

**FRENCH GESTAPO
TRIALS
And Other Articles**

Vincent Reynouard

**Translated by
Carlos Whitlock Porter**

FRENCH GESTAPO TRIALS
Vincent Reynouard

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Introduction to the English Edition

About five years ago, Vincent Reynouard – currently residing at an unknown location to avoid his second or third term of imprisonment for his scholarly historical writings – had a brain-storm, one of the smartest revisionist ideas I ever heard of: he took the trouble to compare the accusations made against the Gestapo at Nuremberg, by the French, with the post-war French trials of the same personnel, involving the same cases, the same victims, the same witnesses. What he found was that the evidence and accusations were not the same: the accusations made at Nuremberg in these same cases were practically forgotten. The French Gestapo articles in this volume constitute some of the best proof I ever saw that the Nuremberg “evidence” was just lies, all lies.

Reynouard, born in 1969 in Normandy, is (or was) a highly qualified secondary school teacher of mathematics, physics and chemistry. His scientific training allows him to write methodically, systematically and in great detail, proving every step of an argument as he goes along. Despite his qualifications and undisputed abilities as a teacher, he has been deprived of employment since the mid-1990s, with approximately half a dozen prosecutions and/or convictions for the Orwellian thought crime of *negationism*, dating back to 1992.

In all cases, he was prosecuted solely for his privately held political and historical views which he never mentioned in class. His students all liked him, and repeatedly demonstrated in his favor.

Negationism – whatever that means – has, of course, nothing to do with “Freedom of Expression”; that, of course, is something entirely different.

For example, on January 7, 2105, Moslem terrorists slaughtered the entire staff of a French humor magazine, *Charlie Hebdo*, on the grounds that they felt “offended” by its cartoons. (They are not offended by beheadings or child rapes – only cartoons.)

One of the cartoons to which the Moslem terrorists aforesaid paid absolutely no attention whatsoever (drawn by a Jew of Tunisian origin, Georges Wolinski, killed in the massacre) depicted the Holy Ghost sodomizing Jesus, who was, in turn, sodomizing God! There were many others in a similar vein.

This is “Freedom of Expression”. The articles in this book are not “Freedom of Expression”. This must be firmly understood.

Presto! Within the twinkling of an eye, millions of Frenchmen, including heads of state and other prestigious personages, were to be seen parading around like lemmings, bearing placards and signs saying “I AM CHARLIE”, in support of the “Freedom of Expression” aforesaid. (You are not allowed to say “Moslems Out of France”, even though nobody invited them and nobody wants them; that is a criminal offense. Such freedom!)

Within another month – the twinkling of another proverbial eye – the author of this book was sentenced *in absentia* to 2 years imprisonment and a huge fine, once again, for the *crimen atrocissimus* of *negationism*! This was quickly lowered to one year, which turned out to be the maximum penalty! (It would appear that French judges are too stupid to know their own laws, probably a very common situation.)

The articles in this book are scholarly, serious and well-researched. Read this book carefully. Do you find anything blasphemous? Obscene? Racist? Heretical? Anything jeopardizing or undermining our Christian heritage, public decency and morals, the fundamentals of our civilization? You be the judge.

Carlos W. Porter,
July 14, 2015.

List of Terms and Abbreviations

Fresnes – famous French prison.

Rue de Saussaies – German Gestapo headquarters in Paris.

Feldkommandatur – German Field Command Post.

STO – compulsory labor service.

TSF – radio receiver-transmitter.

M. – Mr.

Mme – Mrs.

Mlle – Miss.

Maquis, maquisards – rural Resistance.

Gestapo gangs – small groups of Gestapo auxiliaries, usually foreigners, with little or no police training, employed by the Gestapo and distinguished by nationality or leader.

PBL = Trial of the “Bonny-Lafon Gang” [Procès Bony-Lafont].

PGN = Trial of the “Neuilly Gestapo” [Procès Gestapo de Neuilly].

PAFG = Trial of the “French Gestapo Auxiliaries” [Procès des auxiliaries français du Gestapo].

PGG = Trial of the “Georgia Gestapo” [Procès du Gestapo de Georgia].

PTT = Post, Telegraph and Telephone office.

Attentat = bombing or assassination attempt.

Gestapo Behavior towards Women and Young Girls

False nature of the official claims

Despite the evidence, the French prosecutor at Nuremberg dared to declare:

“Those who carried out these measures had every latitude for unleashing their instinct of cruelty and of sadism towards their victims” [IMT V, 401]. Supposing this to be true, these agents are said to have exploited women who fell into their hands. This is untrue.

Of course, in his report, cited above, H. Paucot wrote that, during the interrogations, **“The women and young girls were... almost always completely undressed, out of pure sadism”** (doc. F-571, IMT XXXVII, 263, in French).

But this is untrue: in the thousands of pages which I had taken the trouble to read, there is no question of undressing [except for one case involving a common-place theft perpetrated by two members of the “Bonny-Lafon gang”. The thieves tortured and undressed an old woman and her nurse to force them to reveal the hiding place of their savings. The two victims were then murdered. In this lamentable affair, the individuals were not acting, not as agents in the German service, but as common criminals in search of material gain, etc.] Otherwise, there is no question of rape or even improper gestures or touching.

Mlle Phegnon suffered no humiliation

At the “Neuilly Gestapo Trial”, Colette Phegnon, the daughter of the local Resistance leader, described her interrogation; while she claimed to have been beaten or struck (see above), she mentions no undressing, no torture. In this regard, she contented herself with saying: “[R. Martin] threatened me with the bathtub treatment. But they didn’t go through with it.” (PGN, 5, 96).

No “inappropriate gestures” with regards to Mlle Lelong

Even more clearly, the following is the deposition of Mlle Lelong, who recalled her treatment (fully dressed), but tied to a chair and beaten by Gestapo agent M. Beller:

“THE PRESIDENT. – No inappropriate touching?

Mlle LELONG. – No.

THE PRESIDENT. – I like that better” [PAFG, hearing of 1 March 1947, deposition of Jacqueline Lelong, p. 24].

Mme Memain spoke of “rather correct” police agents...

Two years before, another Resistance member, Mme Memain, was asked a similar question and gave a similar response:

“THE PRESIDENT. – Did those in the lodge acted appropriately towards yourself, Mlle Genet and others?

Mme MEMAIN. – They were rather correct” [PGG, dossier 10, p. 117.]

Mme Thierry speaks of “correct” agents as well

At the Bonny-Lafon trial, a woman whom he had already questioned, F. Thierry, was also questioned as to the manner in which she had been interrogated:

“Me DELAUNEY. – [...] you were released, after an interrogation, which was courteous, I believe?

THE WITNESS. – It was correct” [PLB, 6, p. 167, deposition of Françoise Thierry].

Treatment of pregnant women

The prosecution spoke of pregnant women beaten until they suffered miscarriages...

At Nuremberg, the French prosecution produced a terrible written declaration by Major Pierre Loranger. After investigating the acts of the German police services in France under the occupation, he wrote:

“To the physical torments, the sadism of their torturers added the particularly painful moral torment for a woman or young girl of being undressed and stripped naked by her torturers. The condition of pregnancy did not protect them from blows and when the brutalities entailed the expulsion of the product of conception,

they were left without care, exposed to all the accidents and complications of this criminal abortion.” [IMT XXXVII, 297]

**These accusations are not confirmed
by any testimony whatever**

The following are three written testimonies from women and one from a man, but concerning his wife. **One expects to find four terrible tales of forced nudity, inhuman torments inflicted upon pregnant women and resulting miscarriages. But we find nothing of the kind: no nudity, no humiliation, no miscarriages due to beatings, etc.:**

– Lucienne Krasnoploski was not mistreated at all; employed for two months as a cleaning lady at the Kommandantur of Valenciennes, if anyone had been beaten or tortured, she would have seen it (*Ibid.*, pp. 299-300).

– Madame Carton, a barmaid who failed to serve the Germans fast enough, received a hard slap which perforated her ear drum (pp. 297-8).

– Madame Hazard, whose husband was “the head of a Resistance group” is said to have been beaten with a whip “with extreme violence”, but without causing any fractures, which “stupefied” the physician (p. 298).

It should be noted that these women were not pregnant. The only one who was pregnant, was named Gilberte Sindemans. She was a young Resistance member, aged 22. On 24 February 1944, she was arrested in a hotel in Paris. A search permitted the discovery of the affair of the stamps from the Kommandatur, “*laissez-passer*” cards [a sort of internal passport], German worker identification cards (stolen the evening before) as well as box of cartridges and three revolvers (IMT, XXXVII, 298). She was obviously a major activist! The following is what she writes:

“They immediately put me in handcuffs and took me away for interrogation. As I did not answer, they slapped me right across the face with such force that I fell off my chair. They whipped me with a rubber whip, right across the face [...].

I had to tell them I was three months pregnant.

After my first interrogation, I was taken to the prison of Fresnes and I was thrown into a solitary confinement cell without a mattress, without blankets, with my hands handcuffed behind my back at all times, plus I had chains on my ankles. For 4 days, without anything to eat or drink [lucky she didn’t die of thirst]. On the 4th day, they came for me, to interrogate me. I underwent 24 interrogations and I came

back with my face more and more swollen up every time. Since I wouldn't say anything, they threatened to deport me for execution by shooting. Since I still wouldn't talk, they put me in a cell for six months, in secrecy.

There came the day of the evacuation of the prison. As I was expecting my baby, I expected to be released, but I received a visit from the commissioner and the chaplain. They told me my last [hour] had come and I had to talk [...].

I was taken to the Fort de Romainville and from there to the hospital, where I had my little girl, on 25 August" [IMT, XXXVII, 299].

Of course, her story is quite regrettable. **But if one does not wish to be beaten and endanger the life of one's baby, one should not participate in an illegal war; one should not steal official papers and stamps from the enemy, and one should not deal in weapons under a military occupation.** In addition, I must stress that G. Sindemans was never undressed, and above all, she never received any blows which could have endangered the life of her baby. **On the contrary: in the end, she was allowed to give birth to her little girl, alive and apparently healthy.** Proof that, although she was detained in secrecy, she received no other mistreatment.

Consequently, these four testimonies in no way prove the allegations made by Major Loranger. Now, it is obvious that if the French prosecuting authorities in these post-war trials had really been in a position to produce any such testimony, even in one single case, they certainly would have done so.

Today, thus, it is permissible to conclude that Major Loranger's allegations have no reliable basis in fact.

The dishonesty of the Nuremberg prosecution

It is also interesting to note that, at Nuremberg, the assistant prosecutor C. Dubost read the declaration of Major Loranger's written statement, and went on to quote the deposition of this same G. Sidemans (since the other three prosecutors offered no evidence). Dubost took great pains, however, to delete the end of that same deposition, reading only the first three lines [IMT VI-171], and stopping just after the words "I must tell you that I was three months pregnant at that time".

In other words, **Dubost concealed the fact that G. Sindemans was permitted to give birth to a little girl in the end (IMT VI, 179-180) – thus giving the Tribunal – and the world – the impression that this courageous Resistance member had – like so many**

others – lost her child as a result of German mistreatment... It is hard to be more dishonest than that...

Case of women Resistance members: proof that the Gestapo acted with great restraint, even in serious cases

Having stated the above, let us proceed. **Under the Occupation, in visiting people's homes to arrest suspected members of the Resistance, the Gestapo auxiliaries very often found themselves face to face with the wives of these same, wanted individuals. How did they treat these women? Did they strip them naked? Torture them? Beat them and strike them until they suffered miscarriages?**

Not at all.

Case of Mme Lecour

Let us first take the case of Mme Lecour, from Cours-Cheverny. Her husband was a wanted Resistance member. On 30 July 1944, French auxiliaries came to her house. But the man was not there; he had taken refuge elsewhere. At the house, the group found only the wife, then seven months pregnant, with her baby.

What did they do? At their trial, the statement of facts says:

“Mme Lecour, seven months pregnant and alone with a one-year old baby, was at home when Combier and his team appeared. These individuals conducted a search of the house according to the regulations and attempted to obtain information as to Lecour's whereabouts by threatening her with their weapons. Combier was mean enough to give Mme Lecour a few slaps, despite her condition” [PAFG, statement of facts, p. 20].

At the hearing, the husband appeared as a witness:

“THE PRESIDENT. – What did they do to your wife?

M. LECOUR. – They hit her.

THE PRESIDENT. – They searched the house?

M. LECOUR. – Yes, they did [...].

THE PRESIDENT. – Did they hit your wife despite her condition?

M. LECOUR. – Yes.

THE PRESIDENT. – How did they hit her?

M. LECOUR. – They hit her and pulled her hair” [PAFG, hearing of 1 March 1947, deposition of M. Lecour, p. 216].

The wife then testified as follows:

“THE PRESIDENT. – [...] Did one of them enter the house and slap you?

Mme LECOUR. – They hit me and pulled my hair” [*Ibid.*, p. 219].

One must, of course, condemn the violence inflicted on this woman. But, if we were to believe Major Loranger and all the other propagandists, these same individuals – Gestapo auxiliaries – should have had recourse to much more terrible means of making her talk: **they could have taken her baby and said, “Talk, or we’ll cut one ear off, then the other one, etc.”; they could have abducted the child and told the mother “We’ll give her back when you talk”; they could have stripped her naked, placed the woman on her back, and told her: “Talk, or we’ll stomp on your stomach”.**

They did nothing of the kind. They abstained from acting in this manner, and they left without even learning the whereabouts of the wanted man, the very same Resistance member they came to arrest...

Search at M. Buffet

From Cours-Cheverny, now let’s look at Lyon. The members of the “Georgia Gestapo” at Lyon were searching for a very important wanted Resistance member, M. Buffet. Having visited his home and having failed to find him, they conducted a search according to the regulations:

“THE WITNESS [Mme Buffet]. – [...] You tipped everything over, my mattresses, everything...

OBERSCHMUCKLER – You are right.

REBOUL – [...] The search was completed?

THE WITNESS. – Yes.

REBOUL – The mattresses were tipped over?

THE WITNESS. – The drawers, everything, on the floor!” [PGG, dossier 8, p. 94]

The agents found nothing capable of revealing the whereabouts of M. Buffet. In the house, however, were his wife and daughter. Not surprisingly, they attempted to extort information from the mother. The statement of facts declares that Oberschmuckler “interrogated her very severely and made numerous threats” (PGG, statement of facts, p. 83).

But did he beat her, torture her? No. The follow-up permits us to answer that question: H. Oberschmuckler, we are informed, “backed Mme Buffet up against the wall at pistol point” (*Ibid.*). That’s all...

In 1945, moreover, when called as a witness, Mme Buffet never even mentioned any of this inhumane treatment to which she had allegedly been subjected! This is what she declared:

“On 5 February 1944, towards 11 o’clock in the morning, three individuals came to my apartment, produced a pistol, and conducted a search of the premises. They found nothing, of course, and they

questioned me about what my husband did, what was going on in his garage. I answered that I didn't know anything, that I wasn't aware of any of these things. They then questioned me about a certain Georges, who is now commander Jouneau. I said I didn't know who this person was, I didn't know him. Seeing that they weren't getting anywhere, they remained in the apartment for an hour. They questioned me about my husband's family, asking me where they lived, and they left. The next day, Sunday morning, three other individuals appeared. They weren't the same men. They questioned me again. They searched the place again, and then they left" [PGG, dossier 8, p. 86, deposition de Mme Mathilde Vernay, wife of M. Buffet].

Shortly afterwards, the President of the Tribunal interrogated her about any threats made:

"THE PRESIDENT. – You indicate that he [the chief] did not threaten you. Didn't you indicate that he was the one who threatened you?

THE WITNESS. – He held his pistol against me.

THE PRESIDENT. – He held the pistol?

THE WITNESS. – Yes.

THE PRESIDENT. – It was Oberschmuckler who held the pistol against you and forced you against the wall?

