs. Il était considéré par la plupart des paysans comme imposé par la force.' Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 3 W 50, 28 May 1945. There was a similar incident at Veyrier-du-lac (Annecy-nord) where a right-wing candidate won 246 votes compared with the 46 votes cast for M. D... a former resister. He stole the ballot box at the second round of the elections, receiving a three month sentence and a FFr:5,000 fine for his pains. Report of Sûreté Nationale, Annecy, A.D., 3 W 50, 28 May 1945.
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The political composition of the post-election municipalities demonstrated some interesting trends in Haut-Savoyard society. There was undoubtedly a swing to the left in Haut-Savoyard towns and low-land communes. Although the PCF and SFIO lost control of 34 of the 60 communes where they had been given a mandate by the CLLs after the liberation, nevertheless they did win seats in places where they had never before been represented. In the arrondissement of St. Julien, which apart from Annemasse and the surrounding communes had been extremely right-wing, the number of communist councillors increased from four in 1935 to 69 in 1945. There were also communist councillors for the first time on municipal councils of the towns of Thonon and Evian. Moreover, in terms of the absolute number of municipal councillors the PCF did remarkably well. In the arrondissement of St. Julien, for example, the number of councillors increased from 7 in 1935 at the previous municipal elections to 74. The Socialists also appeared to do well in terms of aggregate figures. In the arrondissement of St. Julien, the number of socialist councillors increased from 46 in 1935 to 130 in 1945.

But the elections also demonstrated the continuing strength of anti-communist conservatism in upland rural areas where the left-wing parties made little headway. As the Prefect argued, the elections were a triumph for the newly formed Mouvement Républicain Populaire (MRP), led locally by François de Menthon, the newly appointed minister of justice who only three years previously had been placed unceremoniously in a fountain by members of the Annecy SOL. The MRP, known to the communists during the election campaign as the 'Machine pour Ramasser les Pétainistes' and 'Mensonge, Réaction, Perfide', had been formed on 26 November 1944 to provide a party for progressive catholics after the collapse of the right after Vichy. It was gaullist, led by formidable members of the resistance such as de Menthon, boasted more than 125,000 members nationwide after 1945, and most importantly, was clerical - a fact related to its ability to gather a huge mass of support.

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45 Report of sous-préfet de St. Julien, Annecy, A.D., 3 W 39, 14 May 1945. The Prefect down-played the success of the PCF in Haute-Savoie: 'Les 3/4 des voix se sont portés sur les candidats de la liste de la Résistance qui n'est mise en échec que dans une dizaine de communes. Les communistes bénéficient de ce patronage et entrent dans plus de la moitié des conseils municipaux. Ils ne sont toutefois sur les listes qu'en dernière position au point de vue des voix obtenues. Par contre, les MRP obtiennent à cet égard les plus brillants résultats; ils ont largement contribué au succès des listes communes.'

46 The success of the MRP should not be seen as a defeat for the resistance movements. The MRP identified closely with the Armée Secrète. In the canton of Thônes, where the AS had been well-integrated into the society, the MRP won eight out of ten communes during the spring 1945 elections.

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of first-time voting women throughout much of France. The party's success was atypical of the MRP's results elsewhere in the country, where the MRP vote collapsed under the weight of communist and socialist propaganda between the two rounds of voting in April and May. Throughout France the MRP won only 477 communes, but of these 120 were in Haute-Savoie.

The left-wing parties proved unable to capitalise on the rejection of the Vichy regime in Haut-Savoyard upland areas. These conservative, Catholic regions were not traditionally fertile ground for the left-wing parties, but a significant factor in that failure was undoubtedly the role of Communist-led FTP maquisards before and after the liberation. Indeed, membership of such groups was a sufficient liability for some former résistants not to draw attention to their membership during the electoral campaign. In contrast, the MRP was able to draw its support from the valleys to the east of Annecy towards Thônes which were traditionally loyal to de Menthon and had supported the AS during the occupation. But it was also able to depend on conservative rural votes, and in particular those of newly enfranchised women. Catholicism retained its remarkable influence among women in the department and the Church, which undoubtedly sympathised heavily with the MRP, encouraged women not only to register their vote, but also to vote against the left.

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50 See, for example, the commune of Brethonne (Douvaine) where the post-liberation mayor, a former member of the FTP, was 'mal vu' by the local population and seen as abusing his authority. Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 3 W 50, undated.

51 Prefect's report, Annecy, A.D., 3 W 50, 30 April 1945.

52 One priest had to leave the department following threats he received for encouraging women to register their vote. Even the nuns in the convent at Thonon registered their vote. Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 3 W 50, 7 May 1945. For reports that priests making a massive effort to ensure that women registered to vote in the forthcoming elections, see: Prefect's report, Paris, A.N., Fic III 1226, 14 February 1945.

53 The left-wing parties were aware of this and were ambivalent in their attitude towards the enfranchisement of women. Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 228, 8 December 1944. 'They commented ironically, 'Le parti socialiste... étude de très près la vote des femmes. Il appréhend l'influence de l'Eglise sur une grande masse d'entre elles et considère que le résultat des élections pourrait s'en trouver faussé.' Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 228, 19 February 1945.
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Renseignements Généraux, some priests told women they would be committing a cardinal sin if they failed to vote.\textsuperscript{54}

The immediate political legacy of Vichy was the polarisation of political opinions along town and country lines. Conservative rural and upland voters either voted for pre-war Radical candidates or plumped for a progressive but safe Catholic party - the MRP. Voters in the towns, who had suffered so much from material deprivation during Vichy and who were not as strongly Catholic as those in rural communities, were undoubtedly drawn to the left after the liberation. That polarisation was confirmed during the elections of 23 October 1945, when the PCF managed to capture 33,506 votes compared with some 4,306 in 1937 (26 per cent compared with 8 per cent of votes).\textsuperscript{55} The SFIO did less well, increasing its proportion of the vote from 17 per cent in 1937 to only 18.4 per cent. But in the countryside, it was the MRP, with 59,876 votes (47.15 per cent) that benefited from the conservatism of agricultural communities.\textsuperscript{56}

\textsuperscript{54} Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 3 W 50, 26 April 1945. Admittedly, not all women voted right. At Neuvecelle (Evian), the female voters were reported to have voted to the left rather than for the MRP. Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 3 W 50, 2 May 1945.

\textsuperscript{55} For the first time ever, a communist deputy was elected in Haute-Savoie. The aggregate figures cannot be compared directly, of course, because of the increase in size of the electorate caused by de Gaulle's decision to give women the vote.

\textsuperscript{56} The total number of votes cast in October 1945 was 125,978. The electorate was 160,789. The votes were as follows: PCF 33,506; SFIO 23,244; Radicaux-Socialistes 4,005; MRP 59,876; Entente Républicaine 3,121. In the following elections in June 1946, the polarisation was confirmed: PCF 34,890; MRP 64,604; Radicaux-Socialistes 5,393; SFIO 18,324; Peasant party 2,165; Independents 2,065. The electorate was 161,802, and the number voting 126,846.
CHAPTER 34: THE LIBERATION AND DE GAULLE

GIVEN THE apparent unpopularity of the resistance movements in many parts of the French countryside, and given the Indian summer of popularity of Pétain during 1944, the enthusiastic welcome given by the French population to de Gaulle in Paris in August 1944 and in Haute-Savoie during the autumn must be explained. The extent of that welcome should not be underestimated. De Gaulle, in his memoirs, describes the scenes on 26 August when a sea of people, estimated at 2m, acclaimed him as he walked down the Champs Elysées.¹

However de Gaulle, as a political figure rather than just a symbol of anti-Germanism, had not always enjoyed the support of the French population during the Vichy period. Sympathising with de Gaulle did not necessarily imply support for the gaullist movement - a movement whose principles changed significantly during the four years between the fall of France in June 1940 and the liberation in the summer of 1944. Immediately after the debacle in the summer of 1940, de Gaulle himself was little more than a symbol. Gaullism remained essentially a negation rather than an affirmation. First and foremost, the movement was a manifestation of anti-Germanism² and a denial of collaboration,³ which, as has been demonstrated, consistently represented one of Vichy's most unpopular policies.

In these terms, the attitude of many Haut-Savoyards who despite their support for Pétain also sympathised with de Gaulle becomes more understandable. In November 1940, the prefect attempted to explain such attitudes:

Je dois à la vérité de dire que l'ex Général de Gaulle compte encore une fraction non négligeable de partisans, qui se recrutent surtout dans les couches moyennes de la population. Cette attitude n'est pas le fait de survivances idéologiques; elle n'implique pas davantage une condamnation des efforts tentés par le Gouvernement. Elle traduit l'opinion des gens qui pensent que, seule, une victoire anglaise pourrait rendre à la France son ancienne grandeur, et sur un plan plus immédiat, mettre un terme aux revendications italiennes.⁴

² The SCT was convinced that 'les sentiments pour de Gaulle étaient surtout dictés par l'opposition à l'occupant.' Report of the Contrôle Téléphonique, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, October 1942.
³ The Contrôle Postal was unambiguous about the links between hostility towards the Germans, Anglophilia and Gaullism: 'En général, gaullisme et anglophilie vont en pair.' Report of the Contrôle Postal d'Annecy, Annecy, A.D., 12 W Annecy, A.D., 12 W 257, 1 April 1941.
⁴ Report of the Prefect, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 5 November 1940.
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It should not be imagined that sympathy for de Gaulle in 1940 or 1941 represented a denial of Pétain, Vichy or the values of the national revolution,5 anymore than did listening to the BBC or Swiss radio. Much of the population appears to have been quite willing to reconcile its dislike of Vichy's foreign policy - and manifest its sympathy with de Gaulle - while still believing in the Vichy's values. Similarly, support for Pétain and de Gaulle was not mutually exclusive.6 Although Vergain, the head of Légion in Haute-Savoie, estimated the proportion of Gaullists in the department at about 75 per cent, this did not prevent the administration reporting that criticism of the Marshal was almost non-existent in Haute-Savoie, nor prevent tens of thousands of Haut-Savoyards travelling to Annecy to see Pétain when he visited the town on an official visit in September 1941.7 The administration was aware of this apparent paradox. In an assessment of anti-gaullist Vichy propaganda during the spring of 1941, the sous-préfet for Bonneville, whose arrondissement was one of the centres of gaullism in the department, commented:

Les efforts récents faits par la radiodiffusion française pour contrecarrer la propagande gaulliste paraissent devoir donner quelques résultats; bien qu'il importe de souligner que le nombre des gaullistes en Haute-Savoie est relativement important. Paradoxe assez curieux à comprendre: la plupart des gaullistes arrivent à concilier leur sympathie pour de Gaulle avec leur vénération souvent sincère du Maréchal.8

5 The SCT intercepted one letter: 'Au fond, on est très pétainiste, mais on affiche des airs gaullistes pour déplaire aux geôliers.' Synthesis of reports of the SCT, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 258, 5 September 1941.