THE WITNESS. – Yes, that's correct. I didn't move, by the way. I remained motionless during the entire search and interrogation" [*Ibid.*, p. 88-9].

She was then questioned by Government Commissioner Reboul:

"Reboul. – Weren't you threatened during the first search?

THE WITNESS. – No. They simply told me to keep calm [...] I told them I didn't know what my husband did. They told me that I could keep silent, but that if they found my husband, his case would be closed" [*Ibid.*, p. 90].

Now, Mme Buffet was perfectly well aware of both her husband's activities and his whereabouts. During the trial, she mocked Oberschmuckler proudly and openly, right there in the courtroom, saying: "I really took you for a ride!" (*Ibid.*, p. 95).

I think one can safely suppose, however, that if these same of Gestapo agents had undressed her, beaten her severely, burnt the "sensitive" parts of her body, forced splintered matches under her fingernails and set fire to them, or cut her daughter's ears off, the same woman would have talked. But the point is: *they didn't do it.*

It should also be noted that after the search, the members of the "Georgia Gestapo" were actively looking for M. Buffet. They showed

photos of him to various people in the neighborhood asked if they knew him:

“They went walking around the district with enlarged photographs and asked everybody if they knew me” (PGG, dossier 8, p. 66);

“Reboul. – I say that the witness is providing us with a new fact, it is that after this matter, they looked for him everywhere, walking about the area with photographs that they had taken the trouble to enlarge.” (*Ibid.*).

In reality, the photos had been enlarged by Mme Buffet eight years before (*Ibid.*, p. 135)].

Now, this Resistance member had a mother and parents-in-law. The Gestapo could therefore have arrested them all and warned M. Buffet that his family would only be released if he turned himself in; they could even have demanded his surrender in the form of an ultimatum. But they didn't do so; they merely arrested his nephew by mistake, Georges Buffet, because they believed him to be the “Georges” in the Resistance whom they were looking for.

Not only didn't they torture people, they offered them cash rewards

OK, now let's talk about “Georges”. This person was really M. Jouneau, “whom Oberschmuckler was actively looking for” (*Ibid.*, p. 84). In accordance with normal procedure, the auxiliaries arrived to search his domicile. Not surprisingly, “Georges” was not there; the search team found only his wife and children. According to the statement of facts read out during the trial on July 1945, H. Oberschmuckler “behaved abominably” (PGG, dossier 1, p. 84).

But what did he do? Did he torture the wife, or torture their children under the mother's eyes, to make her talk? No. We read:

“He attempted to bribe Mme Jouneau by offering her money and undressed one of the children to be sure which sex it was. He then left after two hours of interrogations and stealing furs and personal effects” [*Ibid.*].

At the hearing, Oberschmuckler denied this and accused another person:

[Mme Jounaud] is getting me mixed up with Krammer. Krammer, who was present, said to her: if you give me M. Jouneau's address, I'll give you a hundred thousand francs; and he showed her a packet of money [...] As regards the act of undressing a little girl – a little girl six months old – I would like to point out that the child was lying in a little bed, on top of a leather jacket [...] A German lifted the child up, took

the leather jacket and stole it. The woman then thought that we had looked at the child – a little girl six months old – but she will [also] confirm that if the German really lifted the child up, it was to steal something” [PGG, dossier 3, p. 98].

Nevertheless, when called as a witness, M. Jouve accused H. Oberschmuckler, and said:

“[...] the children interested him in particular, especially my older daughter, who was two years old at the time, and looked a little bit like a boy. Boys interested him, this character, and he stated that he had what he needed to keep himself busy. I am very happy that he didn’t get a chance to do it.

“[...] This happened at 8 o’clock in the morning, and lasted until 11, when the search was over. Oberschmuckler looked through everything there was, that is, the money, first. He put 100,000 francs on the table, this rascal, as a reward for turning me in. She’s worth more than that, Monsieur Oberschmuckler, you didn’t know the brave spirit that motivates the French Resistance members. You could have offered ten times as much. You would never have mixed them up in your dirty work!” [Applause in the courtroom].

“On the other hand, he had given the order not to move [or remove: enlever] the children. He waited until the search was more nearly complete.

“No need to tell you that my wife is used to this sort of repression: this was the third time. The next day, she moved, without wasting time [PGG, dossier 8, p. 139].

What’s the main point of all this? That to make the woman talk, members of the “Georgia Gestapo” used no violence at all: they didn’t torture the mother; they didn’t strip her naked and beat her; they didn’t torture or molest the children in front of her eyes, to force her to talk. On the contrary. No – they tried to get her to talk by offering her money...

No brutality against Mme Cléret

Let’s get back to Paris and the case of the PTT [Post, Telegraph and Telephone]. The German police were looking for M. Cléret, one of the leading Resistance members, as well as for his men. Members of the “Georgia Gestapo” went to his home and found only his wife. She had gone to take refuge in Seine-et-Oise pour “to avoid arrest, which she felt to be imminent” [PGG, statement of facts, p. 66].

They interrogated the wife, who refused to talk. What happened then? Was she beaten, tortured, electrocuted, burnt with acid? All these accusations, and more, were made at Nuremberg:

“Special mention must be reserved for the more refined tortures [...] incisions between the toes upon which they poured a corrosive liquid, cleverly-dosed electrical shocks which caused all the muscles to convulse” (see the above-mentioned report by H. Paucot, IMT XXXVII, p. 264);

“or with a lighted cigar applied to her breasts” [“I personally saw a young woman who bore on her breasts the scars from burns inflicted with a lighted cigar” (*Ibid.*, p. 265)];

“given the bathtub treatment” [“immersion in a bath of icy water was a common practice” (*Ibid.*, p. 263)].

What did they do, in fact? Let’s let her talk, the victim.

On 23 July 1945, Mme Komarov, whose married name was Cléret, testified as follows before the High Court:

“Mme KOMAROV. – [...] They showed me photographs of people who were Resistance members from the PTT and who had been arrested and they asked me to identify them. Since I refused to do so, and said that I didn’t wish to talk, they took me to Rue des Saussaies to make me talk, then Fresnes. At Rue des Saussaies, they showed me photographs. They wanted me to admit that I knew these people, that my husband was a dreadful person, a murderer, a whole load of stuff.

An hour and a half later, I was taken to Fresnes. During this time, these men were busy pillaging everything in our home [...].

THE PRESIDENT. – You were not brutalized while these men were in your home?

Mme KOMAROV. – No, I was not brutalized. I was insulted” [PGG, dossier 11, pp. 3-4].

The truth of the matter could not possibly be clearer: although this was a rather serious case, **Mme Cléret, who refused to talk, was not mistreated, merely insulted.**

I should add that, informed of his wife’s arrest, M. Cléret did “everything possible to get her released. Through friends, he succeeded in contacting one of Odicharia’s lieutenants [...] who asked M. Cléret for 150,000 francs for obtaining her release. Cléret handed it over and Mme Cléret was released on 7 August 1944” (PGG, dossier 1 p. 67). At the hearing, M. Cléret confirmed: “I believe it was rather because of the 150,000 francs that she was able to get out of prison” [PGG, dossier 11, p. 9].

The simple ruse against Mme Meley

More Paris cases. In connection with the dismantling of a Resistance network, the German police were looking for a certain M. Meley, head of the organization. But he had fled, leaving his wife alone at home. Auxiliaries of the German police attempted to obtain information from the wife.

Again, did they use torture, the whip, acid, electricity? Once again, no. Instead, they merely tried a trick:

1) On 20 June 1944, G. Collignon passed himself off as a Resistance member wishing to see M. Meley. Mme Meley contented herself with saying “My husband is not there”. G. Collignon left (PGG, dossier 1, p. 67).

2) Eight days later, Gestapo agents came to the apartment at midnight “turned the place upside down, searched everywhere” (*Ibid.*, p. 68). They remained for some time, organizing surveillance in relays so as to arrest M. Meley when he came back. But he didn’t show up, so they gave up. Mme Meley was not even arrested (*Ibid.*).

Same strategy used against Mme Viard

In the same case, the Gestapo attempted to arrest Georges Viard but he had fled, as well, leaving only his wife. On 28 June 1944, two agents appeared at the home and passed themselves off as Resistance members wishing to know Viard’s whereabouts. Mme Viard maintained a cautious silence.

The intruders did not even attempt to conduct a search. “Then they gave me a telephone number [...] and asked me to notify them if my husband came back. Mme Viard promised, did nothing, and never saw these two individuals again”.

During the “Georgia Gestapo” trial, one of the accused, Solina, admitted that he had conducted a search at Mme Viard’s, but confirmed this version of the facts:

“Mme Viard simply said that her husband was away. We said: ‘Please tell your husband to telephone M. Totor’. We didn’t even search the house, while we could have gone in all the rooms and checked anything we wanted” (PGG, dossier 3, pp. 59-60.).

The surprising admission of a woman who was not mistreated, either

Let us finish with the case of M. and Mme Marceron, a married couple in the Resistance, who were concealing six cases of explosives in their home. They were betrayed by a woman who talked after being arrested. When agents in the German service arrived, they knew what they ought to find. Not surprisingly, the couple denied everything:

“My husband replied, smiling, that they obviously weren’t the kind of people who kept explosives around the house [...]. I answered in the same vein, that I didn’t understand what they were talking about” (PBL, 7, p. 52, deposition of Mme Marceron)].

The woman had her small child with her, aged 2 and 1/2. The agents, who had no time to waste, could have used either the child or the mother – or both – to force the husband to talk (“Talk, or we’ll shoot the lot of them”).

They did nothing of the kind; they never touched any of them. After searching the house and finding nothing, they announced that they were taking the husband in for questioning (very probably to confront him with the person who had betrayed him). At trial, Mme Marceron recalled:

“[...] I asked him whether they would let him eat a little bit and get dressed. They agreed immediately. My husband then ate breakfast.

These men, accompanied by the Germans, asked if they could eat breakfast with him, telling me they would pay. I said: – If you want to eat, eat with my husband, just help yourselves” [PBL, 7, p. 53].

After eating breakfast, they left with the suspect. A French agent suggested to Mme Marceron that she give him her savings, in return for which, he would arrange to save her husband. ‘If you wish, he said, I’ll take this sum [200,000 F], and leave you with 25,000 F to raise your child. Yes or no?’ (*Ibid*, p. 55, deposition of Mme Marceron). The woman agreed, and kept 30,000 F (p. 56).

A few hours later, M. Marceron returned and declared: “They knew everything. Mme Mesclos told them everything” (p. 57). He was, of course, obliged to reveal the hiding place of the explosives. The Germans deported him to Germany, but they left the mother in liberty and *never touched the child...*

At trial, moreover, Mme Marceron had the courage to finish her deposition declaring (before being interrupted by the President of the Tribunal):

“I have nothing against the Germans. Of course, they’re our enemies, that’s obvious. A German defends his country, we defend ours...” [PBL, 7, p. 62, XXX “Merceron confesses”]

Such was the behavior of the Gestapo towards the wives of Resistance members. This is very far from the image propagated by the official version of these events...

Comments by the Translator

As I understand Vincent's articles, a number of points should be kept in mind:

1) Resistance activity in France during the war was not only a violation of the Fourth Hague Convention on Land Warfare (which might be considered a bit academic): it was also a violation of the peace treaty according to which France and Germany ended the war.

2) A number of recent books published in Germany stress that the Gestapo never had more than 9,000 agents for all of Germany in 1939.

3) They certainly never had tens of thousands of agents to spare towards the end of the war.

4) Like all police forces in an emergency, suffering from a shortage of manpower, the German authorities in France recruited a great many substandard individuals, many of them foreigners (including 300 Arabs and at least 2 Jews), some of them with criminal convictions, relatively few of whom had any police experience.

5) Many of these persons were more inclined to commit extortion or theft than to "torture" anyone. The German officials at the top, who were responsible people, seem to have noticed something which our great wonderful "democracies" have forgotten: that real "torture" produces relatively little reliable information while creating tens of thousands of enemies, and is thus counterproductive.

6) For example. If you catch someone with explosive devices or weapons, you must find out where this material comes from, and you must find out immediately. This is a life and death necessity. But he will always give you the name of a dead person. How do you know when he's telling you the truth? Thus, for every item of correct information obtained by torture, you will probably get 100 lies, and make 10,000 enemies, prepared to kill you at the first opportunity, many of whom would otherwise probably have refrained from hostilities.

7) A certain amount of mistreatment is probably inevitable, given the life and death nature of the situation, but taken to an extreme, and used to the exclusion of more effective methods, it probably produces nothing. What it does produce, whether true or not, is very effective propaganda for the enemy.

8) All nations have political police, but they give them innocent-sounding names. The word “Gestapo” strikes fear into the heart, but the name “Security Services” produces nothing.

9) When the Germans, or their foreign auxiliaries, did mistreat people to obtain information, they did so immediately, when the information could still be obtained.

What is the point of torturing people years later, when they no longer possess any useful information and the people torturing them were not even present at the arrest and have no idea what questions to ask?

Answer: None. Pure sadism. But it was not the Germans who did this. It is the Americans, today – *now*.

One wouldn’t imagine that our hypocritical “democracies” would now, in 2010, be involved in the 9th year of 2 or 3 (or 4 or 5) different “aggressive wars”, all at the same time, including concentration camps, imprisonment without trial, illegal wiretapping, etc, not to mention the enthusiastic and officially approved use of sexually perverted methods of torture which the Germans and Japanese were never even accused of in 10,000 trials; one wouldn’t image that the Americans themselves had exterminated 35 million of their own children through abortion in the last 35 years, in the name of “freedom”; one wouldn’t imagine that we all face a probable future of billions of years of increased cancer rates and birth defects because the “idealistic” Americans tossed depleted uranium all over the Middle East, which is now blowing all over the world, while they manufacture one artificial panic after another about “passive smoking”, “bird flu” and “swine flu”, just to make money. One wouldn’t imagine their own country was falling apart while they continue to preach and pontificate about the “immorality” of the Germans 65 years ago. This is Phariseeism.

Carlos W. Porter,
7 October 2010.

Introduction to Gestapo Trials

by Vincent Reynouard

The Actions of the German Police in Occupied France

These articles are based mainly on four trials of “Gestapo Auxiliaries” held between 1944 and 1947 in France. The stenotyped records of these trials are available for consultation in their entirety at the Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine (BDIC), located at Nanterre (“fonds de reserve, côte générale”: F Res 334/...). For greater convenience, we will refer to them as follows:

- Trial of the “Bonny-Lafon Gang”: PBL [Procès Bony-Lafont];
- Trial of the “Neuilly Gestapo”: PGN [Procès Gestapo de Neuilly];
- Trial of the “French Gestapo Auxiliaries”: PAFG [Procès des auxiliaries français du Gestapo];
- Trial of the “Georgia Gestapo”: PGG [Procès du Gestapo de Georgia].

In the first part of my study, I showed that, until 1939, far from being an instrument of terror, the Gestapo was merely a tool to protect the State against minority agitation. It didn’t need to create a national spy network; it didn’t need to send hundreds of thousands of people to concentration camps; and it didn’t need to institute a reign of terror – for the good and simple reason that, starting in 1933, the immense majority of the German people followed Hitler voluntarily.

This is why the judges at Nuremberg declared the Gestapo a “criminal organization” starting in 1939 only. It was impossible to do otherwise, because there was so much evidence against any such proposition.

Of course, I can already hear the reply:

“Agreed, the Nuremberg Tribunal didn’t claim the Gestapo was a ‘criminal organization’ before September 1939. Of course, it didn’t need to commit crimes because the German people accepted the Nazi dictatorship, of course. However, the German secret police revealed its true face during the war, when it spread terror in all the occupied countries, arresting and torturing people, shooting them, etc. At such

times, it acted in conformity with the racist Hitler's doctrine that everything which was not purely German did not deserve to be considered human, and could therefore be degraded, humiliated, killed, with impunity... It was this Gestapo which was condemned during the trials. But the real culprit was Nazism, of which the Gestapo was only an instrument."

As the French prosecutor at Nuremberg, François de Menthon, put it:

"This doctrine necessarily brought Germany to a war of aggression and to the systematic use of criminality in the waging of war" [IMT V, 378];

or

"These crimes flow directly, like the war itself, from the National Socialist doctrine. This doctrine is indifferent to the moral choice of means to attain a final success, and for this doctrine the aim of war is pillage, destruction, and extermination" [IMT V, 390].

"For this reason, all your hair-splitting about the starting point, the exact date, of Gestapo 'illegality' – after which date the Gestapo was indeed 'criminal' are pointless. We aren't interested in hearing that Hitler treated his own people well. Hitlerism must be judged by the way it treated foreigners, that is, after 1 September 1939"...

As this objection is a very powerful one, I shall respond to it in several stages.

Summary of Gestapo Cases

In France, the German Police (incorrectly referred to as the Gestapo) almost never struck blindly

The following is a list of trials in which the defendants were members of the “Bonny-Lafon” gang (“French Gestapo”), “Neuilly Gestapo” (Martin-Van Houten gang), “French Gestapo auxiliaries” or “Georgia Gestapo”. I have attempted in each case to summarize these cases as objectively as possible.

This explanatory list shows once again that the German police and its agents, with few exceptions, did not strike arbitrarily, far from it.

Case of the Bonny-Lafon gang

The Bonny-Lafon Gang was the reason for the existence of the “French Gestapo” in Rue Lauriston. The trial was held in December 1944, only two months after the complete Liberation of French territory. After the serious excesses of August-October 1944, the objective of this first trial of a “Gestapo” gang was to show the country that justice would be meted out to all “traitors” and “collaborators”, thus rendering unnecessary any undisciplined settlement of accounts with a mere appearance of legality.

In this atmosphere, the prosecution was conducted in such a way as to establish the facts with enough clarity to justify the condemnation of the accused. But it went no further. Hence their very rapid, imperfect nature, which the Court did not even attempt to deny:

“COMMISSIONER FOR THE GOVERNMENT. – We are obliged to recognize that the presentation of prosecution evidence was particularly rapid [...].

THE PRESIDENT. – I recognize it given the circumstances...

Mr DELAUNEY. – [...] You’ve got to admit that there are gaps in the dossier.

THE PRESIDENT. – There is no doubt” [PBL, 3, pp. 10-11].

I) Arrest of Mr Lambrecht (during the summer of 1940)

Mr Lambrecht was “the head of the secret services of la Belgique Combattante” (PBL, 1, 13). He hid out in Toulouse. According to the defendant Pierre Bonny, Mr. Lambrecht’s arrest permitted the apprehension of “600 persons”

“600 persons, according to Bonny, had been arrested by the Germans as a result of Lambrecht’s arrest” (PBL, 1, 13).

In court, the interested party stated:

“THE PRESIDENT. – You have even stated the figure of 600 persons.

BONNY. – 600, that’s what I mean to say” (PBL, 2, 25)].

II) Arrest of Jacques Paul Kellner (2 November 1941)

J. P. Kellner “had been a member of a Resistance organization” at Boulogne-Billancourt (PBL, 2, 53). He was discovered “as the result of an interruption of correspondence and a long inquiry” (PBL, 1, p. 24) conducted by the services of the Hôtel Lutetia under the responsibility of Captain Scheffer (PBL, 2, 55). On 2 November 1941, agents of the service of the occupying power searched the offices of Mr. Kellner’s factory and discovered “an American Morse code transmitter” (PBL, 1, pp. 23-4). A few hours later, Mr. Kellner was arrested in his home, at Paris. An employee of the factory, named Paulin and a certain lady named Skoff, were also arrested “at whose home a large file of names was confiscated” (PBL, 2, p. 53).

III) The Tournus Case (Saône-et-Loire, 71700)

Arrest of a commissioner, who, according to H. Chamberlin (known as Lafon), “smuggled Jews into Free France in order to rob them” (PBL, 1, 44). He was said in particular to have robbed and murdered a family of Dutch Jews in order to steal the diamonds they were carrying.

But, from the Court’s admission, the presentation of evidence was very largely incomplete in this matter and no verification was ever performed. We do not know what happened to the commissioner.

IV) Isolated networks

(4 cases)

Many networks failed. These operations had the following consequence:

IV.1) The arrest, in 1943, of Madame May, wife of a singer, “accused by the Germans of engaging in anti-German espionage” (PBL, 1, p. 45). We do not know what happened to her.

IV.2) The arrest, at the same time, of an unknown person for reasons which remain unknown. We do not know what happened to him or her (PBL, 1, p. 45).

IV.3) The arrest, during the winter of 42-43, of “a certain number of persons” suspected of belonging to a “[Resistance] organization located at Paris and Gentilly, headed by Mr. Paul Appel, former Deputy from la Manche”. Nevertheless, according to P. Bonny, the information giving rise to this operation were “recognized to be inexact and the arrests were not upheld” [PBL, 1, p. 46. For P. Bonny’s confirmation at the hearing, see PBL, 3, pp. 22-23].

IV.4) Giverny Case (Eure, 27620)

An informant informs the German police that a storage place for illegal weapons had been set up in the region of Giverny:

Escorted by a non-commissioned officer and four German soldiers, Lafon carried out an initial inquiry which proved unsuccessful, as several people answered the description of the weapons supplier.

Kieffer [German commander working in the Avenue Foch], alerted at Paris, came to identify him in person and is said to have promised him that he would not be bothered if he surrendered the weapons.

The person interrogated then delivered 36 parachute cylinders containing 5 tons of weapons and was never further inconvenienced at any time, according to Lafon [PBL, 1, p. 47].

V) Anti-parachuting actions

(3 cases)

V.1) Arrest of a group of (British) parachutists discovered thanks to the decoding of broadcast messages in code. They were “shadowed by the German police services who arrested them after a few days, after allowing them to contract French Resistance members”

(PBL, 1, p. 48). “Six Allied agents” were arrested with them, “several of whom were handed over to Kieffer” (PBL, 1, p. 49).

V.2) Amboise operation (Indre-et-Loire, 37400)

The Amboise operation ended in the shadowing of two French citizens from Angers to Paris, and then from Paris itself. After their arrest, one of them was found to be carrying false papers, military documents issued in Angers, addresses for correspondence and the sum of 4 million francs. He declared that his name was Lieutenant-Colonel Bonotaux.

First taken to Rue Lauriston, Lafon handed him over to Kieffer with the money and papers found on him (PBL, 1, p. 49).

V.3) Fourth operation at Angers

This operation led “to the arrest of two Englishmen and two Frenchmen. Lafon arrested them and handed them over to Kieffer” (PBL, 1, p. 50).

VI) The case of “Defense of France” organization

This case began with two informers. One of them was named Serge Marongin. Aged 25 years and of Italian origin, he was a student of the medical sciences (PBL, 1, p. 51).

In January 1943, S. Marongin provided the first information on an organization “which was said, according to him, to have committed several assassination attempts or bombings in the Metro and attacked an escort of prisoners heading for the prison of Fresnes” (PBL, 1, p. 51). He gave the address of their meeting place, in boulevard du Maréchal Lyautey, Paris:

Lafon agreed to take charge of the inquiry and accompanied by about a dozen men from Rue Lauriston [...] and a few German non-commissioned officers, he proceeded, after some nighttime surveillance, with the arrest of five men for his own account, while the Germans who were with him arrested three men and a woman for their part.

These persons were handed over to Kieffer [...] [PBL, 1, p. 51].

Shortly afterwards, Marongin “provided information on the clandestine Defense of France organization. This was a small group with its own printing shop, which distributed clandestine tracts” (PBL, 1, p. 51):

Marongin aided in the preliminary inquiry, which lasted three months [...].

The information provided by him and by the other investigators were centralized by Bonny, who drew up the files and reports, a copy of which was made available to Hess by Lafon.

At the end of three months, twenty names of Resistance members were discovered, along with the location of their meeting place and known annexes [...].

Upon conclusion of the inquiry, the advisor in criminal matters, Boemelburg, who, with Kieffer, concerned himself with the matter, give the order to go into action on 26 July 1943 [PBL, 1, p. 51-2].

144 arrests were made in two days, 15 of them definitive, the other persons having finally been released after being cleared of suspicion (PBL, 1, p. 53). Among the persons arrested was Geneviève de Gaulle, who was finally deported to Ravensbrück (PBL, 1, p. 54).

VII) Expeditions to Montbard (Côte d'Or, 21500) and Bort-les-Orgues (Corrèze, 19110) in 1943.

VII.1) Expedition to Montbard

At German orders, a “large scale operation” was organized against *maquisards* [members of the rural Resistance] in the region of Montbard” (PBL, 1, p. 56-7).

Bakers and merchants suspected of feeding the Resistance were arrested, as well as two doctors, a man and a woman (with his wife and son), on the grounds of aiding the Resistance:

“Dr. Thierry had been designated by one of the reports as having sheltered two men guilty of attacking a resident of Montbard and stealing his ration cards” (PBL, 3, p. 100, interrogation by P. Bonny).

The doctor, Françoise Thierry, “was interrogated by Bonny at the Feldgendarmierie of Montbard and released a few hours later” (PBL, 1, p. 57).

At the hearing, P. Bonny spoke of an even shorter lapse of time: “It lasted two minutes. When she said she was a doctor, we said: ‘You can go, you’re free’ ”(PBL, 3, p. 100, interrogation of P. Bonny).

F. Thierry confirmed this:

“THE WITNESS. – He asked me for an explanation of the registered letter receipts, the mailing of packages, things of absolutely no importance. He told me to think about it. I returned to the large room of the Feldkommandantur. Then he called me back. He released me, saying: Don’t start all over again, you may leave” (PLB, 6, p. 159, sworn statement by Françoise Thierry”).

The physician’s wife, Mme Plait, was also released, but her husband and son were transferred to Paris and finally deported to

Germany (PBL, 1, pp. 57-8). In all, there were “twelve to fifteen” arrests followed by transfer to Paris [PBL, 3, 87, interrogation of defendant Paul Clavié.

Were these people guilty? In December 1944, one of the persons arrested, who had been released for lack of evidence, declared: “Saying that they worked for the Resistance, I don’t know. They were all deported to Germany and are there now, they didn’t trust me at all” (PBL, 6, p. 152, sworn statement of Léon Théobalt). But shortly afterwards, he stated that an initial operation had been carried out at Montbard “against teachers and priests who had arrived with children from the region of Paris and who were supposed to help the Resistance, which is perfectly true, by the way” (*Ibid.*, p. 156).

While the Plait family was being interrogated, a search was performed at their domicile. It later appeared that “jewels of great value” had disappeared:

Since Mme Plait protested, Bonny summoned her to Paris and returned some of the jewels.

Lafon explained that these thefts had been committed by the Corsican gang [a gang led by a criminal named Suzzoni, who was the rival of Lafon’s gang. Despite this rivalry, the two sometimes worked together (PBL, 1, p. 75) and he had finally been successful in making him disgorge a part of his ill-gotten gains [PBL, 1, p. 58].

At the hearing, P. Bonny confirmed this:

“BONNY. – The theft was committed. We knew almost immediately that this theft had been committed, at Mme Plait’s. Lafon gathered all his men in my office. I was present. He said: ‘I seized a telegram from the Feldgendarmérie of Montbard, saying a theft had been committed, I want to know the value. Nobody leaves until we know the value’. After a few moments, the thief introduced himself. It was a guy named Ferrando.

THE PRESIDENT. – Was he a member of the Corsican gang?

BONNY. – Not exactly. But he was with them just the same. He wasn’t Corsican; that’s why I say ‘not exactly’.

“Lafon asked him where the jewels were. He gave an address. Some of the jewels were found. Lafon asked me to draw up a letter to Mme Plait, I did so immediately. Mme Plait came, a certain time afterwards, to take possession of the jewels which had been found.

THE PRESIDENT. – Did she come to Rue Lauriston?

BONNY. – Yes, to take possession of the jewels which had been stolen. Each time there was a theft, and unfortunately there were a few, Lafon never hesitated to punish the guilty person severely. Only,

obviously, in this environment, it was a little bit difficult” (PBL, 3, pp. 102-3).

VII.2) Expedition to Bort-les-Orgues

At the same time, several persons were arrested within the framework of a similar operation not far from Bort-les-Orgues:

The prisoners were taken to Auxerres, then Fresne, but were released shortly afterwards, according to confidential statements made by Bonny, and Lafon to Pagnon [PBL, 1, p. 58].

At the hearing, the defendant Pagnon confirmed the above:

“THE PRESIDENT. – [...] You have declared, [Louis] Pagnon, that the prisoners were taken to Auxerre, then Fresnes, you say they were released shortly afterwards.

PAGNON. – Yes, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT. – I can easily believe that they were released; sit down” [PBL, 3, 103].

VIII) The case of the North-African brigades

In 1943, the creator, in France, of the Comité Musulman de l’Afrique du Nord et du Cercle d’Etudes Nord-Africain, Mohamed El Maadi, needed paper for the newspaper he published, *Er Rachid* (The Messenger). He went to the “French Gestapo” in Rue Lauriston to ask Lafon to intervene in his favor:

[“LAFON. – He had asked me if it was possible to ask him for paper for his newspaper” (PBL, 3, 104)].

Lafon went to bat for him before three large newspapers of the time and Mr. El Maadi receives his paper:

[“Towards mid-1943, an Arab, El Maadi, head of the Islamic group of France, came to visit Lafon in Rue Lauriston to interest him in the publication of an Arabic-language newspaper which he edited and which was called *Er Rachid*.

“Thanks to Lafon’s intervention before the newspapers *Paris-Soir*, *L’Echo de la France* and *Les Nouveaux Temps* [...], El Maadi received substantial assistance. *Er Rachid* received the delivery of paper and the paper was printed on the presses of Paris-Soir.” (PBL, 1, p. 58-9). *Er Rachid* continued to appear until August 1944.”

Gradually, the idea of recruiting North Africans was born. According to Lafon, the idea first came from the German services in Avenue Foch, headed, at that time, by Mr. Boemelburg, “knew El Maadi and his secretary” (PBL, 3, p. 105, sworn statement by Lafon). “Boemelburg, he said, wished to recruit North-Africans the way he had

recruited Georgians” (*Ibid.*). He only wished to use them “to guard” “premises owned by Germans”.

“LAFON. – For guard duty, to relieve the service. For example, Avenue Foch...”

THE PRESIDENT. – He intended to use these North Africans in the struggle against the *maquis*.

LAFON. – No: for guard duty.” (PBL, 3, p. 105)].

Finally, after several interviews, “approximately 300 Arabs” were recruited and combined in a house in Neuilly, 21 Avenue de Madrid (PBL, 3, 107).

“The Germans were first rather evasive and only authorized the recruitment of 300 Arabs in the end, after several interviews, who, trained by Frenchmen, were to be scattered between Toulouse, Limoges, Périgueux etc.” (PBL, 1, p. 59).

After the rejection of certain elements which proved unsatisfactory, five sections of about thirty men each were set up (PBL, 1, p. 59-60). The Arabs enrolled were “given special uniforms” (provided by Joinovici, a Jew) and armed by the German services in Avenue Foch (PBL, 1, p. 60). Their wages amounted to 5,000 F per month, “paid by the Germans, as were their equipment expenses” (PBL, 1, p. 60 and 3, p. 110).

In February 1944, the sections were scattered between Limoges, Périgueux, Tulle and Montbéliard.

VIII.1) The Corrèze Case

The section recruited at Tulle (Corrèze, 19000) participated in a struggle against the *maquis* near the village Cornil, near Corrèze (PBL, 1, p. 61). Other operations were later carried out, always in Corrèze, among which those of the Saillant d’Allasac and Objat (PBL, 1, p. 61). Some *maquisards* were arrested, including a certain Victor, “an influential member of the [local] Resistance” (PBL, 1, p. 64). He was said to have suffered “the worst tortures during his interrogation by the heads of the Arab brigade” (PBL, 1, p. 64).