6 There are persistent rumours in the reports coming into the prefecture in Annecy that de Gaulle and Pétain had a secret pact and were following the same policy, well into 1943. The Sûreté commented: 'On émet parfois l'idée que le Maréchal et de Gaulle sont "de connivence".' Report of Sûreté Nationale, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 5 February 1941.

7 Vergain wrote, 'La sympathie va aux Anglais qui le [l'ennemi héréditaire] combattent. On n'admet pas la collaboration; on approuve de Gaulle; Mers-el-Kébir, Dakar, la Syrie même, où les forces françaises sont directement dressées contre les autres, n'ont pas ouvert les yeux.' Report of Vergain, chef départemental de la Légion, to the prefect, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 1 July 1941.

8 Report of sous-préfet de Bonneville, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 30 April 1941. In a report two months later, the sous-préfet admitted that gaullism had made serious progress in his department, particularly in schools. He added, however, that those who followed the government were nevertheless numerous. Special report of sous-préfet de Bonneville, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 14 June 1941. In June he repeated that gaullism was making serious progress in his arrondissement, though he added that the authority of the Marshal was unchallenged: ibid., 29 June 1941. Some were prepared to choose between Pétain and de Gaulle, even in 1941. The SCT intercepted a letter from Chedde, one of the few industrial communes in Haute-Savoie: 'A St. Gervais, l'on est très porté à soutenir le Maréchal, mais ici à Chedde c'est le parti Gaulliste qui domine.' The reason given in the letter was that Pétain had given control of the country to the Catholic church. Synthesis of reports by the SCT, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 258, 18 August 1941.
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Even many of those already in the non-communist resistance during 1941 proved reluctant to criticise the Marshal during this period. They tended to isolate their criticisms of the regime to Vichy's policy of collaboration. In August 1941, the authors of the resistance newspaper, Vérités, reflected, in part, the attitudes of much of the population in the Zone Libre:

Without doubt, excellent interior reforms have been announced and we approve them, but the future of France will not be determined by these, however judicious they are... M. le Maréchal, we beg you, do you want French veterans to become the allies of the German army? If you do not want it make it quite clear that you don't. You have understood that France needs a firm line.9

Admittedly, a number of Vichy administrators were anxious to emphasise the damage to the gaullists caused by both Mers-el-Kébir, when the British sank much of the French fleet off Oran, and by the Anglo-Gaullist attack on Dakar in September 1940. A... wrote, 'Ce qu'on peut seulement affirmer, c'est que l'ardente faveur dont bénéficié, voici cinq à six semaines, le mouvement de la France Libre, est en baisse sérieuse.'10 It had needed the Anglo-Gaullist attack on Dakar in August to open many people's eyes, argued A...11 Other correspondents noted briefly: 'Après [le] revirement profond en faveur [de l'] Angleterre et de Gaulle, il y a quelques semaines, [l'] affaire de Dakar est venue donner à réfléchir. [Le] prestige [de] de Gaulle [est] atteint sérieusement.'12

However, despite the Vichy administration's obvious delight in emphasising the uncomfortable position of gaullists after Mers-el-Kébir, Dakar and, eventually, Syria,13 the effects of these events on de Gaulle's

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10 Report of A... chef du centre départemental d'information, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 337, 15 October 1940.

11 A letter sent to A... stated that before Dakar, de Gaulle's speeches were broadcast almost publicly. Passers-by used to gather outside cafes to listen to them almost religiously. Letter of Colonel F... to A..., chef du centre départemental d'Information, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 337, 26 September 1940.


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popularity, although momentarily serious, proved not to be lasting. Even at the time, A... reported not everybody had been convinced by Dakar and that de Gaulle continued to enjoy some sympathy from the population, particularly among working class communities in the valleys of the Faucigny. The Contrôle Téléphonique d'Annecy reported an intercepted telephone conversation in May 1941, quoting one of the callers who believed that the re-emergence of opinion in favour of de Gaulle was 'formidable' and was offering photographs of the General for sale. In July 1941, at the end of the Syrian campaign, the Contrôle Téléphonique d'Annemasse complained, 'La propagande gaulliste est toujours discutée avec faveur, et chaque soir, toutes fenêtres ouvertes, elle lance ses insanités qui sont ensuite commentées pour les besoins de la cause.'

One of the reasons for gaullism's early resilience was that it was a negation rather than an affirmation of any particular doctrine. Initially, very little was known about de Gaulle as an individual or about gaullism as a political movement. Gaulism was at best a set of beliefs rather than a programme for action, and was so undefined that it could act as a broad church attracting sympathisers, if not always adherents, from across the political spectrum.

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14 The contrôle postal d'Annecy noted that the attack on Syria by anglo-gaullist forces had caused widespread indignation, which initially was extremely violent. It suggested that de Gaulle's reputation also suffered in the occupied zone, where gaullism was stronger than in the free zone. Report of the Contrôle Postal d'Annecy, Annecy, AD, 12 W 257, 28 June 1941.

15 Report of A..., chef départemental d'information, Annecy, AD., 12 W 337, 15 October 1940. In a handwritten draft report in the same file, M. A... contrasted the attitude of those living in the mountains above 800m where the majority of the population followed the Marshall without question and the more urban population in the valleys in the Faucigny which continued to have some sympathy for de Gaulle.


17 Report of the Contrôle Téléphonique d'Annemasse, Annecy, AD., 12 W 257, July 1941. Admittedly, the contrôle postal in Annecy believed it could detect fewer gaullists after the Syrian campaign and argued that there was 'indignation contre les Anglais et Gaullistes.' Report of the Contrôle Postal d'Annecy, Annecy, AD., 12 W 257 29 July 1941; 27 September 1941. Gaulism was even able to survive the lamentable performance by the Allies in Greece and Yugoslavia during the spring and early summer of 1941, when, as has been demonstrated, there was a moment in the department when collaboration appeared to be becoming acceptable and the chances of an Allied and gaullist victory increasingly remote.

18 In 1940, there were even rumours in Haute-Savoie that de Gaulism equaled royalism. Letter of B..., to A..., chef du centre départemental d'Information, Annecy, AD., 12 W 337, 30 October 1940.

19 The reports before November 1942 about gaullist activity in the department from most of parts of the administration are littered with the letters RAS - Rien A Signaler.
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If there was any particular characteristic of a typical gaullist in 1940 and 1941, it was his or her youth - any division that existed was generational rather than political. In a draft report, A... explained: L’ex-général de Gaulle a des partisans aussi bien à un pôle qu’à l’autre; surtout parmi la jeunesse, alors que les milieux combattants de l’autre guerre pardonnent difficilement aux Anglais d’avoir contribué à précipiter dans les conditions que l’on sait la guerre de 1939 et de s’y être comportés jusqu’en juin 1940 avec autant d’égosisme.

Initially, Vichy propaganda attempted to provide a definition of Gaullism that would frighten the population. In particular it attempted, after the German invasion of the Soviet Union, to link gaullism with communism. It also questioned de Gaulle’s freedom of action and independence from the British, and attempted to discredit the leadership of the movement as being divided and ineffectual. In these early days, the administration itself was unsure whether its propaganda was having any effect. Some reports argued that their efforts were bearing fruit. The Sûreté National, for example, believed it could differentiate

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20 Much of the enthusiasm for the gaullist adventure came from French youth. The SCT stated in November 1941 that the only evidence it could find of actual activity by gaullists was at the Ecole Hôtelière at Thonon and the Ecole Horlogère at Cluses. Synthesis of reports of the SCT, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 258, 5 December 1941.

21 This view was supported by a letter from T... who argued that de Gaulle had supporters on both the left and the right. Letter from T... to A..., chef du centre départemental d’Information, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 337, 9 September 1940.

22 Handwritten draft of report by A..., chef du centre départemental d’information, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 337, probably October-November 1940.

23 Although some gaullist posters were found in the department, the commissaire de police argued that gaullist propaganda had become almost inexistent by April 1941, and had never caused any concern. Report of commissaire de police, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 2 April 1941.

24 Report of sous-préfet de Bonneville, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 30 April 1941.

25 See, for example, one of the Prefect’s reports, which argued, ‘Si la faveur du public se porte vers un succès britannique, cela n’implique aucunement une sympathie pour la dissidence et il me semble qu’il convient de séparer ces deux aspects de l’opinion d’une manière très nette. Il est permis d’affirmer que les responsables du mouvement gaulliste sont complètement discrédités aux yeux de la majeure partie de la population. Prefect’s report, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 9, 3 February 1942.

26 See, for example, a report by the prefect which stated, ‘Les partisans d’une victoire anglaise demeurent nombreux. Le mouvement gaulliste est , par contre, en recul. Sa collusion avec le mouvement communiste le condamne, en effet, dans l’esprit des gens raisonnables.’ The newly appointed and rather more zealous Prefect was even more damning two months later. He wrote in his first report, ‘L’opinion marque une indifférence totale au mouvement gaulliste qui ne compte, dans le département, que de rares zélateurs. Prefects’ reports, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 22 January 1941; 7 March 1941.
between support for the British and support for de Gaulle, arguing in 1942 that the latter was 'en regression. Moreover, through the summer and autumn of 1942, the reports coming into the prefecture in Annecy, suggested that if there still plenty of sympathy for the British and gaullists, there was little actual activity. In the end, although gaullist radio propaganda was heard a good deal in the countryside, the population nevertheless remained preoccupied by other considerations. The continual search for food, the return of Laval and its implications for collaboration, the round-ups of Jews in the department and finally the highly unpopular Relève, dominated the reports. Events in Madagascar, where the British took the island from Vichy forces and even Bir Hakeim, when Gaullist troops made a significant stand against German advances in North Africa before El Alamein, created few echoes among the population.

Vichy propaganda against the gaullists only began to make headway when gaullism became more defined, and became a political movement rather than just a denial of collaboration. Once the Americans landed in North Africa on 8 November 1942, Vichy was given a larger target to aim for in its efforts to discredit de Gaulle and his movement. The political divisions in North Africa and Admiral Darlan’s presence in Algeria caused

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27 Report of Sureté National, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 10 February 1941.