VIII.2) Case of the rapes in the Doubs

The Montbéliard section (Doubs, 25200) maintained surveillance of the Peugeot factories in which “sabotage had been committed by the workers” (PBL, 3, 137, remarks by the President); “about thirty persons were arrested and handed over to the Germans” (PBL, 1, p. 65). Nevertheless, the Arabs committed crimes, particularly the “rape of several women”, which led to repressive measures by the Germans against this brigade” (PBL, 1, p. 65).

At the hearing, this story of the rapes was confirmed by the defendant, who nevertheless spoke in the form of hearsay:

“THE PRESIDENT. – It appears from the confidential remarks made by Maillebauu to Deleheye who spoke of the matter in the course of drawing up the file, that these excesses committed by Arab guards, and particularly the rape of several women had led to repressive measures taken by the Germans against the brigade. Deleheye, is that correct?

[Edmond] DELEHEYE. – That is correct” [PBL, 3, p. 137].

VIII.3) Dordogne Case (rescue of Eymet)

The Périgueux section fought the *maquis* [rural Resistance] from March to June 1944 (PBL, 3, p. 138), arrested a local head of the Resistance (a certain “Vincent”) and confiscated weapons [PBL, 1, p. 65 et 66. On Vincent’s arrest, see PBL, 3, pp. 159-60, statements of the defendant Alexandre Villaplana].

The most important operation took place at Eymet (Dordogne, 24500). Certain inhabitants had been denounced for assisting British paratroopers (PBL, 3, p. 139).

In his letter, the anonymous informant had also given other names, including Mr Reynaud and Mr. Lormand.

The German police chief proceeded with the arrest of both persons, then he gave Mr. Raynaud five minutes to speak; if he refused to speak he would be shot with the other inhabitants and the village burnt [PBL, 3, pp. 140-1, sworn statement of Alexandre Villaplana].

Alexandre Villaplana then intervened and interrogated Mr. Reynaud. Mr. Reynaud declared that he had been the victim of a machination. The agent succeeded in obtaining a postponement of several hours before execution from the German police chief [“I was then able to postpone the execution by asking the adjutant police chief to grant me a few hours to find out whether I could succeed in finding the weapons. He told me, after a bit of hesitation, I’d like to, but this evening, at 7 o’clock...” (PBL, 3, p. 141)].

Continuing his interrogation, he learned from an inhabitant of the village, Mr. Morganti, that the anonymous denunciation came from Mr. Lormand’s daughter-in-law, who was angry with him because she was in the process of divorcing Mr. Lormand’s son. This woman had already sent a first letter of denunciation (apparently without success).

“I resumed my interrogation of the entire Lormand family. A real family drama was going on in this village, in which people are very small minded [...]. At six o’clock, Mr. Morganti gave me a clue and made me understand that this might come from Mr. Lormand’s

daughter-in-law. I asked him why. He said: because she is divorcing Mr. Lormand's son; she had already sent a first letter and I saw her take 50,000 F from her father-in-law's chest; it was an act of revenge to do that" (PBL, 3, pp. 141-2).

A. Villaplana immediately sent for the suspect:

I informed myself and I sought to find out where Mr. Lormand's daughter-in-law was; we found her 500 meters from the mayor's office, hidden behind a tree; she was waiting to see what was going to happen. We took her to the mayor's office. [...]. After three quarters of an hour of interrogation, she finished by admitting that she had sent the two anonymous letters against her father-in-law" [PBL, 3, p. 142].

The members of the Reynaud and Lormand families (as well as the other designated victims) were therefore saved. A few days later, he came to Périgueux to thank A. Villaplana (PBL, 3, pp. 141-2).

During the trial, Mr. Lafon defense attorney asked commissioner Clot, who had investigated the matter, whether or not Mr. Lafon had not "taken advantage of the undeniable credit that he enjoyed before the Germans to obtain the liberation of a great number of Frenchmen". The commissioner replied:

"COMMISSIONER CLOT. – There's no doubt of it. I must tell the truth, since Mr. Lafon, who betrayed his country, did a great deal of harm to France, but he did good to private individuals, without a doubt" [PBL, 6, p. 22].

VIII.4) Arrests at Tarbes

Under the leadership of a certain Paul Clavié and a German officer, one of the sections (including about forty Arabs), took part in a large-scale expedition to Châteauroux at Tarbes. In the first town, a block of houses was surrounded and thirty arrests were made (PBL, 1, p. 63). But the section "ran into a very serious ambush by the *maquis* at Angoulême and was decimated" (PBL, 1, p. 62).

IX) Arrest of Mr. Crassuski and Mr. Chevot (March 1943)

"There were two people who were clandestine members of Resistance organization, particularly, supplying identity cards and other documents to facilitate the return of prisoners from Germany" (PBL, 2, p. 107).

Case of the “Neuilly Gestapo”

The so-called “Neuilly Gestapo” trial (PGN), hearing on 12 November 1945. Presentation of the evidence, part two: “The various matters held to incriminate the defendants”.

I) Arrest of a woman named Cottel

In July 1940, Raymonde Fonfrède, married name Cottel, a resident of Rue du Cherche-Midi à Paris, was arrested. In her home, the police found “correspondence exchanged with British military personnel while she formed part of the Health Service at Touquet” (PGN, 1, p. 15). Suspected of membership in the Intelligence Service, she was taken to the premises of the “Neuilly Gestapo”, in Rue Pétrarque:

Martin [the reference is to François Martin, known as “Rudy”. He later appears under his real name and pseudonym both] in the presence of [Gédéon] Van Houten proceeded with the interrogation, accusing the Cottel woman of belonging to the Intelligence Service. She was locked up for four days, Martin and Van Houten taking turns supplying her with food.

Following her release, she became Mr. Van Houten’s mistress [*Ibid.*, pp. 15-16].

II) Arrest of Nicolai Raineroff

In the spring of 1941, N. Raineroff was arrested “on the basis of information that he had maintained relations with Resistance agents and Allied agents” [PGN, 3, p. 48, sworn statement of the officer, Roger Sirjean].

A trap was set, as he himself explained during the hearing:

A comrade had offered to get me smuggled out to England. The smuggler in question was Rudy [PGN, 4, p. 32, sworn statement of Nicolai Raineroff.]

Arrested and taken to Rue Maurice Barrès, he was held for eight days, then released in exchange for working for F. Martin as a translator:

“[Martin] proposed either that I work as a translator or be deported with my father. I agreed to work” (*Ibid.*).

In the statement of the facts, we read: “He was interrogated by Van Houten several times in order to find out whether he belonged to a Resistance group and he was freed by Van Houten” (PGN, 1, p. 16). But the interested party himself denied it at the hearing:

“Mr. RAINEROFF. – [...] He asked me what I was doing there.
THE PRESIDENT. – To find out whether you belonged to a
Resistance group.

M. RAINEROFF. – Absolutely not” (PGN, 4, p. 34)].

III) Arrest of Mr. Carrère and Mr. Rodian

Mr. Carrère, from Paris, “formed part of a Resistance group which had hidden a storage of weapons with Mr. Rodian at Joinville” (PGN, 1, p. 16). They were both arrested at the end of August 1941 by Frédéric Martin, who produced a “German police card” (p. 17).

Carrère was taken to Neuilly and interrogated by Martin in the presence of two German officers. Although Martin had given him 25 minutes to indicate the location of his group’s arms cache, Carrère kept silent.

He was locked up, handcuffed, held in a room and interrogated several times, both day and night, over the course of his imprisonment, which lasted 14 days.

Despite numerous threats and even despite the announcement that he had been sentenced to death without trial, Carrère did not speak [PGN, 1, p. 17].

[...] Mr. Rodian, at whose house the weapons were hidden, was arrested the same day as Carrère, taken to Martin, interrogated and struck savagely by Martin. He was supposed to be taken to Fresnes afterwards [PGN, 1, p. 17]

IV) Arrest of Mr. Ouizman

Mr. Ouizman was a Jew of Moroccan origin in an irregular situation: under the occupation, he “hid in Paris with false papers” (PGN, 1, p. 17). He was arrested within the framework of a small black market transaction: the sale of a few chronometers to a certain “Francis” who was in reality an agent provocateur in the service of the Germans:

[Francis] took the “policemen” to Ouizam. Unfortunately, at this same moment, Ouizam’s mistress arrived, with a letter in her purse establishing that Ouizam had false papers. The couple were arrested and taken to Bd Victor Hugo.

Martin interrogated Ouizam and attempted to make him admit that he was a Jew, a spy and a gold trafficker. Ouizam was interrogated for 48 hours and beaten [...].

In view of the absence of evidence against him, he was liberated along with his mistress, not without receiving a few offers to “work” with Martin, offers which he never followed up [PGN, 1, p. 18].

V) Arrest of Mr. Charles Caron

As a Communist or communist party sympathizer [PGN, 3, p. 66, the sworn statement of an officer, Roger Sirjean], Mr. Caron was arrested on 12 November 1942 because he was “suspected of having committed sabotage against the railway lines and cut telegraph lines and burnt wheat mills in a farm, all in the Oise” [PGN, 3, p. 95, sworn statement of Police Inspector Emile Nouzeilles].

The official responsible for the arrest was Lucien Jouanneteau, inspector of criminal police at Paris, who also worked for the “Neuilly Gestapo”. What happened to Mr. Caron? In his statement of the facts, we read:

“He was immediately taken to Bd Victor Hugo and placed in Martin’s presence, who showed his Gestapo card [this should be understood to mean his SR card]. At Mr. Caron’s reply that he didn’t care, Martin gave him a violent blow with a truncheon.

“Following this initial appearance, Mr. Caron was locked up in the cellar, in a cell, after being deprived of his shoes.

“Martin was interrogated for five days by Martin and his agents under the accusation of being a Communist and, since he refused to answer, he was violently struck each time.”

This was confirmed at the hearing by the witness himself:

“THE PRESIDENT. – Didn’t they get the information they wanted from you?

THE WITNESS. – Not at all: I didn’t talk” (PGN, 4, p. 75).

“At the end of fourteen days, Caron was freed, no proof having been obtained against him” [PGN, 1, p. 19].

Again, this was confirmed at the hearing when the President read the witness’s declaration before the preliminary inquiry:

“Five of six days afterwards [after my arrest], since I still hadn’t said anything and since they had no evidence against me, I was transferred to the third floor of the building, in a little room, and five or six days afterwards, I was freed” (PGN, 4, p. 78).

L. Jouanneteau’s superiors were very unhappy at having wasted their time with an innocent person. They shouted at him:

“Look at this time-waster!... A real policeman? He brings you a case that won’t stand up” [PGN, 3, p. 99 sworn statement of Police Inspector Emile Nouzeilles].

At the hearing, Police Inspector E. Nouzeilles would say:

“Luckily, Caron wasn’t in the Resistance; if he had been, with all the beatings he got, he might have betrayed his comrades and this could have led to the arrest of about ten good patriots, maybe more” [PGN, 3, p. 99].

VI) Case of the Lahaye children

This was a regrettable case in which a member of F. Martin’s team, Pierre Lahaye, whose wife had obtained a divorce and custody of the children, took the children away from her by force, with the assistance of his colleagues. He succeeded in having a commissioner of police and a bailiff, who had carried out the order concerning the custody of his children, arrested and held as hostages. Then he went to his ex-wife “with a Gestapo agent and a German officer” (PGN, 1, p. 20). There, he declared that the two hostages would not be released until his child was returned to him.

Mme Lahaye was supposed to comply, but she filed a complaint against her husband. Her husband then warned his wife’s lawyer that if she persisted in her demand, she would be deported to Germany. The inquiry effectively established that Mr. Chain, commissioner of police at Neuilly-sur-Seine, had been held as hostage in the services of Bonny-Lafon pending the return of the Lahaye children to their father [PGN, 1, pp. 20-1].

VII) Arrest of Henri Phegnon and Phegnon and Roux, two young girls

Mr. Phegnon, insurer at Vernouillet (Seine et Oise) forming part of the Resistance group in this locality [He was the head: “Since I was the head of the Resistance at Vernouillet” (PGN, 5, p. 90)]. On 1 December 1943, Mr. Phegnon and his secretary, Mlle Roux (who was aware of her employer’s activity) were arrested by Rudy Martin at their offices, Rue Saint-Lazare à Paris.

They were taken to 5, Avenue du Général Dubail, and immediately interrogated. Mr. Phegnon was violently struck several times, and was subjected to the bathtub treatment four times in one night.

The objective was to squeeze information out of him:

“THE WITNESS – [...] They wanted to know the name of my comrades, since I was the head of the Resistance at Vernouillet. Since I didn’t answer, they hit me with a whip on the head, and they soaked me in a bathtub, five or six times in a row” (PGN, 5, p. 90.).]

The same day, Mlle Collette Phegnon, daughter of the above, was apprehended in her father's offices and taken to Rue du Général Dubail. There she was interrogated and, she maintained, beaten by Rudy Martin because she did not wish to answer.

“THE PRESIDENT. – Were you beaten? Did he hit you with a truncheon, perhaps?

THE WITNESS. – No, with his fists. He picked me up by the hair.

THE PRESIDENT. – Even a young girl, he didn't hesitate to hit you!... He hit you [...].

THE WITNESS. – [...] Then he confronted me with my father.”

At the confrontation, she said according to her father: “No, papa, it's not us, we didn't do anything, you know, papa, nothing.” (PGN, 5, p. 89, sworn statement of Henri Phegnon)].

She continued: “He threatened me with the bathtub. But it stopped there.” (PGN, 5, 96, sworn statement of Colette Phegnon)].

As to the secretary, Mlle Roux was taken to Fresnes with her employer. They both stayed 5 and a half months.

During his stay at Fresnes, Mr. Phegnon was interrogated in a correct manner by German judges: “those who really interrogated me, at Rue des Saussaies, were correct. They asked a lot of questions, always about the same things: they wanted to know the name of the organization I belonged to, who the other members were. But I wasn't mistreated at all” (PGN, 5, p. 91).

In the end, they freed him. The German judge responsible for his case told him:

“I argued your case. I never wanted to send you to Germany. And then, finally, I had no evidence against you. I asked for your release and it was granted” (PGN, 5, p. 92)].

Mlle Phegnon, for her part, was freed after a few days [PGN, 1, p. 21].

VIII) Arrest of Mr. Pasteau

Mr. Pasteau “belonged to a Resistance movement (the OCM group)” (PGN, 1, p. 22). On 17 December 1943, fell into a German trap. He was arrested and interrogated one first time by F. Martin. At night, however, he succeeded in fleeing:

After Pasteau's escape, his wife and sister-in-law, Mlle France Porés, were arrested on 18 December 1943. They were taken to Av. du Général Dubail and while awaiting Martin's arrival, they were interrogated by [Ernest] Lupescu [...].

They were then interrogated by Martin and released.

This is confirmed when one reads the Mme Pasteau's sworn statement at trial:

"Towards midday, Rudy finally got to me and interrogated us, my sister and myself. Then, at about one o'clock in the afternoon, we were released after a search of my sister's domicile" (PGN, 2, p. 89)].

"During their interrogation, Lupescu insulted [this should be: "was said to have insulted"] Mr. Pasteau, declaring that he was deceiving his wife, that he didn't deserve her trust... that he was a swine" [PGN, 1, pp. 22-3].

This was confirmed at trial by Mme Pasteau: "I remember, in any case, that Lupescu told me that my husband was deceiving me, that he was sleeping with another woman, that he was a bastard, etc." (PGN, 2, p. 90).

But Lupescu denied this:

"M. LUPESCU. – [...] I didn't say it. [...] Why would I have told this woman that? I don't know Mr. Pasteau, I didn't know that he had been arrested, I had never seen him except in photographs. That someone or other, in the office, may have said it, I don't know, I can't say they didn't, but me, personally, no. I never use those words" (PGN, 2, p. 60).

IX) Discovery of a body in the garden at 78, Bd Maurice Barrès, Neuilly

On 19 March 1945, in connection with the inquiry into the doings of the F. Martin gang, a body was dug up in the garden at 78, Boulevard M. Barrès, Neuilly:

"It was not possible to identify the body, which was in such an advanced state of decomposition that Dr Paul was unable even to discover the cause of death" [PGN, 1, p. 23].

To these cases, one must add a tenth, revealed during the third hearing by the Roger Sirjean, officer of the Criminal Police.

X) Murder of a certain Rubentel

The case was linked to the black market. F. Martin and G. Van Houten had laid a trap for two black marketers, Mr. Abrabanel and Mr. Rubentel, pretending that they wanted to complete a transaction with them. On the day of the appointment:

"[...] the currencies, gold and paper money are on the table. At this very moment, Van Houten and Rudy show their Gestapo cards, take out

their pistols and say ‘German police. Gestapo’. The gold was confiscated.

“Rubentel’s reaction was an unfortunate one for him, since Rudy shot and mortally wounded him in the vicinity of the heart” [PGN, 3, p. 50].

Case of the “French Gestapo Auxiliaries”

So-called “French Gestapo auxiliary” trial (PAFG), hearing of 24 February 1947. Statement of the facts, chapter II: “The various cases with which the defendants are charged”.

I) So-called “economic cases” (related to the black market)

II) Case of a Resistance headquarters

(p. 6), around Easter 1944:

“Violette Moriss had informed Rue des Saussaies about French officers forming part of a specialist group in parachuting and sabotage” (p. 6). A first action permitted the arrest of a colonel, his wife and a captain, as well as the discovery of the mail box used by the group. This find permits the arrest of three other persons, for a total of six. The prisoners were taken “to the fort of Vincennes and shot” shortly before the German retreat (p. 7).

III) Case of the parachutings at Montlhéry

(Essonne, 91310)

This case also arose as the result of denunciation on the part of V. Moriss.

“A quantity of weapons had been parachuted at the exit from Montlhéry a short distance in front of the aerodrome and the Resistance members were guarding the parachuted weapons” (p. 8).

German soldiers visited the spot indicated. “The soldiers surrounded the area and shooting broke out between Resistance members and Germans. After about half an hour of fighting, the Germans took control of the area. Seven Resistance members had been killed or seriously wounded, the rest, about ten of them, were taken to Rue des Saussaies and in bad shape, were taken charge of by the Wehrmacht and probably executed” (p. 8).

IV) Case of the Meaux parachutists (Seine-et-Marne, 77100)

Informed by the Gestapo, Germans went to near Meaux where a parachuting had taken place: “Towards 23 h, two planes had dropped containers. As soon as they disappeared, we surrounded the area tightly and a short gunfight broke out; two Resistance members were wounded, three others were take prisoner and the team proceeded with the seizure of five tons of weapons and ammunition which had been parachuted. The prisoners and materiel were taken to Rue des Saussaies and taken in charge by the Wehrmacht” (p. 8).

V) Cases without name

V.1) Arrest of Etcheberry-Billet-Soyer

These three French men were involved in arms dealing. They were arrested for having illegally supplied members of the Gestapo – who had laid a trap for them – with a shotgun and two revolvers (pp. 8-9). They were deported and “have not returned” (p. 9).

V.2) Arrest of Colangelo-Rocca-Vitti

Benoît Colangelo was a prisoner who escaped in 1943 (p. 9). While in a café with two other comrades (Mr. Rocca and Mr. Vitti), in the suburb of Paris, the group was apprehended by French auxiliaries who were passing by. The three comrades were taken to Fresnes then deported to Buchenwald. Two returned in 1945, but Tino Vitti died in deportation.

In this case, everything leads one to believe that the men were innocent and were arrested by accident:

“Mr. COLONGELO. – My arrest and that of my comrades was not premeditated. It was an accident” (PAFG, hearing of 1 March 1947, p. 45).

VI) Case of Rue Halévy (Paris)

Mr. Zuber, a Resistance member, “had been a member of the Mithridate network since 1943” (p. 10). “He had organized, in the premises of the company of which he was the director, an organization intended to assist persons evading the STO [compulsory labor service]” (p. 10).

With four accomplices, Mr. Willemetz, Mr. Bernardin, Mr. Joguet and Mr. Picard, they “drew up false identity cards and false working certificates, and, with the assistance of Mr. Scheigoffer’s assistance, placed by the network within the Organization Todt, they were able to prevent the departure for Germany of these STO dodgers under the cover of a phony job in that organization” (p. 10).

After the Gestapo had infiltrated the network, it arrested Zuber, Bernardin, Picard and Willmetz. Shortly afterwards, Joguet was arrested at his home (p. 11). M. Scheigoffer was able to escape them. All, except for Picard, were deported. Bernardin died in deportation, the two others returned in 1945 (p. 11).

VII) Case of General Lelong’s Château (at Montgeron, Essonne, 91230)

General Lelong had joined Charles de Gaulle in 1941. His wife and daughter remained in their Château at Montgeron. But “ever since 1942”, they had “worked for the Resistance” (p. 12). The lady of the Château “hosted members of the headquarters of the OCM and CNR [Resistance groups] at her Château” (p. 12).

Mme Lelong was arrested on 9 May 1944. On 22 June, the Gestapo raided the relevant location in Montgeron, arresting Mlle Lelong, Captain Massiet and Mr. Vernazobres, Mr. Morestin, Mr. Arnaud, Mr. Emonnet and Mr. Hurlin (p. 13). Captain Massiet was able to escape. Mme Lelong and her daughter were deported to Ravensbrück whence they returned. The men were also deported; Mr. Hurlin Mr. Vernazobres returned (i.e., four who returned out of six deportees).

VIII) Siot Case (TSF outpost) [radio transmitter-receivers]

Mr. Siot produced TSF sets in secret. He was denounced by an employee who worked in a TSF factory with a shop front, but whose owner had problems with the Gestapo for black market activities. Finally, Mr. Siot got out of trouble by paying 30,000 F, twice, and supplying five TSF sets (pp. 14-15).

IX) Arrest and execution of information agents (Richelieu-Drouot crossroads, Paris)

At the beginning, the Gestapo learned “that two information agents were in the habit of visiting a cafe at the Richelieu-Drouot crossroads” (p. 15). An expedition permitted the arrest of the two individuals.

“Their interrogation was extremely violent [...]. The next day, their execution was decided upon” (p. 15).

Taken to the fort of Vincennes “they were shot [there] by two German soldiers with a burst of submachine gun fire” (p. 16).

X) Anti-*maquis* raids in the Loir-et-Cher

X.1) Santenay case (41190), 16 July 1944

On the evening of 16 July 1944, at Santenay, French auxiliaries visited a tobacco shop owned by a certain Mr. Vonnet. This establishment was used as a meeting place for regional Resistance members. The auxiliaries were greeted with gunfire upon their arrival. Having returned fire and taking control of the situation, they arrested Mr. Vonnet and one Resistance member. The first was killed to make the Resistance member talk. A little while later, his wife was also apprehended, but she was not subjected to any mistreatment.

Sent to prison at Blois, the couple were freed on 10 August 1944 as the result of an attack by the Resistance (pp. 17-8).

The Resistance member who had been arrested was found to be carrying a false ID card. He claimed to have obtained it from Mr. Jules Armand, mayor of an adjacent municipality, Herbault.

X.2) Arrest of the mayor of the municipality of Herbault (41190), 17 July 1944

On 17 July 1944, French auxiliaries therefore visited Jules Armand. This was a man 70 years old who lived with his wife. Only the mayor was arrested; his wife was not bothered.

“During his interrogation, he was horribly mistreated by [the auxiliaries]; Combier, in particular, pointed the barrel of his pistol at his temple. After several hours of interrogation, he was incarcerated at the prison of Blois, where he was liberated by the Resistance on 10 August 1944.

“In trying to obtain confessions from this old man, Combier had threatened to burn his house and arrest his wife, who was 70 years old” (p. 18).

X.3) Cours-Cheverny case (Cheverny, 41700), 1e 30 July 1944

On 29 July 1944, the French auxiliaries mounted an expedition in a tavern at Cours-Cheverny where, according to the information received (which proved accurate), Resistance members were being sheltered (p. 18). After surrounding the house, they entered the interior. The clients were taken out into the courtyard to check their identity

documents. The owner, Mr. Pointard, who was just coming home, was apprehended in turn. A search was conducted which lasted two hours. While the operation was underway, a certain Armand Crahes, who was passing by in the street, was arrested and interrogated.

After the search, Mr. Pointard (who was not taken away) verified the disappearance of jewels and 15,000 F in cash (p. 19).

What did he do? He filed a complaint for theft (p. 21).

On 30 July, the auxiliaries came back to perform a new search and check the identity documents of all clients on the premises. “however the conversation took place in a calmer tone than the day before, and they all drank several bottles of wine together” (pp. 20-21).

On 31, the auxiliaries demanded, under threats, that Mr. Pointard withdraw his complaint; the tavern owner finally agreed (p. 21).

The auxiliaries also wished to search another tavern in the village, held by Mr. Rouillard. “Quite luckily, [auxiliary Combier] contented himself with questioning Mr. Rouillard alone, since Rouillard had a cache of weapons in his house. Combier restricted himself to making threats and left him alone” (p. 19).

On 30 July, the auxiliaries visited Mr. Lecour, denounced as a Resistance member. As Mr. Lecour was absent, they found his wife, then seven months pregnant.

“Mme Lecour, seven months pregnant and with another child only one year old, was home when Combier and his team arrived. These individuals performed a correct search of the house and attempted to obtain information on Mr. Lecour’s whereabouts, menacing her with their pistols. Combier was unscrupulous enough to slap Mme Lecour, despite her condition” (p. 20).

X.4) Expedition in force against the Resistance in the Romorantin region (41200).

An initial gun fight took place in a village about twenty kilometers from Romorantin. Some Resistance members fired some shots on the arriving troops from the cafe:

“Upon arriving in the village, some Resistance members fired on his troops, from a cafe. The house was immediately surrounded and a heavy fusillade broke out on both sides. After ceasing fire, three patriots were arrested and were compelled by threats to indicate the positions of the Resistance” (p. 22). One Resistance member who was “badly beaten up” pointed to a wood. The Germans approached but did not succeed in entirely surrounding the wood, “which permitted the patriots to scatter and put a swamp between them and the Germans” (p. 22).

X.5) Case of the executions in the Pontijou wood, 13 June 1944

On 11 June 1944, the Germans attacked the Souches château (municipality of St-Julien-sur-Cher, 41320) where some Resistance members lived. Four arrests were made. The prisoners were taken to the Gestapo at Blois and were joined by six other prisoners in the same situation. All were executed by a burst of machine gun fire in a wood not far from the village of Pontijou. Two survived since they were only wounded (p. 23-4).

XI) Case of the Boulevard Suchet in Paris (American parachutists)

Six American parachutists were arrested on the Boulevard Suchet in Paris. One of them revealed the presence, on this boulevard, of a clandestine TSF device: “the tortures were extremely violent and under their effect, one of the Americans indicated the location of a transmitter in the Boulevard Suchet” (p. 25). All six men were summarily executed in the Torfou wood (p. 25).

XII) Case of the Rue de la Harpe, Paris, 7 August 1944

Three Resistance members (including a Jew) had laid a trap for the Gestapo. Passing for black marketers, they acted in such a way as to ensure that they would be noticed. The objective was to kill any Gestapo agents who came to arrest them. But the operation failed and the three accomplices were really arrested:

“They were, in reality [...] agents of the Resistance who had unmasked Combier and his acolytes and had laid a trap for them. Really, one of the ‘vendors’ started firing as soon as the [Gestapo] agents got there. A fusillade immediately broke out on both sides. Combier arrested the Jew while his companions arrested the other two individuals” (p. 26).

Taken to Rue des Saussaies, they underwent a severe interrogation. The Jew succeeded in jumping through the 4th floor [this would be the 5th floor in America] window and killed himself instantly, falling to the courtyard. The two others were shot the next day at the Fort de Vincennes (p. 26).

**XIII) Execution of Resistance members at the Fort de Vincennes,
August 1944**

Summary execution at the Fort de Vincennes, towards 10 August 1944, of “nine patriot prisoners held at Fresnes” (p. 27).

**XIV) Case of the patriots executed at the Bois du Boulogne,
15 August 1944**

On 15 August 1944, thirty Resistance members, who had been arrested shortly before “as the result of an attack in the Rue des Ternes” were grouped together in the courtyard of the Rue des Saussaies (p. 27). A few were shot on the spot, while the others were taken to the Bois de Boulogne “where they were executed” (p. 28).

XV) Case of Sainte-Menehould (51800), 24 August 1944

On 24 August 1944, an arms cache was discovered in the Sainte-Menehould region. “25 Frenchmen, among them Mr. de Bigault du Granhupt, a member of the Secret Army, his father and brother, were arrested in this operation” (p. 28). They were interrogated. A physician was shot on the spot; M. du Granhupt’s château was pillaged and burnt; thirteen Resistance members were deported to Germany.

“While M. du Granhupt was able to return from the Nazi extermination camps, his father, brother and four others died there” (p. 28).

XVI) Case of the fake policemen

[Cases related to the black market.]

Case of the Georgia Gestapo

Trial known as the “Georgia Gestapo Trial”. Statement of the facts (Edf) and stenographic record of the hearings (the first issue is that of the jacket in which the records are classified).

I) Cases in the Paris region

I.1) Frépin Case, February 1944

This concerned a Resistance group which is said to have existed in the Latin Quarter in Paris. Closed without follow-up (Edf, pp. 33-4).

I.2) Saint-Rémy-les-Chevreuse Case (Yvelines, 78470), May 1944

One of the defendants, Georges Collignon, had signaled from the ground to Allied aircraft flying over the countryside dropping leaflets. Closed without follow-up.

I.3) 15th Arrondissement Case, Paris, July 1944

Arrest of about ten persons, including a young man (a certain Novoborowsky) apprehended in the middle of the street with a briefcase carrying copies of a clandestine newspaper, *Le Patriote Russe* (9, p. 123), which was anti-German. The individual attempted to flee. The agents responsible for arresting him shot at him and wounded him. He was taken to the Hôpital de la Pitié (12, p. 45ter).

I.4) Case Pillard, March 1944

A woman was denounced for sheltering parachutists. The follow-up given to this case are unknown (Edf, pp. 35-6).

I.5) Case de Peroy-les-Gombries (Oise, 60440), March 1944

A Resistance network was dismantled, the Resistance members arrested and handed over the Feldgendarmarie at Creil (Edf, p. 36)

I.6) Case of the Montmorency parachutists (Val d'Oise, 95160)

Two British parachutists were arrested after parachuting into Montmorency forest (pp. 36-7).

I.7) Case of the “five young people” apprehended at the Gare d’Austerlitz (Paris)

Some young people were apprehended at the Gare d’Austerlitz (Edf, p. 37 et 2, pp. 48 ff.). They were trying to reach England to join the Gaullist forces. On 21 July 1945, one of them, who was returning from deportation, Roger Foucher, declared: “I was leaving to fight with General de Gaulle” (10, p. 17).

I.8) Gabriel Laaban Case, January- April, 1944

The Jew Gabriel Laaban was a Resistance member whose friend, Mr. Vogel, supplied false papers (at a price of 10,000 FF for an identity card [2, p. 73]).

G. Laaban was not very discreet: at Toulouse, he had met a young lady of easy morals, Hélène De Tranze. He saw her again in Paris while

she was working as a secretary for the “Georgia Gestapo”. Despite this fact, he did not conceal his illegal activities from her.