29 The Contrôle Téléphonique d'Annemasse, wrote 'Propagande gaulliste: ne s'exprime ouvertement que par les indications de la radio anglaise, la masse n'est pas entrainée par le gaullisme, elle le considère avec sympathie, mais seulement pour ses intentions militaires. Report of the Contrôle Téléphonique d'Annemasse, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, August 1942.


31 The synthesis of reports by the SCT noted that there were few comments either on the telephone, or in letters about Madagascar. Synthesis of reports of the SCT, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, first fortnight, May 1942.
considerable confusion. Darlan's deal with the Americans was not understood and did little for the popularity of the Free French movement.

The political divisions between de Gaulle and General Giraud were more problematic for Haut-Savoyards sympathising with the Free French. Giraud was a popular figure in the department. When it became apparent that Giraud had arrived in North Africa with the Americans, the administration reported that the population became less concerned about the situation there. Giraud appears to have been perceived by much of the population in the department as a figure for stability, one already known to the public. Most importantly, he was untainted by pre-war politics which many continued to find distasteful.

Haut-Savoyards quickly became bored by politics in North Africa. As early as 12 December the Renseignements Généraux reported that the population was more interested in military operations than the negotiations between the two generals in Algiers. A few weeks later, they noted, 'Autre part l'opinion est peu influencée par ce qui se passe sur le plan intérieur en Afrique du Nord. Les rivalités entre dissidents

32 'Les déclarations selon lesquelles l'Amiral Darlan prétend agir en plein accord avec le Maréchal, créent une confusion dans les esprits. La rivalité qui semble exister entre le Général de Gaulle et l'Amiral et la déchéance de nationalité prononcé à l'égard de ce dernier, ajoutent encore à cette confusion.' wrote the Renseignements Généraux. Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 9, 14 December 1942.

33 There was little sympathy for Darlan, who was seen as an opportunist. His subsequent murder caused scant dismay. The Renseignements Généraux explained: 'De toutes les personnalités françaises, l'Amiral était la plus discutée et la plus exposée. Les gaullistes le considéraient comme un opportuniste dont le passé autorisait les plus légitimes suspicions et ceux qui sont restés fidèles au Maréchal lui reprochaient amèrement sa trahison. L'Amiral n'avait jamais été populaire. Son passage à la dissidence ne changea que peu les sentiments de la population à son égard. Il fut tardif et intéressé.' Admittedly, there was some muddle among at least a part of the population. The Renseignements Généraux noted a slogan in Annemasse, proclaiming, 'L'Amiral Darlan mort au service de la France. Vive de Gaulle et Giraud. A bas les piafs.' Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 9, 28 December 1942. The view that Darlan had few defenders, that his death caused little impression on the population, and that some even believed it was a just punishment for his time in office was supported by the SCT. Report of the Contrôle Téléphonique d'Annemasse, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, December 1942.

34 When his escape from German captivity was announced, the SCT reported that the news was welcomed in Haute-Savoie with joy. Report of the Contrôle Postal d'Annecy, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, May 1942.

35 'Les événements d'Afrique ont provoqué de la stupeur dans l'esprit de nombreux habitants du département. Au début de ces opérations les consciences se sont révoltées; une bonne partie de l'opinion publique n'acceptait pas sans réserves l'invasion de notre empire africain. Puis est venue l'annonce du passage en Afrique du Général Giroud [sic], qui a commencé à ébranler la conviction de beaucoup.' Report of C., commandant de la compagnie de la Haute-Savoie, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 9, November 1942.

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l'intéressent du moins en moins.\textsuperscript{37} As the bickering between the two French generals continued, the population remained surprised by the political confusion between them.\textsuperscript{38} The Contrôle Téléphonique d'Annemasse reported, 'les efforts de rapprochement entre les généraux dissidents sont suivis avec impatience, le différent qui les sépare n'est pas très bien compris par les uns, et non admis par les autres.'\textsuperscript{39}

However, as the positions of the two men began to become clear, so conservative and catholic Haut-Savoyards became increasingly concerned by the growing importance of the left-wing gaullists in Algiers. And they increasingly identified Giraud as a means controlling those left-wing interests. De Gaulle's efforts to create a broad church among the resistance movements - one that included the communists - were not always followed with sympathy by the significant sections of the community. The administration believed that it could identify some gaullists who were sufficiently concerned by the growing influence of the left that they changed their allegiance to Giraud.\textsuperscript{40}

In addition, the provisional government in Algiers increasingly appeared to be made up of unpopular and familiar figures from the pre-war politics. The Renseignements Généraux noted that many in Haute-Savoie did not want France to make the same mistakes as she had during the Third Republic. They continued, 'C'est pourquoi la popularité du Général de Gaulle baisse nettement dans le sentiment de beaucoup de personnes qui, au contraire, considèrent que le Général Giraud est vraiment l'homme de la situation.' The accusation that the Third Republic was threatening to return after the liberation continued to dog Algiers. When the Consultative Assembly in Algiers was enlarged in November 1943 to include politicians and members of the resistance movements, the Renseignements Généraux wrote,

Par suite de l'origine savoyarde de l'intéressé, la validation de la candidature de M. Pierre Cot a été très commentée. Dans les milieux paysans, restés en majorité assez méfiants vis-à-vis du régime parlementaire, cette nouvelle n'est pas accueillie sans appréhension, l'ancien Ministre de l'Air étant considéré comme l'un des politiciens les plus néfastes de l'avant-guerre.\textsuperscript{41}

\textsuperscript{37} Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 9, 24 December 1942. When Giraud and de Gaulle finally agreed to meet in Casablanca, after frantic efforts by both Churchill and Roosevelt, the ability of the American President to fly across the Atlantic impressed the population more than the meeting of the two generals. Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 1 February 1943.

\textsuperscript{38} Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 11 January 1943. As late as May, reports suggested that the population was still did not understand and were bored by the negotiations in North Africa. Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 17 May 1943.

\textsuperscript{39} Report of the Contrôle Téléphonique, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, May 1943.

\textsuperscript{40} Synthesis of reports of the SCT, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, April 1943.

\textsuperscript{41} Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10, 28 November 1943.

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Given Giraud's importance as a counter-balance to the Third Republic politicians and the influence of the left, it was hardly surprising, then, that there was considerable reaction in the department to de Gaulle's efforts to marginalise Giraud - efforts which were successfully concluded by his replacement by General de Lattre de Tassigny. In Haute-Savoie his replacement, 'a soulevé une vive émotion dans le public qui semble montrer une vive sympathie l'égard de l'ancien Gouverneur de Metz,' wrote the Renseignements Généraux. It was also seen as a victory for the left which appeared to gaining power in Algiers. The agent administratif de Reignier et Annemasse explained, 'la nouvelle orientation de la politique du Comité d'Alger inquiète néanmoins de nombreux sympathisants de la dissidence et le quasi-limogeage du Général Giraud en a dessillé beaucoup [d'yeux].' It was clear from the administration's reports that many fonctionnaires felt able to sympathise with Giraud's difficulties. They concluded that Giraud's dismissal confirmed the leftist tendency of the Free French movement. In July the Renseignements Généraux wrote, "L'opinion s'intéresse de plus en plus à la situation en Afrique du Nord [...] Elle estime toujours que Giraud, avec toutes les préférences américaines, représente un courant d'idées réactionnaires et que de Gaulle synthétise les aspirations à la reprise de pouvoir de ce que fût le 'Front Populaire.'"

Attitudes within the department were not homogenous, however. The Renseignements Généraux explained that the appointment of two communists to the Comité d'Alger and the apparent dismissal of General Giraud were welcomed or not depending on each individual's political persuasion. Factory workers were reported to be pleased by the appointment of the communists, while the 'amis de l'ordre', as the Renseignements Généraux described the bourgeois and Giraud's supporters, were upset. The SCT summed up these fears, when it wrote in November 1943, "L'évolution de la situation en Afrique du Nord cause des préoccupations nombreuses et alarmantes. La prépondérance qu'y prennent les communistes et d'anciens parlementaires 'unanimement hannis,' tel Pierre Cot, est une source de

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44 'Dans les milieux de l-ex-Gauche... on est Gaulliste par principal.' Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 12 July 1943; 23 April 1944.
47 The reports on the Comité d'Alger, which had previously been short, began to become increasingly lengthy from about April 1944. Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 16 April 1944.
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déception quasi unanime: 'C'est la règne de la pagaille, de l'arrivisme et de la canaillerie.' La 'sovietisation du Comité d'Alger' apparaît comme un fait acquis: 'c'est Staline qui commande là-bas.' Aussi de nombreux correspondants approuvent-ils l'attitude de Giraud dont la démission manifesterait la volonté de 'ne pas vouloir se salir'; d'autres interprètent cette démission comme un 'véritable limogeage' qui marquerait 'le commencement de la débâcle.'

During 1943, as the domestic security situation began to deteriorate and as the Soviet army began to make progress in the East after Stalingrad, the Renseignements Généraux highlighted growing concern in the department about the risk of civil war and the growing importance of the communists in Algiers: 'Chez les gens qui demeurent les partisans de l'ordre, d'un retour à la situation normale après le conflit, la constatation de l'influence grandissante des communistes en Afrique du Nord est accueillie avec crainte.' The idea that the communists were taking control of the resistance both on mainland France and in North Africa was a theme to which both the SCT and the Renseignements Généraux returned consistently throughout 1943 and until the liberation in 1944. As the department became increasingly anarchic and fears of civil war became more and more prevalent, so De Gaulle's links with the communists became more worrying for the more conservative elements in Haut-Savoyard society. The administration reported considerable concern that De Gaulle would become a French Kerensky, unable to control events after the liberation. In particular, as the resistance movements in the department began to kill increasing numbers of collaborators and once Pierre Pucheu, a former Vichy minister, was executed in North Africa, so the reports reflected concern about whether de Gaulle would be able to control the excesses of a purge after the liberation.

The fears of conservative and Catholic Haut-Savoys were shared by many other French men and women. In the six months before the liberation, it still remained far from clear whether a majority of the population was politically gaullist. Although it undoubtedly desired an Allied victory and Axis defeat, that did not mean that it wholeheartedly supported de Gaulle or the gaullists in North Africa, any more than hatred of the Germans meant that the population wholeheartedly supported the resistance movements in the countryside around them. Such a situation was not unique in Haute-Savoie. A British report of an interview with the former head of the far eastern section at the Quai d'Orsay in Paris noted:


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The sole thought in the minds of nine Frenchmen out of ten is to get rid of the Germans out of France. Political views are almost universally subordinated to this one desire. As General de Gaulle is considered the symbol of the intention to clear France of the Germans, he is regarded generally as the national leader. This does not mean that he is popular or that most Frenchmen know anything more about him than that he has rallied the resistance forces outside France.\(^52\)

Not only was de Gaulle little known, but his entourage in North Africa was suspected by the more conservative elements of society.\(^53\) A Swiss paper-making machine manufacturer who had travelled extensively in France and was interviewed in Lisbon during April 1944, gave this view:

> Politically, they [the French] are not so sure of de Gaulle. He is very much of the 'left'. If any German-Vichy propaganda 'takes' it is this belabouring of the Communist bogey, and de Gaulle is always described as conceding everything to Moscow. The French, whilst they admire him, do not seem to admire his entourage.\(^54\)

This snap-shot of French society before the liberation was supported by a member of the Belgian resistance who passed through France in April 1944 on his way to Lisbon and London:

> A wide section of the upper classes, including practically the whole of the industrialist class, very many aristocratic families and a large proportion of the commercial and rentier class are sincerely terrified of Communism. The Algiers

\(^52\) Minutes of interview with M. Chauvel, London, PRO, FO 371 41861 Z2570/2/G17, 7 April 1944. The view that de Gaulle was little known in France before the liberation other than as a symbol of resistance outside the country was supported by an interview with two middle class Norman women: "We do not know de Gaulle in France" was reiterated by both informants, although each acknowledged his great achievements as a resister and a reorganiser of French power outside France." Report of interviews by MI9, London, PRO, FO 371 41862 Z 4317/2/G17, late June 1944.

\(^53\) The Vichy authorities believed that the American government understood the concern about the unrepresentative nature of the comité d'Alger: 'Les raisons qui motivent l'attitude américaine, fait-on observer dans ces milieux (les milieux qui sont convaincus que les armées de libération entreront en France), sont assez faciles à comprendre. On se rend compte outre-Atlantique, qu'il n'est pas démontré que tous ceux qui, en France, sont partisans de la Résistance, accepteraient volontiers le régime politique et administratif mis en vigueur par le Comité. Le dernier discours du Général de Gaulle, les récentes condamnations prononcées par le tribunal militaire africain, l'entrée des communistes dans le Comité jettent un réel désagrément sur le dit Comité. Il est logique, précise-t-on, que le Gouvernement des États-Unis ne veuille pas s'engager à imposer en France une administration que la nation pourrait ne pas approuver unaniment et qu'il refuse de lier, par avance, les mains du Général Eisenhower.' Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 2 April 1944. The concern in France about the role of the left in comité d'Alger and the question of whether the committee enjoyed the support of the population helps to explain the behaviour of President Roosevelt and the attitude of the US administration to de Gaulle. For a fuller discussion of these issues, see: Abrahams, P.R.A., 'America and public opinion in France, The Journal of Strategic Studies, XII, 1, (1989), 99-104.

\(^54\) Interview in Lisbon with M. Amiet, London, P.R.O., FO 371 41861 Z 2857/2/17, 21 April 1944.
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Committee has done nothing to allay their doubts. To them, the Committee and the Consultative Assembly smelt strongly of the Popular Front even before the Communist representation on the Committee was negotiated. These people cannot stomach the Committee nor the Resistance movement. They are afraid of both and are delighted to see that the Allies have not given de Gaulle any formal recognition. For a while this class was appeased by the presence of Giraud on the Committee and they pinned their faith on him. Not by any means all of this class are pro-German or even pro-Vichy and they felt they could quite well come to some accommodation with Giraud which they could never do with de Gaulle and the Resistance. The disappearance of Giraud has left them adrift again and they have had to look round for another anchor.55

Given the disquiet about de Gaulle and the gaullists before the liberation, the acclamation that de Gaulle received at the liberation and his undoubted popularity must be explained. That acclaim was considerable. One British intelligence officer who visited Normandy in June 1944, had little doubts about the popularity of the general,

There is one name and one name only on every lip - de Gaulle. About this, there could be no doubt and no two opinions. The testimony was overwhelming and indeed seemingly unanimous. There was no question of any emotional reaction, but rather the quietly accepted fact that he was their leader.56

During the post-liberation euphoria, de Gaulle became more than a symbol of resistance against the much-hated Germans. Urban workers and fonctionnaires who suffered considerable hardship during Vichy, not least because of shortages of heating fuel and food, believed de Gaulle would take into account the need for social justice in post-liberation France. De Gaulle was committed to such a programme, and it was hardly surprising that because he met such aspirations much of his most significant support came from these sections of the community in the towns.57

The position in the countryside and among the more conservative elements in society was more complicated. Before the liberation, in the conservative and Catholic countryside, where, in many cases, the resistance had

55 Interview by MI19 with Belgian lawyer, London, PRO, FO 371 41862 Z 42 39, 14 June 1944.

56 Report of Colonel Ellias on state of civilian population in France, London, PRO, FO 371 41862, Z 4089, 13 June 1944. He stated that at a meeting after the liberation of Bayeux, de Gaulle's name was greeted with prolonged and almost rapturous applause, which was remarkable because the Normans were reputed to be the coldest and most unemotional of all the French types.

57 A member of the Belgian resistance who passed through France in April 1944 told an MI19 informant: 'The actively resistant working class (mainly of Communist tendencies) are convinced supporters of de Gaulle for the time being and are at the same time the best Allies that the Anglo-Americans have in France.' Interview with an anonymous Belgian lawyer, London, PRO, FO 371 41862 Z 42 39, 14 June 1944.
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been most active, attitudes towards de Gaulle were rather more reticent. Pre-liberation concerns about the role of the communists in the comité d'Alger, the dangers of an uncontrollable purge and the possibility of a red revolution were widespread. De Gaulle's position in such a scenario was far from clear. Initially, this was reflected in the muted reaction of the rural and intensely Catholic population in Normandy when the general stepped on to French soil for the first time since 1940.58 British reports of the general's visit to Bayeux suggested that the population's reaction was less than enthusiastic.59 A British officer explained, "The resistance people say that they were satisfied. The Norman is not a demonstrative person and as this part of Normandy has suffered little physically or morally, no white-hot enthusiasm could be expected."60

De Gaulle's triumph in 1944 was not based on his ability to win the support of the urban working classes - that was already secured before the liberation. Rather de Gaulle saved France from potential revolution in the summer of 1944 by appealing to the conservative, Catholic right. It would initially appear as though much of this right-wing constituency was capricious during the summer of 1944, switching its allegiance from Pétain to de Gaulle in the space of only four months.61 However, this significant section of the French population was not, in reality, capricious. Instead, it remained remarkably consistent in recognising what it perceived to be its interests - stability. One of the American weekly civil affairs summary for France in September 1944 explained: 'Some surprise is expressed at the number of people who regard General de Gaulle as a symbol of resistance who will disappear with the return of normal conditions. The feeling has in fact shifted from the ideal of 'de Gaullism' to the man himself. All the people believe, or at least hope, that he is the man they so badly need."62

58 For a description and brief examination of this reaction, see: Footitt, H., and Simmonds, J., France 1943-5, Leicester, 1988, p.72-7.


60 London, PRO, FO 371 41852 Z 4382/ZG17, 19 June 1944.


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De Gaulle's achievement was to win over the left before the liberation by promising social revolution and then win over the right after the liberation by promising to control the extent of that revolution. In the chaos of liberation France, de Gaulle was able to represent himself as a rock, secure, in a sea of instability and violence. He won the right's support through his actions. He controlled the resistance 'war-lords' in the provinces; he integrated the FFI into the army and directed them to the front; he condemned the excesses of the purge; and he suppressed the communist threat. He also wooed conservative and, particularly, Catholic circles. It was not without chance that de Gaulle visited the Bishop of Bayeux during his visit to the town on 14 June. Nor was it coincidence that one of the first actions taken by de Gaulle on his entry into Paris was to celebrate a mass, while incidentally pleasing the communists by not allowing the archbishop of Paris, Mgr Suhard, to officiate at the service because he had met Marshal Pétain four months earlier and had been willing to hold a mass for PhilippeHenriot after his murder.

Despite the continuing excesses of the épuration, there was an unusual and unwonted political unanimity in France in the late summer of 1944. Duff Cooper, the newly appointed British ambassador in Paris, explained,

There is no doubt whatsoever that General de Gaulle has the support of a large majority of the French people and at present there are no signs of any rival springing up from the ranks of either old or new political alignments.

Curiously echoing the reports about Pétain in 1940 and 1941, Duff Cooper concluded his analysis by stating that General de Gaulle was regarded as almost above criticism.

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63 One American Officer, Captain de Pury, told the following story de Gaulle and the Bishop of Bayeux, who expected to see the general accompanied by 'comarades' wearing red scarfs: de Gaulle first introduced a M. Coulet, who turned out to be the nephew of a bishop. The bishop was then introduced to General Koenig - a Norman, followed by Admiral d'Argenlieux (a monk in civil life) who had been at the same seminary as the Bishop. Then Colonel Chevigne of an old Catholic family. Then Colonel Billotte and the Bishop was impressed to find he was the son of the General. Finally, Colonel de Boislambert - and the Bishop was delighted that he was the nephew of a Boislambert of Bernières, one of the biggest contributors to the Roman Catholic Church.... Since then he has been telling the people that the Gaullists are far from being Red revolutionists.' Report by Captain E.G. de Pury, London, P.R.O., FO 371 41863, undated.


CONCLUSION

HISTORY HAUNTS France more than most nations. As Eugen Weber has argued, in France, more than anywhere else, past politics are part of present politics. It is not surprising, then, that the war years - stretching from the inglorious defeat of the French army, through Vichy's collaboration with the Germans to the bloody contest between resistance and Milice, and concluding with the excesses of the purge - continue to torment the French psyche. The sudden rash of trials during the early 1990s of former Vichy officials demonstrates the depth and longevity of the country's trauma. There is no other way of explaining the decision to persecute men such as Paul Touvier, René Bousquet and Maurice Papon, all in their seventies or eighties, after nearly 50 years.

A symptom of that trauma - but also a cause - has been France's inability to address its war-time experience. War-time France remains an historical black hole, absorbing endless books and memoirs, without shedding any light on the subject. A necessary and politically potent consensus was developed after the conflict which maintained that Vichy was an aberration and that the resistance was the manifestation of a significant, popular and mainstream movement. Vichy was not an aberration, however. The government came to power through legitimate means, voted in legally by both the senate and the chamber of deputies. Its subsequent programmes and policies resonated with traditional French values and reflected a countrywide desire for national renewal. In Haute-Savoie, Vichy's organisations, such as the Legion, generated, until 1942, enthusiastic fervour, particularly in the countryside. And its leader, Marshal Pétain, was venerated until the liberation, almost beyond criticism.