“HÉLÈNE de TRANZE. – The first day I saw him again, he told me he was a Resistance member, that he could have identity cards made” [2, p. 73]).

In order to trap this small group, agents in the service of the Germans passed themselves off as members of the Resistance wishing to reach Toulouse. G. Laaban supplied them with a diagram of the house which had been requisitioned by the Gestapo in Toulouse (it was his father’s house) as well as the addresses of two members of the Gestapo, Katz and Wolff, who had arrested his father and brother.

On 5 April, during a meeting arranged to carry out the transfer of the false documents, G. Laaban was arrested, “taken to the Gestapo, accused of an assassination attempt against Capitain Schweitzer, whipped, water-boarded, sent to Fresnes, then Drancy, and finally deported to Weimar. He was able to escape while travelling through the regions of St-Quentin” (p. 40).

Mr. Vogel was also arrested and then deported. As of the date of the trial, nothing had been heard from him.

I.9) Petit-Clamart Case (Hauts-de-Seine), autumn 1943

Thanks to a Communist who had become a double agent, Bernard Hubert (1 p. 155), the Gestapo infiltrated a group of Resistance members supplying false papers issued by the mayor’s office in Luc-en-Dordogne (p. 42). The case was closed by the arrest of several Resistance members at Périgueux.

I.10) Case of the PTT Network, June 1944

A Resistance network organized within a local PTT [Post, Telephone and Telegraph] building was dismantled. “The group was very active, had a relatively large budget and large quantities of weapons” (p. 44).

The first arrests took place in June 1944 at the cemetery of Thiais during a trap laid in the form of an appointment with Resistance members. Thanks to the interrogations, the Germans came to know that the members of the PTT organization possessed a “mail drop” in the concierge’s lodge of a building located at 4, Rue Margueritte, Paris. The name of the concierge was Mme Memain, wife of René Memain.

This “mail drop” permitted them to correspond with other local groups (commanded by Mr. Rio, known as Mr. Lenoir). Mr. et Mme Memain, as well as their son Marcel and the son’s fiancée, Mlle Genet, were in cahoots:

“The fiancée, Mlle Genet, was also a member of the group, and assisted her future husband, who had been appointed to an important post in the Resistance, typing Gaullist pamphlets in the lodge itself” (Edf, p. 51).

On 13 June 1944, auxiliaries of the Germans performed a search in the lodge in which Mme Memain and Mlle Genet were there: “Tracts, address lists, documents, 2 typewriters were confiscated and taken away. A sum of 50,000 F was discovered in an envelope [...]” (Edf, p. 52).

On the 6th floor, the agents “discovered, in a maid’s room, a large quantity of weapons (grenades, submachine guns, incendiary bombs, etc.) which had been placed there by Marcel Memain, who was the arms storage specialist of his Resistance group” (Edf, p. 57).

Arrested not far away, Marcel Memain was brought back to the lodge in handcuffs; a search permitted the discovery that he was carrying a revolver.

The Gestapo agents then received the following mission: “to stand guard in the lodge [...], arrest everyone appearing for any reason apparently connected with this matter or asking to speak to any of the Resistance members in the lodge” (Edf, p. 52).

The other Resistance members arrested were not mistreated in any way, except for three:

– “Towards 15 h. 30, a liaison agent of Mr. Rio, Dr. Bireau [also spelled Biro], appeared, asking to see ‘Mr. Lenoir’.

“He understood that he had fallen into a trap and attempted to flee. It was at this instant that Blanchet jumped him and a fierce struggle began. Dr. Bireau was stronger. He flattened Blanchet and struck Collignon very hard, who unfortunately succeeded in getting loose, and drawing his weapon, opened fire on Dr Bireau.

“The bullet struck the victim in the abdomen and became lodged in his spinal column” (Edf, pp. 53-4).

A physician called on the spot confirmed a serious internal hemorrhage. Dr. Bireau was evacuated to Hôpital de la Pitié. Operated on 6 July, he remained paralyzed in one leg. He was transferred to the infirmary at Fresnes. He was liberated on 17 August by the arrival of the Allies.

– Mr. Rio arrived the next day towards 10 h.

“He was immediately identified by Collignon, who had his photograph. He asked him if he was Mr. Lenoir. The other denied it. Collignon slapped him and hit him with his fist a number of times, the blows with the fist being directed at the stomach, after putting him in handcuffs under cover of his revolver” (Edf, pp. 55-6).

At the hearing, R. Collignon denied having hit Rio with his fist:
“COLLIGNON. – I gave him one or two slaps [...].

THE GOVERNMENT COMMISSIONER. – And some blows with your fist in the stomach.

COLLIGNON. – I gave him one or two slaps. [...] I only slapped him” (3, p. 17).

Mr. Rio was deported to Germany.

– Towards 16 h, on 16 June, two Resistance members, Mr. Boulet and the nurse, Muller, arrived at the lodge. They were asked for their papers. Mr. Boulet pulled a revolver. But two agents, Solins and Fontini, had already drawn theirs. They drew and emptied their weapons into the two new arrivals. The fusillade was so severe that the bullets flew in all directions, riddling the lodge. (Edf, pp. 57-8). Mr. Boulet was hit by four bullets, but not very seriously wounded. Mlle Muller was mortally wounded by one or two bullets (2, p. 23) and died two days later.

The inquiry later focused on the Danton telephone central. Two Resistance members were arrested. Then a woman was apprehended in her home. Her boy friend, Mr. Cléret, employed Marcel Memain as a secretary and “was, like them, a member of the PTT organization” (Edf, p. 71).

After the Rue Margueritte Case, he had gone to take refuge at Seine-et-Oise (today, les Yvelines) to “avoid an arrest which he felt to be imminent” (Edf, p. 66). The agents in the service of the Germans visited the Clérets and conducted a search (“there was absolutely indescribable disorder,” said Collignon at his trial [3, p. 28]). Mme Cléret was placed under arrest and interrogated on the spot:

“Collignon and Terrile proved very tough” (Edf, p. 66). Taken to Rue des Saussies, “she was housed with several persons arrested in the cases of the PTT and who had been tortured with violence” (Edf, p. 66).

Informed of the situation, Mr. Cléret “did everything he could to gain her release. Through friends, he succeeded in contacting one of the lieutenants of Odicharia [...] who demanded 150,000 F from Mr. Cléret for the favour. Cléret agreed and Mme Cléret was released on 7 August 1944” (Edf, p. 67).

The German police also wished to arrest Mr. Meley, head of the PTT network. But after the events of Rue Margueritte, he had taken flight, leaving his wife alone at home. The agents attempted to find out where he was hiding.

On 20 June, R. Collignon passed himself off as a member of the Resistance (3, p. 51) wishing to see Mr. Meley. Mme Meley contented

herself with answering: “My husband is not there”. R. Collignon simply went away (Edf, p. 67).

2) On 28 June, Gestapo agents came to the apartment at midnight, “tore everything apart and searched everywhere” (Edf, p. 68).

At the hearing, R. Collignon denied this:

“COLLIGNON. – [...] I would like to remark that we did not tip anything over at all, contrary to what Mme Meley says” (3, p. 52).

Collignon remained in the apartment for a certain length of time, and organized the surveillance in shifts. But nobody came by. Mme Meley was not even arrested (Edf, p. 68).

R. Collignon is also alleged to have simply told her: “I am not a policeman, but a hunter, who, when he sees game, kills it”, which Collignon denied (3, p. 53).

The occupant sought to arrest Mr. Viard, affiliated with the PTT network. But he had also fled, leaving only his wife. On 28 June, two agents came to his house and passed themselves off as Resistance members wishing to know where he was.

Mme Viard maintained a cautious silence. “Then they gave her a telephone numbers [...] and asked her to let them know when her husband came back. Mme Viard promised, but did nothing, and never saw these two individuals again”.

Later, she recognized one of them as Sébastien Solina, agent of the “Georgia Gestapo” (Edf, p. 69). At the hearing, Mme Viard confirmed this version of the facts (8, p. 103). The defendant Solina did the same: “Mme Viard simply said that her husband was absent”. We said: “Would you tell your husband to telephone Mr. Totor”. We didn’t even search the house, although we could have gone into all the rooms and performed checks if we had wished” (F Res 334/82/3, p. 59-60.).

II) Lyon cases

(February 1944)

II.1) Search of Jean-Marie Buffet’s garage

The Gestapo searched the garage of a certain Mr. Buffet. Mr. Buffet sheltered Resistance vehicles in his garage. (Edf, p. 82...).

At the trial he declared:

“I belonged to the Resistance since 1942. I was working for the account of the MURL – Mouvements Unifiés de la Région Lyonnaise. My garage was a port of call for the MURL of Haute-Savoie, all the Resistance groups in Haute-Savoie. What’s more, I had to guarantee the liaison between Colonel Roussard and his agents in the region of Lyon. Colonel Roussard was at Geneva. I had the mail at the garage.

“In 1943, I met Commandant Georges, who asked me to make my garage available for a transport warehouse” (8, p. 60).

II.2) Interrogations at the Vaize machinery warehouse

During the trial, the principal defendant, Oberchmuckler, was charged with having “interrogated the warehouse personnel very severely” (p. 84). But he did so because there had been an assassination attempt:

– “The Resistance came to blow up the machines, over the course of 1943”, deposition of Marcel RENNI, [8, p. 147];

– “Eighteen locomotives had been blown up”, deposition of Oberchmuckler, [3, p. 78].

Despite the leaks, no advance warning had been received of these bombings, hence the danger of renewed acts of sabotage.

II.3) Searches at the Bertret Garage

This was a garage which “occupied itself with disguising Resistance automobiles at Lyon” (p. 85). Ten arrests were made.

III) Pau case

The Gestapo had to show up at the end of 1943 to dismantle the Resistance networks:

“Main had already prepared the terrain and sounded out the Resistance members to be arrested, to whom he was to present his acolytes as Resistance members wishing to ‘camouflage’ themselves in the local Resistance. The appointment was made for 3 October in the evening, at the Café du Trèfle, at Pau. The whole team, except for Odicharia, struck up acquaintances with the 6 or 7 Resistance members present.

“At 21 h, Odicharia arrived with the SD, shouting ‘German police’... His acolytes, including Collignon, drew their guns and proceeded to make arrests. The prisoners were taken to the headquarters of the SD, at Pau, interrogated and brutalized. Collignon was assigned to guarding them. The next day, however his comrades continued the inquiry” (p. 96).

At the hearing, Collignon denied that there had been any “brutalities”:

“But ‘brutalities’, that’s a bit much. What I mean is that I saw people [come back] who were a bit disheveled, like.” (4, p. 103).

Gestapo Legends

What they tell us about the Gestapo

The Gestapo – Geheime Staatspolizei (Secret State Police) – was created on 26 April 1933. It remains the symbol of the “police terror” which is said to have existed under Hitler from the moment of his accession to power – and, later – in all the German-occupied countries. Modern school books and the various documents distributed to young people are unanimous. The Gestapo was a “Nazi” organization which spied on everyone:

The National Socialist Party became the only party and Nazi organizations kept the entire population under the surveillance of the State Police (or Gestapo) [See F. Lebrun and V. Zanghellini, *Histoire, terminales* (ed. Belin, 1983), p. 13, col. B].

It had thousands of agents at its disposal, who, throughout the day, arrested and tortured people and sent them to concentration camps.

The Nazis create a racist police state; denunciation is encouraged; the S.S. and thousands of Gestapo agents, directed by Himmler, arrest and torture political opponents and send them to concentration camps [See J.-M. Lambin, *Histoire/geographie*, 3e (Hachette, 1989), p. 72.].

So much so that, starting in 1933, Germany experienced an era of increasingly serious chaos and savagery:

“The State is just a facade and the numerous security forces (Gestapo, SD, SS, etc.) rival each other in zeal, plunging Germany into chaos, but also causing an escalation in savagery” [See *Le train pour la memoire et l'égalité, 12-21 February 1999* (leaflet published upon the initiative of the “Coordination PACA de SOS Racisme”, 1999), p. 12].

At the International Military Tribunal, the Gestapo – or Secret State Police – was one of the numerous National Socialist organizations collectively indicted by virtue of the principle of collective guilt. Articles 9 (§1) and 10 of the “Statutes of the International Military Tribunal” state:

“Article 9. At the trial of any individual member of any group or organization the Tribunal may declare (in connection with any act of which the individual may be convicted) that the group or organization of which the individual was a member was a criminal organization [...].

Article 10. In cases where a group or organization is declared criminal by the Tribunal, the competent national authority of any

Signatory shall have the right to bring individuals to trial for membership therein before national, military, or occupation courts. In any such case the criminal nature of the group or organization is considered proved and shall not be questioned” [IMT I, 12].

These two articles made it possible to accuse the following organizations: the Reichs Cabinet, the Corps of the political heads of the NSDAP, SS, SA, SD, the Gestapo, the General Staff and High Command of the German armed forces [unnumbered page, beginning of IMT volumes; see also appendix B of the Indictment; IMT, I, 85]. The indictment is dated 18 October 1945, date of the first hearing of the Nuremberg Trial. One month later, in his opening address, the American prosecutor Robert Jackson declared:

“Through the police formations that are before you accused as criminal organizations, the Nazi Party leaders, aided at some point in their basic and notorious purpose by each of the individual defendants, instituted a reign of terror. These espionage and police organizations were utilized to hunt down every form of opposition and to penalize every non-conformity” [IMT II, 128].

Shortly afterwards, one of Jackson’s assistants, Commander Frank B. Wallis, declared:

“The formations of the Party, the SA, the SS, as well as the SD and the Gestapo, were the vicious tools used in the extermination of all opposition, real or potential” [IMT II, 193].

The Gestapo was defended by Rudolf Merkel. Today, historians recall that at the end of the trial, the Gestapo was finally declared a “criminal organization”. This is partially true (I will return to this point). But the remarks heard during the hearings largely disprove the official story.

Political police forces already existed in Germany before 1933

It is very often stated – or we are often given the impression, for example – that no political police force existed in Germany before Hitler’s accession to power. In its issue of 15 December 1939, the French weekly *Notre Combat* wrote:

The Weimar Republic had thought it needless to create political police. Hitler’s first concern, upon his accession to power, on 30 January 1933, was to repair this error [see: *Notre combat*, No. 13, 15 December 1939, issue entitled *La Gestapo: ses origines, ses chefs, son organization*, p. 1].

This is completely false. Under Weimar, a very active and effective police existed, the “*la service*” of which was exclusively concerned

with political matters. On 3 January 1946, Merkel interrogated Otto Ohlendorf, former head of the SD. Here are the results:

“DR. MERKEL: Do you know whether before 1933, in the area which then constituted the Reich, there had existed a similar institution, a political police force?”

“OHLENDORF: Yes, that existed, as far as I remember, at Police headquarters in Berlin, for instance; and I believe it was Department IA. At any rate political police organizations did exist.

“DR. MERKEL: Do you know anything about the sphere of activities of this organization which existed before 1933?”

“OHLENDORF: Yes. They were the same; at any rate their activities were fundamentally the same” [IMT IV, 344].

Three months later, the former head of the RSHA, Ernst Kaltenbrunner, confirmed the above. Taking January 1933 as his point of departure, he stressed:

“There was a State Police in existence prior to that time; to be sure, they were not called the State Police at that time, but the Political Police Department” [IMT XI, 309].

On 31 July 1946, finally, a former head of the Gestapo, Karl Best, explained what happened before Hitler’s arrival in power:

“In the individual German states, political police systems were set up which were created by the various state governments concerned” [IMT XX, 124].

It is therefore incorrect to believe that Hitler – through Hermann Göring – set up a political police force *ex nihilo* in April 1933. Such a political police already existed, in all the German states under the Weimar Republic, even if it was not called the “Gestapo”.