When Vichy's relationship with Savoyard society finally broke down, it had not been poisoned by ideology and values. Rather, the relationship had been corrupted by the government's collaborationist foreign policy and, most importantly, the incompetent implementation of its interventionist economic policies.

The history of Vichy cannot be understood outside an economic context. Vichy's failure to administer the economy antagonised an urban working class which went increasingly hungry, and a peasant class that resented the growing interference of government in their affairs.

Vichy proved incapable of administrating agricultural areas, demonstrating the resilience and continued strength of French peasant society and suggesting there has been a tendency to overestimate the power of the French state before this period. Peasant resistance to Vichy economic policy was politically motivated only in small measure. At very best, for those peasants refusing to supply the government with food, there was a happy coincidence between financial self-interest and patriotism.

The collapse of the controlled economy unleashed powerful centrifugal forces on French society. The price paid for Vichy's failure to harness agricultural production was that the inhabitants of France's conurbations began to suffer deteriorating nutritional standards and mortality rates - a deterioration for which town-dwellers blamed both peasants and the administration. Paradoxically, at the same time, mortality rates in many rural departments such as Haute-Savoie improved. The failure to provide an equitable system of food distribution...
Conclusion

undermined Vichy’s legitimacy and exacerbated already poor town-country relations. This set the scene for bitter clashes between town-originating maquisards and traditional Catholic and conservative agricultural communities.

By the summer of 1944, France was a divided society. Vichy’s inability to control the power of money exacerbated the existing social inequalities as the poor went hungry and the rich appeared able to purchase anything they required on the alternative markets. Town turned against country as the urban poor blamed the peasants for food shortages. As the mal-distribution of resources deteriorated, so fears of revolution grew. France appeared to be heading for civil war.

Those fears of civil war were reinforced by the relationship between the resistance movements and the agricultural communities where they operated. Rejection of Vichy did not necessarily mean that support was transferred automatically to the resistance movements. Indeed, far from being manifestations of the popular will, the resistance movements represented a tiny minority. In some areas of Haute-Savoie, such as that around Thônes, a culture of the outlaw was created and sustained by the Armée Secrète. But in much of this rural department, the resistance movements enjoyed little popularity, demonstrating the fallacy of Maoist guerrilla theory that irregulars can only operate successfully with the consent of a willing population. Most maquisards were from the towns and found themselves obliged to requisition food, clothing and shelter from the peasants. This was done, on occasions, with considerable brutality. Such attacks, and the political inclination of the FTP - which was headed by communists - led some Haut-Savoyard peasants to join the anti-resistance Milice. The agricultural communities also resented resistance attacks on German forces which frequently led to bloody reprisals. It was only in Haut-Savoyard towns, where maquisards’ demands were limited, that the resistance enjoyed widespread popularity. The résistants were aware of the antagonism of most rural communities and after the liberation attempted to delay the municipal elections, fearing their candidates would lose in this predominantly rural department.

By the spring of 1944, hating the Germans, bombed by the Allies and terrified by the prospect of civil war, France did not know where to turn. One of de Gaulle’s greatest achievements was that this man - obscure before 1940 and politically unknown even in the months before the liberation - proved able to unite such a fundamentally divided country by gaining the confidence of France’s fearful Catholic conservative communities. This was achieved by controlling the resistance war-lords, condemning the excesses of the purge and suppressing the communist threat. De Gaulle saved the honour of France in 1940, but in 1944 saved its very fabric.
APPENDIX I

SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

This study is based heavily upon documents in the Archives Départementales in Annecy and, in particular upon two series: the prefect's rapports de base and the reports of the service de contrôle technique (SCT). Departmental archives contain the best and most underused records at present available to historians wanting to study France under Vichy at a local level.1 While the Archives Nationales in Paris contain some interesting series of documents and have been used to fill a number of gaps left in the departmental archives, most of the documents in Paris are syntheses of local reports, and have sometimes obviously suffered from selective editing on the part of the prefectural administration. Foreign archives have had only limited usefulness in this study. Although the British Foreign Office archives in the Public Records Office contain some useful background information, there is little specific detail relating to Haute-Savoie. The author has not had the resources to consult American State Department records, apart from two microfilm series which proved valuable.2 Finally, German archives, which have been used successfully by American historians such as Robert Paxton and John Sweets, unfortunately failed to yield any information pertinent to Haute-Savoie.3

The series in the departmental archives have provided an abundance of material, both in quantity and quality. The more open attitude of the French Government since 1979 means that, subject to dérogations from the ministry of culture supported by the prefect, it is now possible to be given access to certain series. With the kind support of the director of the archives and that of the contemporary prefect of Haute-Savoie, the author received access to a large number of series, including the reports sent to prefect from most of the agencies in the department, selected reports of the Renseignements Généraux on public opinion as well as resistance activities, and the reports of the SCT which was responsible for opening large quantities of letters and listening to telephone calls. The author was denied access to other series including the archives relating directly to the Service du Travail Obligatoire - the programme of obligatory work service in Germany set up in 1943 - and

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1 Most of John Sweets' work on Clermont-Ferrand was also based on departmental archives. Sweets, J.F., Choices in Vichy France: the French under Nazi occupation, Oxford, 1986, p.293.

2 OSS/State Department intelligence and research reports; OSS/London Special Operations Branch and Secret Intelligence Branch War Diaries. Both published by University Publications of America, Frederick, Maryland.

3 See: Paxton, R.O., Vichy France: old guard and new order - 1940-1944, Morningside edition, New York, 1982; Sweets, J.F., Choices in Vichy France: the French under nazi occupation, Oxford, 1986. The Militärarchiv in Freiburg yielded no records pertinent to Haute-Savoie. Another source - captured Axis documents in the hands of former members of the resistance in Haute-Savoie - were not made available to the author. It is to be hoped that such documents in private hands will eventually be deposited into the safe-keeping of the departmental archives.
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the archives of the Légion des Combattants. Although these series would have proved useful additional information, other sources available touched these subjects, in some cases extensively.

The prefect’s rapports de base represent an unusually rich vein of source material. They are made up of weekly and monthly reports from as many as 20 different government and quasi-government agencies in the department. The advantage of having access to these reports - on which the Prefect based his own monthly account of events and mentalités - is that they permit the historian to compare a large number of records compiled individually without collusion. They also permit a study of the way in which the monthly syntheses - which were sent to Vichy and are now to be found in the Archives Nationales in Paris - were put together at the prefecture. The series are, for the most part, entire, allowing the author to follow complete series, rather than dealing with isolated documents. The series of the Prefect’s rapports de base start in August 1940 and

4 The series for the STO is R 3 D; for the Légion, 23 J.

5 In addition, the ministry’s decision may well have proved a blessing - if permission had been given, the author might still be in Haute-Savoie seated daily in the archives. It is right that the documents should have some protection. There is undoubtedly still sensitive information included in the archives, including letters of délation, as well as reports with names of living persons and the parents of others. For this reason, names have, for the most part been withheld. A few exceptions have been made, such as the name of the head of the Légion, which is already widely-known in the department.

6 They include reports from the Prefect himself; the renseignements généraux; sous-préfets; chef d’escadron, commandant la compagnie de la Haute-Savoie; chef de la Légion; service général des douanes; directeur des PTT; agent administratif des cantons de Reignier et d’Annemasse; service général du contrôle économique; bureau départemental du ravitaillement; l’inspecteur du travail; directeur des services agricoles; l’intendant directeur département du ravitaillement général; direction général de l’enregistrement des domaines et du timbre; inspection académique; direction des services vétérinaires; trésorerie générale de la Haute-Savoie; ponts et chaussées; eaux et forêts; direction des contributions indirectes; chambre industrielle de Haute-Savoie.

7 These rapports de base reports were synthesised by the Prefect or his staff into monthly reports sent to the minister of the interior in Vichy. They dealt with social, political, economic, administrative and financial matters in each department. The rubrics changed from time to time. In August 1941, the reports were divided into three. Part one comprised: general observations; visits in the department; public opinion, activity of various groups (political, the Légion, professional), police activities against communists, gaulists, the black market; general administration, government departments, local administration, the clergy. Part two consisted of reports concerning other ministerial departments other than the ministry of the interior: information and propaganda; the economy and surveillance of prices; agriculture; the food supply; education; family and health; work; industrial production; and communications, including transport and PTT. The last section included relations with the occupying authorities. For a discussion of the use of the prefectorial sources see: Laborie, P., L’opinion française sous Vichy, Paris, 1990, p.33-43.

8 The author was more fortunate than Monique Luirard in her study of the department of the Loire. The rapports de base du Préfet in her department were missing between May 1941 and May 1943. Luirard, M., La région stéphanoise dans la guerre et dans la paix: 1936-1951, St. Etienne, 1980, p.294.
run continuously through until July 1944, with the exception of the reports for February and March 1942 which are missing.⁹ The reports of the SCT run continuously from December 1940 to December 1943.

The reports from the various government agencies have a great advantage over other sources. In the first place, they are contemporaneous, written on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. Unlike memoirs or published diaries, they have not been altered or edited, either consciously or unconsciously, with the benefit of hindsight. In addition, the reports were compiled by a civil service that was, on the whole, remarkably professional. Most of the authors assembling the rapports de base were more than frank about the population's attitudes towards the government, its policies and the administration.¹⁰ The unpopularity of Pierre Laval, for example, was not hidden either by the SCT, the Renseignements Généraux or the sous-prefets. Nor did the reports hide the sustained hostility to Vichy's foreign policy.¹¹ Such reports must be interpreted carefully - they are, of course, prisms rather than windows on the past.¹² The authors were, naturally, conditioned by the prevailing

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⁹ The documents are at the Departmental Archives in Annecy, in the series 12 W 8bis (August 1940 - March 1941), 12 W 8 (April 1941 - December 1941), 12 W 9 (January, November and December 1942), 12 W 7 (April - October 1942), 12 W10bis (January - August 1943), 12 W 10 (September - December 1943), 12 W 11 (January - July 1944).


¹¹ For example, the Contrôle Postal was unambiguous in its assessment of the Pierre Laval's famous speech when he announced that he wanted a German victory, because with it, Bolshevism would be win everywhere: 'L'effet produit est "pénible", "lamentable" et le nombre des adversaires du Gouvernement semble considérablement accru. En particulier, les mots par lesquels Monsieur Laval formule ouvertement des voeux pour une victoire de l'Allemagne sont commentés avec indignation et stupeur: "ce salaud a osé souhaiter une chose pareille", "c'est dire à la face du monde: je souhaite la mort de ma patrie"... "on sait désormais à quoi s'en tenir: il faut être Français ou Allemand." Report of Contrôle Postal d'Annecy, Annecy, A.D, 12 W 256, June 1942.

¹² For example, the statements of the many of the government agencies in the late spring and summer of 1944 should be treated carefully. Almost everyone connected with the administration proved increasingly unwilling to leave the main towns for the countryside. By the summer, the gendarmerie were only willing to leave their barracks when a murder had been committed. Otherwise, the amount of contact that these agents had with the countryside during this period was probably minimal. Nevertheless they continued to write reports as though they did.
Methodology and sources

ideologies of the time. The reports are often, for example, strongly anti-communist and sometimes anti-semitic.\(^{13}\)

The use of the reports of the SCT, made up of the Contrôle Téléphonique and Contrôle Postal, demands special mention. This organisation, set up under the Third Republic, was responsible, among other duties, for monitoring public opinion by clandestinely and randomly opening letters, monitoring telegrams and listening to telephone calls.\(^{14}\) The operation was exhaustive: in one month - January 1944 - the service intercepted nationwide some 2,236,120 letters, 1,573,763 telegrams and 92,000 telephone calls. In Haute-Savoie, during April 1942, there was a team of 16 members of the SCT involved in telephone interceptions alone. They listened to 18,896 calls during that month.\(^ {15}\) The Contrôle Postal was also active: in December 1943 it intercepted some 53,980 letters.\(^ {16}\) The reports of the SCT became progressively fuller and more detailed as Vichy's requirements for information became more pressing. The increase in professionalism between the reports of 1939 and those compiled in spring of 1944 is remarkable. The reports of the summer of 1944 even offered statistics providing the number of letters opened and the proportion offering an opinion on certain subjects. As such, the reports are highly seductive for the historian of mentalités who is often deprived of the sort of data available in other fields.

Invaluable as the reports of the SCT are, there remain some substantial problems for the historian using them. Not least is the question as to whether the attitudes reflected in the intercepted letters, telegrams and telephone calls were representative of general public opinion, or whether they merely represented the opinion of the letter-

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13 For example, the prefect complained about the population's attitudes to the Jewish community: 'nouveaux dans le pays, ils sont encore mal connus des Savoyards, auxquels les donées du problème juif échappent totalement: il se trouve des âmes compatissantes pour plaindre "ces pauvres Juifs."' Synthesis of reports of the SCT by the cabinet du préfet, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, second fortnight April 1942.


writing classes and those able to afford telephones. The SCT itself was aware of the problem: in June 1942, the author of the departmental synthesis of SCT reports pointed out that information culled from letters and telephone calls reflected the concerns of conservative town-based petit bourgeois and commerçants. They did not really reflect the opinions of peasants and workers who, for the most part, remained mute.

A second problem faced by the historian in using the reports of the SCT is the integrity of the information gathered and analyzed by the organisation. If the population knew about the SCT, there is a possibility that people would have refused to talk or write about certain issues, therefore reducing the value of the service to Vichy and diminishing the utility of its reports as a source for the historian. The government was aware of the danger of the existence of the SCT being discovered, and took considerable steps to keep it secret. For example, when the police interrogated people whom they knew from intercepted telephone calls were involved in the black market, they were under strict instructions not to confront them with the evidence. The government’s efforts were not always successful, however. In the second half of May 1941 the SCT warned that the existence of the SCT, and, in particular, the Contrôle Téléphonique, was known to a certain part of the population. It stated that some conversations, especially those linked to the alternative markets, were being carried out in code. The SCT note that conversations appeared to be less spontaneous than before. By March 1943, the Contrôle Téléphonique d’Annemasse reported that, 'la méfiance s'installent partout et les gens hésitent à se livrer au téléphone.' However, the extent of this reticence should not be overstated: as late as April 1943 even the communist party was still capable of indiscretions on the telephone. The SCT reported


18 Synthesis of reports by the SCT, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, June 1942.


20 When Marcel Peyrouthon was secretary of state for the interior in 1940, he wrote to all of the prefects in the unoccupied zone: 'J'attire tout particulièrement votre attention sur la nécessité absolue de garder un caractère secret aux contrôles techniques. Dès l'instant où l'existence de ces contrôles est connue, la source de renseignements est tarie.' Letter from M. Peyrouthon to prefects in the non-occupied zone, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 254, 13 October 1940.

21 Synthesis of the SCT, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 257, second fortnight May 1941.

22 Report of the Contrôle Téléphonique, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, March 1943. This was confirmed by the Renseignements Généraux a few months earlier: report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 9, 21 December 1942.
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that it was only then that members became more discreet when talking on the telephone.23 The increasing unwillingness to talk on the telephone may not necessarily have been because people knew about the SCT. Rather, it may well have been because they were reluctant to express themselves at all.24

As for self-censorship of expression in letters, it appears as though most people continued to be remarkably naive about possible surveillance. Admittedly, there were complaints about the mail between Geneva and Haute-Savoie taking between five and six days to arrive,25 and as early as 1941 there were reports that some Haut-Savoyards had become more reserved and prudent. But the contrôle postal pointed out that people were still willing to demonstrate gaulist sentiments in their letters.26 In July 1942, for example, one correspondent was still willing to write letters admiring the 'geste magnifique' of the Free French, and castigating 'les traîtres d'avant guerre, payés par l'Allemagne, qui sont au pouvoir.'27 And as late as December 1943, 2440 letters were intercepted praising the performance of the Soviet army.28

Despite the dual problems of self-censorship and the unrepresentative nature of the opinions observed in letters, telegrams and telephone calls, the reports of the SCT remain invaluable, and one of the most objective sources from the period. Certainly the Vichy government, and in particular, Admiral Darlan took them seriously. He wrote to the prefects in April 1941, asking them too ensure that the bi-monthly reports arrived by the 5th and 20th of each month so a synthesis could be prepared: "la réunion des synthèses départementales

23 Synthesis of reports of the SCT, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, April 1943.
24 As resistance activity became increasingly prolific, the Renseignements Généraux noted that people were no longer willing to exteriorise their beliefs any more because of fears of their neighbours denouncing them. Report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 11, 2 July 1944. The Contrôle Téléphonique d'Annemasse quoted one telephone call in October between a young woman in a telephone box in Annemasse and a woman over the border in Geneva: C: Que pensez-vous de la guerre en France? B: Moi, je ne lis plus les journaux. C: Mais qu'est-ce qu'on en dit en France? B: On n'en parle pas beaucoup. Report of the Contrôle Téléphonique d'Annemasse, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 258, October 1941.
26 Synthesis of the SCT, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 258, 4 July 1941.
28 Report of Commission Mixte de Contrôle Technique, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 256, December 1943. It was not just the Haut-Savoyards who were naive. When the Americans captured the records of the SCT in the department of the Calvados in Normandy, they found little evidence of censorship consciousness in intercepted letters. Report of US army civil affairs on mail and telecommunications censorship, London, P.R.O., FO 371 42017 Z 4444, July 1944.
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constitue, si chacune d'elles est établie soigneusement, une source précieuse d'information au sujet de l'état
de l'opinion publique.29

A number of other sources have also been used. The unpublished diaries of the René Dépollier and his father
Louis, who were both involved in the newspaper business in Annecy, have been used to add certain details not
covered in the administration's reports. However, newspapers have been used only sparingly in this study.
Although there have been some exemplary textual studies of the medium, especially in the period between the
Munich agreement in 1938 and May 1940,30 this source has not been used. The main difficulty is that the
coverage of events in newspapers after June 1940 was heavily influenced by censorship and self-censorship,
which meant that the papers scarcely, if at all, acted as a reflection of contemporary opinion.31

Finally, it will be noted that the transcripts of oral interviews have not been used in this study, despite the fact
the author taped more than 30 hours of conversation with some of the leading resistance figures in the
region.32 There is not space here to discuss the merits and demerits of oral testimony.33 However, a number

29 Letter from Darlan to prefects, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 254, 26 April 1941. Concerning the objectivity of
the sources, Roger Austin has commented, 'The frankness of the opinions expressed and the numbers of letters
intercepted suggests the analysis of the mood of the population by Vichy officials was not simply a projection
of their own views.' Austin, R.S.P., 'Propaganda and Public Opinion in Vichy France: Hérault 1940-1944',

30 See, for example, the work of Pierre Laborie on the newspapers in the Lot: Laborie, P., Résistants,

31 The series 12 W 338-351 in the departmental archives in Annecy all concern the press and the
government's attempts to control it. There is a disappointing study of the press in the department after the
liberation: Bidal, P., 'Les journaux de la libération Haute-SavoYarde', (unpublished mémoire, université des
sciences sociales de Grenoble, 1985). Jean-Noel Jeanneney has argued, 'Même en temps de paix, livres et
journaux constituent une source difficile, et quelquefois mensongère, parce qu'ils ne sont à peu près jamais
des reflets neutres de l'opinion publique en même temps qu'ils la traduisent, ils aspirent à l'influencer, signes
court à la fois de ses évolutions... Si la presse demeure utile à observer comme moteur de l'opinion
publique, elle n'en est plus qu'un très médiocre reflet. See: Jeanneney, J-N., 'Les archives des commissions de
contrôle postal aux armées (1916-18)', Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine, 15 (1968), p.209-233,
p.209.

32 Copies of the tapes have been deposited at the Anglian Higher Education College in Cambridge which,
under the direction of Hilary Footitt and John Simmonds, has the best collection of resistance documentation
in the UK.

33 For a rather idealistic but nonetheless useful view of oral history see: Thompson, P., The voice of the
excellent work by Anthony Seldon and Joanna Pappworth: Seldon, A., and Pappworth, J., By word of mouth;
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of points need to be made. Firstly, the interviewees were self-selecting; the interviews conducted were almost exclusively with members of the resistance movements. It proved almost impossible to find anyone from the Milice or PPF willing to come forward. Locating opinion formers who had been attached to none of these groups, such as mayors, syndics, primary school teachers or priests, also proved difficult. Furthermore, those members of the resistance willing to be talk were almost all from the right-wing Armée Secrète (AS): former members of the communist-led Francs-Tireurs et Partisans (FTP) were far more reticent in their willingness to talk.