The Weimar political police force was employed to combat the rise of National Socialism

At the Nuremberg Trial, the principal defendant, Hermann Göring, also mentioned the existence of political police forces in Prussia before 1933. Under examination by his lawyer, he declared:

“Before our time there was also a political police in Prussia. That was Police Department Ia, and its task was first of all the supervision of and the fight against the National Socialists, and also, in part, against the Communists” [IMT IX, 256].

Many examples could be given of the use of the political police force to combat National Socialism. I shall quote only a few, which received a great deal of publicity at the time.

On 25 November 1930, following the revelations of a newly-elected National Socialist movement elected to the Landtag (Deputy Schäfer), multiple searches were conducted of a villa owned by Dr Wagner, counselor of the Hessian district of the NSDAP. The searches resulted in the discovery of a document listing measures to be taken to restore order if the National Socialists came to power following a Communist uprising. The news was widely commented upon at the time [see the *Bulletin Périodique de la presse allemande*, No. 407, 30 December 1931, pp. 24-25]. The paper had been drawn up by a National Socialist magistrate, substitute Best, and bore several signatures, including that of the secretary of the district head, Stavinoga. It should however be noted that it was not signed or initialed by any high dignitary of the NSDAP. Immediately after the discovery, Hermann Göring took steps before the Minister of the Interior to inform him that the Party was respectful of legality, that it had not been aware of this draft, drawn up at Boxheim, and that he disapproved of it. Legal proceedings were brought against the NSDAP, which lasted nearly two years. Finally, on 20 October 1932, the Supreme Court of Leipzig dismissed the case.

At the beginning of 1932, the German authorities gathered “concordant information [...] originating from Schleswig, Hannover and Saxony, with regards to the movements of armed SA troops” (proof that the Weimar Republic disposed of an efficient intelligence network). In reaction, on 17 March 1932, the Weimar political police conducted a vast raid of 170 offices of the SA units of the NSDAP, confiscating large numbers of documents and weapons at Berlin, Hamburg, Oldenburg, Pinneberg etc.

According to these documents, the National Socialists are alleged to have prepared to march on Berlin and take power if Hitler won the Presidential elections. The SA were said to have been alerted, and provided with food and weapons. A motorcycle transmission network was said to have been set up. The marching order was allegedly to have consisted of the following telegram: “Grandmother has died. Max”.

Despite the importance of the confiscations, the *Tägliche Rundschau* considered this action as “an act of revenge, rather than a political necessity”. As a whole, moreover, the press treated this information “quite reservedly”, since it was difficult to tell whether these preparations related to a *coup d'état* or a counter-attack in the event of a Communist uprising [source of information: *Bulletin Périodique...*, No. 411, 15 April 1932, pp. 14-15]. In any case, legal proceedings were taken before the High Court of Leipzig. In the following days, moreover, an important conference was held between

General Groener and the Ministries of the Interior of Prussia, Bavaria, Wurttemberg, Hessen and Baden. According to the *Bayerischer Kurier*:

“It had reportedly been decided to reinforce the surveillance of the actions of the National Socialists and to intervene at the slightest act of illegality” [*Ibid.*, p. 15, col. B].

Less than one month later, on 13 April, President Hindenburg signed a Decree-Law outlawing the SA, SS, their joint staffs and all dependent organizations, and the entire administrative apparatus of the National Socialist private army. In 1946, Franz von Papen qualified this action as an “obvious injustice on the part of the Brüning government”, since it struck only against the militia of the NSDAP, sparing, without justification, those of the socialists and Communists:

“...the ban of the SS by the Brüning Government was an obvious injustice. The SS, or rather the SA, had been prohibited; but the uniformed formations of the Socialists and the Communists, that is, the ‘Rotfront’ and the ‘Reichsbanner’, had not been prohibited” [IMT XVI, 246].

The Storm Troops were later re-legalized by a decree-law dated 17 June 1932. But the governments of Bavaria and Baden maintained the prohibition.

These few facts show that, under the Weimar Republic, the struggle against National Socialism was a reality, thanks to the existence of a highly efficient corps of political police. One cannot blame the Weimar Republic for acting in this manner [which would have been a matter of course under any system]. In most cases, in fact, the Weimar political police only acted if Hitler’s followers were suspected of jeopardizing the security of the State.

Now let us return to our topic.

The objectives of the Gestapo were those of all political police all over the world

Two German laws

When the centralization of the Gestapo became more or less fully completed, in early 1936, a new law was promulgated setting forth the responsibilities of the Gestapo. Published on 10 February, paragraph I stipulated:

“The Secret State Police has the task of investigating all tendencies dangerous to the State and of combating them, of collecting and exploiting the result of such investigations, of informing the Reich Government and other authorities of findings important to them, of

keeping them informed and supplying them with suggestions” [IMT XXI, 509].

This law was introduced into evidence at Nuremberg under reference number Gestapo-7.

Four months later, the Preamble of the decree reorganizing and unifying the German police declared:

[The police] are there: [...]. 2) to protect the German people from any attempts at destruction by interior and exterior enemies [See *Notre Combat*, op. cit, p. 1].

Statements made before the Nuremberg Tribunal

All the above was perfectly normal for any political police force. On 12 April 1946 Ernst Kaltenbrunner stressed that the main mission of the Gestapo was the same as all police forces in the world:

“The State Police had for their main function, as in every other country, the protection of the State from any attack coming from within” [IMT XI, 309].

A few months later, on 31 July 1946, defense counsel for Kaltenbrunner, Dr. Merkel, interrogated K. Best as follows:

“DR. MERKEL: Were these new authorities charged with new tasks?

BEST: No. No, they were charged with the same duties as the political police had been given in the past.

DR. MERKEL: What were these duties?

BEST: On the one hand, the prosecution of political crimes, that is to say, for actions which were committed for political reasons or motives in violation of the criminal law, and, on the other hand, the taking of police measures for the prevention of such crimes” [IMT XX, 124].

The Gestapo was not responsible for conveying the “Nazi” ideology

In particular, the Gestapo was not responsible for conveying the dominant ideology. At Nuremberg, a former local Gestapo head, Karl Hoffmann, was categorical:

“DR. MERKEL: Was it not the task of the Gestapo to further the ideological aims of the Party?

HOFFMANN: No. The tasks of the State Police were purely counterintelligence against attacks directed against the State, and that within the legal provisions and regulations” [IMT XX, 157].

A well-manned corps of political police was already active under the Weimar Republic

Today, many people believe that the National Socialists hurried to “nazify” the country by dissolving all the ancient assemblies and by creating new ones composed of convinced National Socialists as soon as they took power. This is incorrect. The German Academy of Law is a very good example. This organization was founded in 1933 by Hans Frank; its mission consisted of preparing the laws (particularly in the social or economic field); like all assemblies of this type, its role was chiefly consultative. At Nuremberg, H. Frank explained:

“FRANK: The Academy of German Law was the meeting place of the most prominent legal minds in Germany in the theoretical and practical fields. Right from the beginning I attached no importance to the question of whether the members were members of the Party or not. Ninety percent of the members of the Academy of German Law were not members of the Party” [IMT XII, 4].

The same applies to with the Gestapo. In the indictment drawn up at Nuremberg, the prosecution claimed that the functionaries and agents of this newly created police force were “selected in accordance with Nazi biological, racial, and political theories, completely indoctrinated in Nazi ideology” [IMT I, 82].

It is true that, K. Hoffmann admitted during the trial that newly appointed functionaries and those who obtained a promotion were “appraised from a political point of view” in the years following the taking of power.

“HOFFMANN: Each official who entered was examined regarding his political attitude, and each one who was promoted was screened again” [IMT XX, 168].

But it would be wrong to assume that the Gestapo was recruited chiefly from Party members. Determined that the Gestapo should be an authentic, effective and immediately active police force, Göring selected, first of all, officials known, not for their National Socialist sympathies, but solely for their professionalism. The immense majority had never belonged to the NSDAP.

Göring’s statements at Nuremberg

At Nuremberg, Göring, former no. 2 man of the defeated regime, explained:

“I took in a great number of political officials [into the newly created Gestapo] who were experienced, and at the beginning took fewer people from the Party circles because for the time being I had to attach importance to professional ability” [IMT IX, 256].

As head of the Gestapo in Prussia, Göring chose M. Diels, a former high police official under the Weimar Republic:

“The leader whom I selected for this police force was not from the Party but came from the former police. He, Diels, was already there at that time as Oberregierungsrat and later as Ministerialrat, and likewise the main chiefs of the Gestapo were officials who were not from the Party” [IMT IX, 256].

Confirmation from a former legal expert...

Göring was not lying. Interrogated on 18 April 1946, a former RSHA expert on legal matters affecting the police, Rudolf Bilfinger, declared:

“The former officials, the officials of the former political department of the headquarters of the Commissioner of the Police, constituted the nucleus of the membership of the Secret State Police. The various local police head offices were created from these former political departments of the central police headquarters, and at the same time practically all the officials from these former political departments were taken over. In Berlin, for example, it was Department I, A of the central police headquarters” [IMT XII, 49].

...and a former local Gestapo head

In support of these declarations, K. Hoffmann, stated that “most” of the members of his service were “employees who had entered the police before 1933 and had been detailed or transferred to the State Police”. The proportion of volunteers who entered after 1933 only reached “at most 10 or 15%” of effective staff:

“DR. MERKEL: Was the employment of all these people on a voluntary basis in general or not?

HOFFMANN: On the whole, they were employees who had entered the police before 1933 and had been detailed or transferred to the State Police. According to my recollection, there were at the most 10 to 15 percent of them who had entered the organization voluntarily after 1933” [IMT X, 158].

Why such a small proportion? Quite simply because that sector of the police was not very well-paid, and was therefore not very much sought after.

“DR. MERKEL: Were people taken on from the Party, from the SS, and the SA?

BEST: Only relatively few, as service in these police agencies was not highly paid and therefore was not very much sought after” [IMT XX, 126].

Let us add that all these volunteers coming from the Party, SS or SA remained obscure subordinates within the Gestapo. They were hired...

“Only to a small extent, and only as employees and workers for technical duties, such as drivers, teletype operators, and office help, were persons from the Party, the SS, and the SA taken on” [IMT XXI, 507].

During the war years, wounded members of the Waffen SS who could no longer serve at the front were assigned to the Gestapo; to me, it seems logical to assume that they, too, were assigned to lower ranks, as they were not professional police.

The Gestapo was not an annex of the NSDAP

This is why it is incorrect to say that the NSDAP created a political police force consisting exclusively with its own members, immediately after the appointment of Hitler to the position as Chancellor. Starting on 30 January 1933, moreover, during a meeting with representatives of the German press, the new director of the German press, Walter Funk, had given an assurance that “there was no question of incorporating Hitlerian formations into the police of the Reich” [source: the *Bulletin Périodique...*, No. 421, 2 March 1933, p. 17, col. A].

Thirteen years later, at Nuremberg, K. Best was categorical on this point, as shown in the following exchange:

“DR. MERKEL: Did the NSDAP establish a political police anywhere in the German Reich?

BEST: No, nowhere.

DR. MERKEL: Was there anywhere an establishment or an organization of the Party taken over by the State as a political police system?

BEST: No, nowhere.

DR. MERKEL: Were the political police posts of the German states occupied by Party members in 1933?

BEST: No, those posts were occupied by former police. Only a few officials were newly taken on at that time.

DR. MERKEL: Were the leading officials members of the Party?

BEST: That varied in the various states. There were even in part officials who had formerly held quite different views and belonged to other parties.

DR. MERKEL: Can you give an example of this?

BEST: There are several well-known examples. It is well known that Herr Diels, the chief of the Prussian Secret State Police, had formerly held other political opinions; the closest collaborators of Himmler and Heydrich from Munich, who were then assigned to the office of the Secret State Police in Berlin – such as Muller, who later was head of Amt IV; Huber, Fresch, Beck—they were formerly adherents of the Bavarian People’s Party, and even the chief of my small Hessian state police office was a former democrat and Freemason, whom I considered qualified for this post.

DR. MERKEL: Why then did these officials continue in the police service under National Socialist rule?

BEST: For a German official it was a matter of course to keep on serving the State, even though the government changed—as long as he was in a position to do so.

DR. MERKEL: Were these officials removed and later on replaced by National Socialists?

BEST: No, these gentlemen had mostly a very successful career and obtained good posts” [IMT XX, 125-6].

As stressed by Dr. Merkel, starting after January 1933:

“Those officials, who had been employed in part even before 1914 and currently up to the year 1933 in combating the various political opponents of the various governmental systems, and the governments which came into power through them, were almost without exception absorbed by the political police of the new regime. The only exceptions were those officials who had been particularly active as opponents of National Socialism. But even those were only dismissed in rare cases. For the most part they were transferred to the Criminal Police” [IMT XXI, 342].

Best also stated that, at least until 1940, police officials received no political or ideological training:

“DR. MERKEL: Were the officials who were in office indoctrinated and influenced politically?

BEST: No. It may well have been a plan of Himmler in 1939 or so for the Main Office for Race and Settlement of the SS to undertake a unified political training program for all the agencies and departments subordinate to Himmler. As long as I was in office, that is, until 1940, this was not done however” [IMT XX, 131].

The Gestapo: a perfectly ordinary State police force

Göring's explanations..

We must conclude that, far from being an arm of National Socialist struggle, the Gestapo was, above all, a State police force, such as existed – and still exist – all over the world. As Göring put it:

“DR. STAHLER: Can one say that the Gestapo in the year 1933, when it was created by you, was a National Socialist combat unit, or was it rather a state organization such as, for example, the criminal police or other state and Reich authorities?”

GÖRING: I have already emphasized that this was a purely state organization built around the already existing political police force, which was merely being reorganized and brought into line with the new state principles. At this time it had not even the slightest connection with the Party. The Party had no influence or authority to give orders or directives of any sort; it was exclusively a state institution. The members who were in it already, or who came into it, were at this time officials with all the rights and duties of such” [IMT IX, 412-413].

A view confirmed by the witness Best

Later, K. Best, interrogated by Dr. Merkel, confirmed:

“DR. MERKEL: What was the Gestapo?”

BEST: The Gestapo was a group of State authorities” [...]. The officials of the Secret State Police were officials employed by the State, and they occupied a public position. An organization sets its own aims. The officials of the Secret State Police received their orders from the State and from the State leaders.

DR. MERKEL: Did the Gestapo belong in any way to the NSDAP or to the National Socialist organization? BEST: No, the officials of the Gestapo were purely and simply State officials” [IMT XX, 123].

Reply to the allegation that Gestapo members belonged to the SS

To this, some people will say that a large majority of Gestapo members were SS members [“Its officials and operatives were selected on the basis of unconditional acceptance of Nazi ideology, were largely drawn from members of the SS, and were trained in SS and SD schools” [IMT I, 83], assuming that the new secret police force was indeed a National Socialist structure. This is an error.

SS men admitted into the Gestapo were considered officials

When SS men applied to join the Gestapo, they had to pass an examination to which all candidates were subjected. If they were accepted, these SS men became Gestapo officials. Of course, they remained SS men, but within the framework of their new activity, they were considered ordinary officials:

[“Until 1934 it was exactly as I described it. Then with the further expansion, the SS element did certainly become stronger and perhaps more people from this sector were brought in, but even these – at that time they all had to pass an examination – became and remained officials” [IMT IX, 413].

Starting in 1939, the assimilation remained “purely formal”

On the eve of the beginning of the war, some members of the Gestapo received a post somewhere in the SS, with the corresponding rank and uniform. The objective was solely to reinforce the authority of ordinary acting officials:

[“The reason for this assimilation was the following: The system of professional civil servants had been introduced and maintained in the Gestapo. But civil servants were, in part, not particularly respected by the Party because of their political or nonpolitical past. In order to strengthen their authority in the discharge of their duties, in particular when acting against National Socialists, they were to appear in uniform” [IMT XXI, 506].

So much so that the SS ranks conferred upon members of the Gestapo had no practical consequence: members of the Gestapo remained ordinary officials and their tasks were in no way modified.