The actual testimony of individuals is also difficult to evaluate. The horizon and perspective that any one individual has, especially in clandestine activity, is inevitably limited. To the witness, the importance of his or her organisation and the events in which they took part remain highly significant, whereas within the wider scheme of things, neither need have been particularly important. It becomes extremely difficult to place the individual's role within the context of what else was happening. The evidence offered is, moreover, often anecdotal, almost impossible to place within any established chronology and frequently almost impossible to cross-reference with contemporary sources. Some of the interviewees tended to over-simplify events or deny problems, while others refused to address certain issues. Any oral testimony is a selective reconstruction of the past - a reconstruction that is inevitably influenced by later events and that enemy of the historian, hindsight. Many of the interviews proved to be performances which, the audience felt, had been rehearsed many times. Some of the sources said they had reminded themselves of events before the interview by reading books on the period: on occasions they were incapable of distinguishing events through which they had lived, and those about which they had read.

This is not to say that the interviews conducted were worthless. They directed the author towards certain aspects of resistance activity, for example the day-to-day problems of food, clothing, shelter and heating, the importance of which might not have become apparent. Not least, the

34 One former member of the resistance in the area of Sallanches continually denied any tensions between the resistance of the local community, arguing that the population supported it wholeheartedly. This contrasted with the testimony of one individual who had been adjoint to mayor before, during and after Vichy and who, when interviewed in 1985, consistently made the unconscious mistake of referring to members of the resistance as 'les terroristes,' before correcting himself to say 'les résistants.'

35 One interviewee refused to talk about events after the liberation, saying: 'Avant c'était la résistance. Après c'était la politique.'

36 Memory is inevitably selective. When the events recalled are as controversial as the occupation period, memories can prove particularly selective.
Methodology and sources

interviews proved invaluable in providing a heightened sense of responsibility: watching a 65-year old career soldier crying as he describes events 40 years earlier is an important reminder to the historian of his duties.
APPENDIX II

MORTALITY RATE METHODOLOGY

The most effective method of examining whether Vichy succeeded in establishing a just and efficient system of food distribution in a time of apparent shortage would be to establish a prices and wages index. However, this has not proved feasible. Despite government controls over prices, there were, in fact, at least four different price levels. Moreover the availability of a product on any particular market at any one time was seldom guaranteed, and it is almost impossible to be sure whether or how particular products were substituted.

If levels of expenditure are difficult to estimate, attempts to evaluate income also present problems. For urban workers, it should, in theory, be possible to multiply fixed hourly wage rates by the number of hours worked. However, hours varied considerably. After the Armistice, there was initially considerable part-time unemployment; later, hours of employment varied enormously from factory to factory depending on supplies of power and raw materials. Furthermore, official wages did not represent workers' complete remuneration. After 1940, as shortages of labour became more acute, some factory owners began to provide their employees with gratuities, compensations and illegal bonuses, or even increased salaries without informing the authorities to ensure the retention of a sufficiently skilled and adequately-sized workforce (Some may also have been motivated by more generous motives). The employers also offered marginal extras such as works canteens to offset the declining purchasing power of factory workers and guarantee them sufficient supplies of food. Given that many of these benefits were illegal, and therefore have left only fragmentary evidence, there appears to be no method of establishing an index of employee compensation.

A further difficulty in establishing the purchasing power of complete families rests on the lack of information available about female employment: some women were made unemployed as part of Vichy's vision of women's role being in the home, and their families' incomes will have decreased accordingly. The impact of these various

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1 This would have proved most effective for the urban population which was most vulnerable to shortages. Most of the rural population was self-sufficient in basic foodstuffs.

2 As defined in article in Bourderon, R., 'Le ravitaillement et les prix dans le département du Gard', RHDGM, 79 (1970), p.37-60, p.38. Bourderon includes prix à la taxe set by the prefect or the government nationally; prix normal, an average of prices found in market places; prix réel, the price to be found in retail shops; and prix au marché noir. He does not divide the prix marché noir into prix marché rose or prix marché gris - when friends sold goods to each other at prices lower than those on the black market. These other parallel markets were also called the marché amical.

3 The position of the peasants, who made up most of the population of Haute-Savoie, was of course different.


Appendix II: mortality rate methodology

Factors, which for the most part are impossible to estimate, will have had an important effect on families' real incomes, and when taken in relation to prices, on their standard of living. Given the apparent impossibility of establishing a prices and wages index, a different method has been used to give an indication of the standard of living for the population in Haute-Savoie.

The most useful indicator of the level of nutrition and standards of living available for this study has been adult and infant mortality rates, which have been examined for the period between 1938 and 1945. Although it would have been more effective to study a longer period, the changes in reporting causes of deaths that occurred in France during the late 1930s have not allowed compatible comparisons. Nevertheless, despite the relatively short period under study and given certain reservations, the available figures offer some interesting conclusions.

Before mortality rates for the department during the war period can be estimated, it is necessary to establish not only the number of deaths and their causes, but also the population for the period. This is no easy matter as the population of Haute-Savoie was far from static between 1938 and 1945. Although an overall increase took place between the start of the war and the liberation, there were frequent fluctuations within each year because of temporary migration, and rather incongruously, tourism. Haute-Savoie enjoyed two tourist seasons: the less significant of the two was in winter, although even during this season the number of visitors could be quite large. During the winter of 1940-41, the director of the Service du Ravitaillement Général noted an increase in the population of the department from 260,000 to 280,000: most of the extra population, which included German holiday-makers, being lodged in winter resorts in the east of the department such as Chamonix, St. Gervais, Megève, La Clusaz and Morzine. During summer months tourism caused even larger temporary fluctuations in population: it was estimated that during the summer of 1942 the department's population had increased from around 280,000 to some 330,000.

Haute-Savoie also experienced more permanent migration during the war. The department offered a number of attractions including more than adequate food supplies - in the countryside, at least - as well as a congenial environment and the prospect of some physical safety. As early as 1939 refugees fled to the Haute-Savoie from Alsace and Lorraine which were threatened by German invasion, and when the invasion did come in 1940, the exodus added some 15,000 refugees to the department from a wide number of countries. Many of these refugees stayed on and were joined by others during the course of the war. In particular, the department played host to a large number of Jews. In 1942 and 1943, Haute-Savoie experienced an influx of both foreign and French Jews, attracted by the proximity of the often illusory safety of Switzerland and later by the possibility

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6 Report by director of the Service du Ravitaillement Général, Annecy, A.D., 808 W 4., 2 December 1940; Ibid., 7 July 1942.

7 Some 12,000 of these had been directed from Switzerland. Prefect's report to Ministère Secrétairde d'État à l'Intérieur, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 8bis, 22 August 1940.
Appendix II: Mortality rate methodology

of Italian protection from Vichy legislation. Other political refugees, such as those who refused to obey the call-up for obligatory work service in Germany (known as the Service du Travail Obligatoire (STO)), were drawn from locations far from the Alps, attracted by the department's reputation as a refuge and source of food. However, actual numbers are difficult to estimate as réfractaires were not included in Vichy estimates of the population requiring ration tickets. There was also some limited emigration: a comparison of the 1936 and 1945 censuses shows that the Italian population fell substantially during the war. The Relève in 1942 and the STO in 1943, both of which were introduced by the Government to send labour to Germany, also caused some emigration. Although few volunteered for the Relève or responded to their call-up papers, a number did go to Germany or escaped over the border into Switzerland to escape Vichy demands.

Despite this migration, it has proved possible to put together an estimate of the population for the period. In so far as has been feasible, population aggregates have been taken from the monthly reports of the Ravitaillement Général based in Annecy which were sent to the Prefect and exist between 1940 and 1943. These statistics, provided by one of the government departments in charge of food distribution, were used to decide the numbers of ration cards needed in each commune. They were probably accurate until 1943 when réfractaires from the STO began to hide in the department and were therefore not included in the figures. Data have not always been available for every month in each year, and an average of available months has been used as the most effective method of establishing an annual figure for the department until the end of 1942. After this date, when the Ravitaillement Général statistics are no longer reliable, the averages compiled by the INSEE (Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques) have been used. The results are in table 6.

8 Jews wanting to escape into Switzerland faced more difficulties than just evading Vichy and Axis forces. They also needed to avoid the Swiss authorities, unless they had been designated as political refugees. Many Jews were deported back into France.

9 A fall probably caused by anti-Italian sentiment in the region and the targeting of Italian subjects by the resistance particularly in 1943. The Italian population dropped from 13,381 in 1936 to 6,961 in 1946 - a decline of 48%. Between June 1943 and June 1944, some 20 Italian civilians were killed by the Resistance and there were a further 33 incidents involving attacks on Italian nationals or their property during the same period: statistics compiled by author from reports of the police, Renseignements Généraux and the prefect, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10-12, 75, 77, 79-93, 228, 234.

10 By the end of August 1942, there had been 90 volunteers for the programme from Haute-Savoie: report of Prefect in Lyon, 3 September 1942, quoted in Chauvy, G., Lyon 40-44, Paris, 1985, p.195.

11 By 25 March 1943, only 127 of those men summoned for the Relève had actually left, and only 120 of those given call up papers for the STO had departed: report of Renseignements Généraux, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 25 March 1943; report of C., Commandant de la brigade de gendarmerie de la Haute-Savoie, Annecy, A.D., 12 W 10bis, 22 March 1943. Numbers of those leaving the department after these dates dropped considerably.

12 Annecy, A.D., 2 M 66, 181 and 808 W 4.
Appendix II: mortality rate methodology

POPULATION OF HAUTE-SAVOIE: 1938-45

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>1938</th>
<th>1939</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>259,961</td>
<td>240,650</td>
<td>240,650</td>
<td>265,000</td>
<td>283,803</td>
<td>284,444</td>
<td>273,000</td>
<td>275,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6

As will be demonstrated, Vichy reports consistently reiterate the difference in conditions between town and country during the war, and an attempt has been made to examine the different rates of mortality in urban and rural districts. The most useful size of administrative area for which data are available is the canton. Following the example of Emile-François Callot’s work on post-war elections, the twenty-eight cantons have been divided into four types: rural; those dominated by rural activity but with some industry; those partly dominated by industry though still with some agricultural production; and urban. Callot categorized the rural cantons as: Alby, Thônes, Thorens, Samoëns, Taninges, Cruseilles, Frangy, Seyssel, Abondance, Le Biot and Boëge, a total of eleven cantons with an approximate population (based on an average of 1936 and 1946 censuses) of 54,267 - some 20.1 per cent of the aggregate population of the whole department. Six cantons were defined as predominantly rural: Rumilly, Chamonix, La Roche-sur-Foron, Reignier, St.Julien and Douvaine, with an estimated population of 53,608 - some 19.84 per cent. Partly industrialized cantons also numbered six: Faverges, Bonneville, St.Gervais, St.Jeoire, Sallanches, and Evian, with a population of 62,479 - some 23.13 per cent. The remaining five were classified as urban: Annecy-Nord, Annecy-Sud, Cluses, Annemasse and Thonon, with a population of 99,789 - some 36.94 per cent.

However, although it might be deduced from these figures that over a third of department was urban, the vast majority of the population’s economic activity remained agriculturally-based. In his monumental study of the department under the Third Republic, Justinien Raymond estimated that as late as 1936, 280 of the 315 communes that made up the department were predominantly rural. Taking twenty rural communes as a sample he discovered that 78% of the population in these communes comprised either of those gaining their livelihood predominantly from agriculture or their families. Even in cantons which were partly industrialized, 28.6% of the population still earned their living from the land. Despite a decline in rural population dating back to the nineteenth century, peasants continued to make up the largest section of Haute-Savoyard society. The history of Haute-Savoie during the war is one of an essentially agricultural society.


16 Ibid., p.634.

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Appendix II: mortality rate methodology

Two sources have been used to establish cause specific mortality rates: statistics to be found the Archives Départementales in Annecy for the period between 1938 and 1942, and secondly material provided by the INSEE for the years from 1943 to 1945. The former were based on forms completed by local doctors or mayors and have been used until 1942 because the INSEE failed to publish complete results for these years. Afterwards, the local monthly statistics to be found in the Departmental Archives became unreliable, as communications broke down and deaths were not fully reported. The INSEE figures are complete for these years as it was able to register these deaths in their final results after the war in 1947.

The causes of death have been divided into the twelve part classification adopted by Preston, based on aetiological rather than anatomical criteria, which has been used effectively in other studies. Unfortunately, the sources available provide no comparable data on age-specific or sex specific mortality, nor do they offer any breakdown on post-neonatal, perinatal or maternal mortality. Maternal and infant mortality together with deaths caused by car accidents have been included in the twelfth category (others).

There are of course methodological problems in using these statistics. Given that no data exist on the age structure of the department, there are obviously considerable difficulties in comparing mortality rates for different four types of geographical areas. The location of hospitals and sanatoria also affected the mortality rates of certain geographical areas: it was not until after the war that the deaths of patients were registered in the commune where they usually resided rather than where the hospital was situated. Any benefits that communities may have had from hospitals, in terms of improved mortality rates, will have been offset by the numbers of deaths of those who were not usually domiciled in the commune.

Similarly, there is the problem of comparing mortality rates of different years, when the age structures of the various populations are unknown. The absence of prisoners of war and those affected by the Relève and STO, most of whom were in the prime of life, should have increased both the age profile and the mortality rates in the populations where they were absent. However, this forced emigration has not proved too important for, as will be seen, mortality rates dropped between 1938 and 1943. If the prisoners had been present an even larger decrease would have been registered.


20 For example, the areas around Chamonix, Thonon and Evian had a number of large sanatoria and therefore officially suffered abnormally high rates of tuberculosis.
Appendix II: mortality rate methodology

The difficulties of comparing causes of death in different years are more problematic. Between 1938 and 1945 there were considerable changes in the classification of causes of death and these will have affected the figures. The method of declaring causes of death was changed in 1937 so that from that year doctors' reports became anonymous, allowing the accurate recording of certain deaths from less socially acceptable causes such as syphilis. The percentage of poorly defined or non-specified causes of death in the whole of France dropped from 21% of all diagnoses to 10% between 1936 and 1942. The following year it fell further to 9%. One example of the possible effects of better diagnosis was the sharp deterioration in the T.B. (in all forms) combined sex mortality rate on a national level from .00120 in 1936 to .00154 in 1942. This may have been partly caused by a poorer nutrition in certain urban areas, as well as worsening housing conditions, but was believed by the INSEE to be caused by improving accuracy of diagnosis of French doctors.

Despite these improvements in diagnosis, the annual reports of the INSEE repeatedly argued that the number of causes that were undeclared, registered as unknown, badly defined or caused by senility - a diagnosis which was too imprecise to be used effectively - was unacceptable. The figures available are, therefore, at best indications of trends rather than irrefutable evidence.

However, despite the difficulties of inaccuracy in diagnosis and the variations in the original sources - both in methods of classification and their completeness - the statistics do provide an interesting indication of the state of health and possible nutritional intake of the population in Haute-Savoie during the war years.


23 Ibid, p.xxxii.

24 Statistique du mouvement de la population: les causes de décès: 1940-42, Paris, 1945, p. v. Haute-Savoie was picked out as one of the worst offenders: Ibid., 1943, Paris, 1947, p. xv. The harsh winters which cut many villages off for weeks often denied access to doctors, so that it was left to the mayor to fill in the bulletin de décès. As late as 1943, only 79% of deaths in Haute-Savoie were properly registered. See: Statistique du mouvement de la population: les causes de décès: 1943-5, Paris, 1947, p.xv.
APPENDIX III

The scale of resistance in Haute-Savoie

The actual quantity of combatant effectives in the resistance movements based in the department is difficult to estimate at any one moment. Numbers fluctuated incessantly. As has been demonstrated, both the FTP and the AS in Haute-Savoie came under continuous and sustained pressure from both Axis and Vichy forces and, not surprisingly, experienced heavy casualties as a result. Many maquisards abandoned the life of an outlaw of their own accord; the lifestyle for those réfractaires who joined armed resistance groups was far from easy. This was particularly true during the winter of 1943-44 when Axis forces and the trials of the mountain cold placed particular demands on maquisards and réfractaires. Some decided to return to the relative safety of civilization in the valleys below. Others strayed into groups which were not affiliated to resistance organisations but had a more relaxed towards discipline. A further problem in assessing the numbers who resisted is posed by difficulties in estimating the number of sédentaires at any one moment who were waiting for the call to be mobilised. All these dynamics made it difficult for the resistance organisations themselves to estimate their effectives at any one time. It is no easier for the modern historian.

Contemporary resistance records never suggested that either the FTP or the AS were particularly large in Haute-Savoie. When Rosenthal was first parachuted into the Rhône-Alpes region with Richard Heslop in October 1943, he was asked to investigate reports that there were hundreds of thousands of réfractaires in the mountains waiting to be armed. After spending three months in the departments of the Jura, Ain and Haute-Savoie, the mission reported back to Special Operations Executive that there were 400 men in Haute-Savoie who called properly be called maquisards - a term which was defined as meaning a man who lived in a camp, was armed and ready to fight at any time. Members of the Groupes Francs and the Armée Secrète numbered about two and a half times those in the maquis proper. A British estimate of maquisard strength in Haute-Savoie on 26 January 1944 just before the Glières incident began put the figure somewhat higher at 1,630, compared with 520 in the Ain and 6,850 in the Jura. The number of those en maquis following the disaster at the Plateau de Glières was undoubtedly lower than this figure.

After the landings in Normandy, however, both the AS and the FTP agreed that their strengths increased as volunteers joined the movements. A report by Commandant Augagneur gave the strength of the FTP on 6

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1 The answer to the problem of the number of effectives may be in the records held by Mr. Robert Poirson, a member of the AS who has a large private archive which, unfortunately, was not available for this study.

2 There were 200 in the Jura and 700 in the Ain: Rosenthal debriefing, RF section history in OSS/London: Special Operations Branch and Secret Intelligence Branch war diaries, microfilm collection published by University Publications of America, Frederick, Maryland, p.71.

3 These were not defined.

4 It is possible that the increase between October and January was a result of Rosenthal's efforts to organise the resistance in the department. Report of the Inter-services Research Bureau, London, P.R.O., FO 371 41904, 19 February 1944.
Appendix III: the scale of resistance in Haute-Savoie

June 1944 at 1,500 men of whom 200 were partisans. He did not define the term partisans, however. 5 By 3 July, Lieutenant Ball telegraphed that the AS had 3,400 'city and village sédentaires', adding that 400 unarmed gendarmes had also joined the movement. 6 Most of these sédentaires had to wait some time before they were armed, however. The following month, on 12 August 1944 Lucien Rose wrote to Alban Vistel that the AS had only 1,200 armed men and the FTP 1,000. 7 This was despite the parachute drop on 1 August 1944, when, according to Ball, about 2,500 people had assembled on the Plateau de Glières to receive the American bombers. 8

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6 The AS was clearly seen as the resistance movement representing law and order. Ball's debriefing, RF section history in OSS/London: Special Operations Branch and Secret Intelligence Branch war diaries, microfilm collection published by University Publications of America, Frederick, Maryland, Vol.3, p.1398.

7 Letter from Lucien Rose to Alban Vistel, document in the private archives of M. Mounthon, 12 August 1944.

ABBREVIATIONS

AS  Armée Secrète
BBC  British Broadcasting Corporation
CDL  Comité Départemental de Libération
CFTC  Confédération Française des Travailleurs Chrétiens
CGT  Confédération Générale du Travail
CGTU  Confédération Générale du Travail Unitaire.
CLL  Comité Local de Libération
CNR  Comité National de la Résistance
FFI  Forces Françaises de l'Intérieur
FN  Front National
FO  Foreign Office
FTP(F)  Francs-Tireurs et Partisans Français
GMR  Groupes Mobiles de Réserve
JAC  Jeunesse Agricole Catholique
JEC  Jeunesse Etudiante Catholique
JIC  Jeunesse Indépendente Catholique
JOC  Jeunesse Ouvrière Catholique
LVF  Légion des Volontaires Français (contre le Bolchévisme)
MLN  Mouvement de Libération Nationale
MRP  Mouvement Républicain Populaire
MUR  Mouvement Uni de Résistance
OSS  Office of Strategic Studies
PCF  Parti Communiste Français
PPF  Parti Populaire Français
PSF  Parti Social Français
PTT  Postes et Télécommunications
PWE  Political Warfare Executive
RAF  Royal Air Force
SCT  Service de Contrôle Technique
SFIO  Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière
SOE  Special Operations Executive
SOL  Service d'Ordre Légionnaire
SS  Schutzstaffeln
STO  Service du Travail Obligatoire
TODT  German construction organisation

Abbreviations used in notes

AN  Archives Nationales, Paris
AD  Archives Départementales
IHTP  Institut d'Histoire du Temps Présent, Paris
PRO  Public Record Office, London
RHDGM  Revue d'Histoire de la Deuxième Guerre Mondiale
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