As Göring explained:

[“...] gradually in the course of years all officials, whether they wanted to or not, had, I believe, to take on some rank in the SS, so that a Gestapo official, who perhaps until the year 1939 or 1940 had had nothing to do with the SS, and whose employment dated from the old days – that is, he had been a police official of the Weimar Republic – was automatically given some rank or other in the SS. But he remained an official, that is, the Gestapo was an apparatus for officials in the German police force” [IMT IX, 413].

Later, the witness K. Hoffmann confirmed this by stating that the “integration into the SS was purely a matter of form”. This is the passage, from 1 August 1946:

“DR. MERKEL: [...].

Did the members of the Gestapo who had been assimilated into the SS by the assimilation decree come under the orders of the SS or the SD and did they perform their duties there?

HOFFMANN: No. The registration in the SS was merely a theoretical measure, and after my formal entry into the SS in the year 1939 I did not perform any service with either the SS or the SD" [IMT XX, 178].

An opportunism which changed nothing in fact

Of course, a few agents joined the SS voluntarily, but these candidates acted purely out of opportunism, since when it was time for promotion, Himmler granted promotion more readily if the official had also been a member of the SS. Thus, a certain proportion of all enlistments may be assumed to have been motivated simply by a desire for advancement. At Nuremberg, E. Kaltenbrunner put it:

"It was, if I may characterize it in these words, the straining of our utmost and our last reserves of strength" [IMT XI, 311].

Here again, these enlistments changed nothing in practice; they merely permitted – perhaps – more rapid advancement in the ranks of the Police.

Conclusion

Consequently, one can only reject the argument that the Gestapo was merely a branch of the SS, and therefore a National Socialist combat organization. This assimilation of Gestapo members into the SS was not only late and very incomplete, it also remained "a matter a pure form", dictated by necessity or opportunism. In his final address, Dr Merkel stressed this fact:

"With this assimilation the Gestapo officials [...] were formally listed among the SD formations of the SS, though they remained solely under the jurisdiction of their own superiors without doing any SS or SD service. Besides, the assimilation was only carried out slowly and to a negligible degree. At the outbreak of war in 1939 only approximately 3,000 members of the Gestapo and the Criminal Police out of a total of 20,000 had been assimilated" [IMT XXI, 506]". [...]

"During the war even non-assimilated persons had to wear the SS uniform on certain assignments, even without being members of the SS. Apart from that the SS did not control the Police or exert any type of influence upon its activities; it was only in Himmler's person that there was personal union in the leadership of the two" [IMT XXI, 508].

Why create the Gestapo?

Naturally, some people might answer: If the Gestapo was not, in reality, a new agency, why change the structure and why give it a new name?

To understand this, one must understand the context of Germany in 1931-1932.

The domestic situation in Germany in 1932

At this time, the country was experiencing a frightful economic crisis. In an article published as early as 28 September 1930, Josef Eberle wrote:

“... of a people [the Germans] pushed to the limits of despair, a people drained of its blood to the limits of what is possible and which had nothing left to lose” [see *Schönere Zukunft*, 28 September 1930, article entitled *Zum Ausgang der deutschen Reichstagswahlen* (On the German Elections to the Reichstag). Let us recall that these elections had brought 107 National Socialists into the Reichstag, as against 12 beforehand.

Since the history of the frightful German economic crisis is relatively well-known, I mention it only once, recalling only the most important events of the period following the publication of the above mentioned article. On 29 May 1931, when a new decree-law was in preparation to attempt to fill the financial deficit reaching 1,250 million marks, the *Deutsche Tageszeitung* spoke of “an impending economic and financial catastrophe”. New budgetary cuts were planned, associated with new taxes. The *Kölnische Zeitung* declared: “the current sacrifices are as far-reaching as could be [...]. With them, the nation has reached the limit of efforts for financial restructuring”.

The situation was such that in the decree-law, published shortly afterwards, the government took draconian measures, including 4-8% pay cuts for State agents and officials, a 50% reduction in the first child allowance, increases in existing taxes on sugar, mineral water and turnover, and the creation of a “crisis tax” on income. Referring to the text, the *Berliner Tageblatt* commented:

“A government has recourse to the most extreme measures to evade acute dangers [...]. The means to which it is taking recourse exceed mere financial measures. They affect many things which were thought of as established or sacrosanct”.

For its part, the *Leipziger Volkszeitung* wrote:

“What is indisputable is that the blackest pessimism has been once again exceeded from what we’ve seen of the decree-law...”

But in view of the seriousness of the moment, the *Vöössische Zeitung* of 7 June advised: “in the current general political situation, the lesser evil is still to tolerate this decree-law”.

At the same time, according to one report, after the drop recorded since February 1931, the number of unemployed was expected to rise to a probable total of 4.5 million jobseekers in 1932 [In February 1931, unemployment peaked at 4,972,000 job seekers. Since that time, the number had dropped to 3,962,000 in June 1931. On 15 July, it reached its lowest level: 3,956,000. But starting on this date, it began to rise again. On 31 August 1931, there were 4,195,000 unemployed (source: *Bulletin Périodique...*, No. 404, 28 September 1931, p. 24, col. A)]. The government was now announcing that these unfortunate people would receive less assistance than ever! For example, seasonal workers could claim unemployment insurance if they were employed for 30 weeks, as against 20 weeks under the previous scheme; an allowance would be paid for 20 weeks, as against 29 before. For their part, persons working at home and those employed in family workshops were to be excluded from employment insurance. As for the “crisis allowance” reserved for unemployed persons at the end of their entitlements – while they were not reduced – the waiting periods were extended: from 14 to 21 days for unemployed without dependent families, and from 7 to 14 days for unemployed with more than four dependents. These families would now be totally deprived of resources for perhaps two weeks... Not surprisingly, the press greeted this report with disappointment. The *Berliner Volkszeitung* wrote:

“Now that the Commission has reached the end of its work, we are unfortunately obliged to observe that it was useless. What has been achieved? The long reports have changed nothing in the misery due to the crisis, the work arrangement plans and hirings remain on paper, even the shortening of the working day, was not approached by the government... Hence the drafts of the Commission showed a tendency to reduce the rights of the insured and social security” [source: *Bulletin Périodique...*, No. 401, 17 June 1931, pp. 12-15].

Despite the above, the German governments expected to dispense 2 billion marks for the unemployed between 1 September 1931 and 31 March 1932: 500 millions for housing and 1,200 million for food and coal [source: *Bulletin Périodique...*, No. 404, 28 September 1931, p. 24, col. A].

On 20 June 1931, President von Hindenburg launched a desperate appeal to the President of the United States to save the country from

bankruptcy. Shortly afterwards, on 13 July, one of the most powerful banking institutions in Germany, the Darmstädter und Nationalbank, announced that it was about to be compelled to suspend payments, triggering a wave of public panic: purchases of foreign currencies soared; stores were taken by storm for fear of a general food shortage. In order to calm overheated minds, the government decreed the closure of the stock market and the banks until further notice. It also drew up severe controls on the purchase of foreign currencies and decreed a tax of 100 marks on all trips abroad. Finally, it announced that salaries for the month of July were assured and that those for the month of August would be paid in three installments. In its evening edition, the *Leipziger Volkszeitung* wrote:

“What we are seeing in Germany is the catastrophic collapse, not only of a great undertaking, but an entire regime” [source: *Bulletin Périodique...*, No. 403, 20 August 1931, p. 18, col. A].

On the 15th of the same month, the German Reichs Chancellor and his minister, M. Curtius, left for Paris to “undertake an action to obtain foreign assistance” (*Ibid.*, col. B). But this attempt was in vain; no assistance could be hoped for at the immediate moment: “Germany should first make an effort on her own behalf” (*Ibid.*, p. 19, col. A). So the government created a new bank, the Guarantee Acceptance Bank, with a capital of 200 million marks, and took steps to refloat the other struggling financial institutions.

On 4 August, in a reassuring speech, Chancellor Brüning announced the resumption of payments for the next day. The crisis had been overcome, but it left Germany even weaker than before...

On 11 August, an agreement suspending all war debts and reparations was signed in London. Four months later, on 8 December, President von Hindenburg signed the fourth (!) “great distress decree” containing cuts in wages, rents and measures affecting social security insurance. On 16 December, metal workers’ salaries in Berlin industry fell 10-15%. The next day, it was decided that the salaries in the mines of the Ruhr would be reduced 10% on 1 January. In his response of 1 January 1932 to the wishes of the diplomatic corps, President von Hindenburg declared:

“All branches of our economy are languishing, millions of our compatriots, despite their ability and desire to work, are being robbed of the basic elements of their existence. Even those segments of the population condemned to unemployment are suffering the effects of the serious material and moral depression” [source: *Documentation catholique*, No. 595, 16 January 1932, col. 145].

One week later, on 9 January 1932, Brüning informed the British Ambassador that Germany would henceforth be unable to continue to make reparations payments. In a declaration to the Wolff Agency, the Chancellor explained:

“It is obvious that the situation in Germany makes it impossible for the country to continue to make payments of a political nature” [source: *Bulletin Périodique...*, No. 408, 25 January 1932, p. 8, col. A].

The next day, *Germania* said:

“Germany refuses to make payments not because it does not wish to pay, but because it cannot pay” [*Ibid.*, p. 9, col. A].

Two months later, a new “distress decree” was published, to fill the gaps in the preceding one. On 4 September, a new decree-law appeared in order to revive the moribund economy. In 1946, F. von Papen declared that the decree involved a “supreme mobilization of our last energy reserves”:

“It was, if I may characterize it in these words, the straining of our utmost and our last reserves of strength” [IMT XVI, 254].

A few immediate successes were recorded (particularly, a drop in unemployment; 123,000 fewer unemployed in a month). But later, the situation got even worse. At the end of 1932, the total debt amounted to 12.26 billion marks, an increase of 11 million compared to the month of March [source *Bulletin Périodique...*, No. 420, 30 January 1933, p. 17, col. B]. The number of unemployed therefore totaled approximately 5.5 million people – which meant that “one German in three was unemployed” [Walter Funk at Nuremberg, IMT XIII, 89.]. According to one expert, August Rosterg, the ambitious government project intended to combat the problem was to create a maximum of 67,000 jobs [source: *Bulletin Périodique...*, No. 420, 30 January 1933, p. 19, col. A]. As for agriculture, the distress was total. On 11 January 1933, The Agrarian League – which did not represent the totality of the peasant world, but just the same... – published a manifesto beginning as follows:

“The misery of German agriculture, that of peasant exploitations of selected products, has, with the tolerance of the present government, acquired proportions which one would not have believed possible, even under a Marxist government. They are continuing to loot agriculture to the benefit of all-powerful monied interests in the processing industries and their satellites” [source: *Bulletin Périodique...*, No. 420, 30 January 1933, p. 19, col. B].

This manifesto implied the immediate breakdown between the government and the Agrarian league.

Germany was truly fighting an “inextricable mass of problems” [according to the *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten*, issue of 2 February 1933, cited in *Bulletin Périodique...*, No. 421, 2 March 1933, p. 18, col. A].

Chronic political instability

This economic distress reinforced the political stability. On 5 October 1930, Josef Eberle complained that there had been no fewer than seventeen governments in Germany since 1918, declaring, quite accurately:

“Truly that which seems the most important thing in Germany seems to be to endow the Constitution with those elements of authority and stability capable of rendering largely possible this certitude in conduct and policy. Only such certitude can lift a nation from the debacle and misery and restore its former greatness” [source: *Schönere Zukunft*, 5 October 1930, article entitled: *Was nun in Berlin?* (What will Berlin Do Now?)].

Subsequent events, however, failed to bring any perceptible improvement. The opening sessions of the Reichstag under the Brüning Cabinet were held on 13 October 1930. Less than one year later, on 7 October 1931, Brüning resigned. The Chancellor was charged with forming a new one, which was done in 48 hours. But this Cabinet lasted even less time than the last: on 30 May 1932, the Reichs President, who wished for a more right-wing policies, appointed Franz von Papen as Chancellor and charged it with forming a new government. In twenty months, thus, three Cabinets had succeeded each other...

The perceptible progress of Marxist ideas

The economic distress and political instability naturally favored the development of Marxist ideas, or ideas linked to Marxism. One symptom among others: in Germany, the number of members of the proletarian and free-thinker movement exploded. Rising from 3,322 in 1918, their numbers reached 59,829 in 1920, 261,565 in 1922, 464,728 in 1926, 581,059 in 1928, and approximately 700,000 at the end of 1930, following the split in the movement into a Socialist wing and a Communist wing [source: *Documentation catholique*, No. 558, 21 March 1931, col. 704 et 705, note].

In the schools (including confessional schools), the Communists were circulating pamphlets encouraging children to join the Jungspartakusbund. To become a Pioneer in this organization, a young

person had to commit himself to unconditional support of the Communist party, to organizing the “struggle against reactionary teachers”, creating cells in classes, etc. In sum, the objective was to form Communist young people’s shock troops. Organized in a climate of general poverty, this propaganda experienced such success that, on 14 December 1931, Cardinal Bertram, on behalf the entire Prussian episcopate, begged the authorities to take “whatever measures might be necessary to remedy the agitation” [source: *Documentation catholique*, No. 596, 23 January 1932, col. 210-1.].

At the same time, the communists never ceased making progress at the polls, even though they were gaining support less rapidly than the National Socialists. The following are only a few examples:

– 17 May 1931, Landtag elections at Idenbourg. The Marxists received 19,389 votes, as against 8,470 three years beforehand [source: *Bulletin Périodique...*, No. 401, 17 June 1931, p. 19. It should be noted that the National Socialists for their part rose from 17,457 votes to 101,490].;

– 27 September 1931, elections to the Hamburg parliament. The Marxists won eight seats, increasing from 114,257 votes (in 1928) to 168,618 [source: *Bulletin Périodique...*, No. 405, October 1931, p. 23, col. B. The National Socialists won 40 seats, increasing from 14,760 to 202,465 votes;

– 15 November 1931, elections to the Hessen Landtag. The Marxists obtained 106,775 votes as against in 41,280 in 1927 [source: *Bulletin Périodique...*, No. 406, 27 November 1931, p. 24].;

– 14 March 1932, Landtag elections at Meckelbourg-Strelitz. The Marxists won nearly 8,000 votes, rising from 10,634 to 18,469 [source: *Bulletin Périodique...*, no. 411, 25 April 1932, p. 22. The National Socialists, for their part, lost more than 12,000 votes].;

– 24 April 1932, elections in Bavaria. The Marxists doubled their voting strength, from 125,842 to 259,400 [source: *Bulletin Périodique...*, No. 412, 16 May 1932, p. 24. The National Socialists, for their part, won six times as many votes, increasing from 203,115 to 1,270,602].;

– 25 April 1932, Landtag elections in Prussia. The Marxists won 9 seats compared to 1928, increased from 2.2 to 2.8 million votes [source: *Bulletin Périodique...*, No. 412, 16 May 1932, p. 21. Over the same period, the National Socialists won 153 seats, increasing from 0.8 to 8 million votes].;

– 25 April 1932, election to the Landtag of Wurtemberg. The Marxists won 34,000 votes, increased from 82,525 to 116,644 [*Ibid.*].

p. 25. At these elections, the National Socialists gained over 300,000 votes, increased from 20,432 to 328,188.

On 31 July 1932, general elections to the Reichstag. The Communists came in third, with 5,278,094 votes, or an increase of nearly 700,000 votes compared to 1930. They came behind the Social Democrats, who gathered nearly 8 million votes (a drop of approximately 600,000 votes compared to 1930) and the National Socialists got 13.7 million votes (an increase of 7.4 million votes in two years). Commenting on these results, the *Deutsche Tageszeitung* declared in its edition of 2 August 1932:

“One must unfortunately observe that the strong pressure of the Communists, a dangerous phenomenon for the State in itself, means that Marxism as a whole had renewed its march forward. The percentage of Marxist votes is, in effect, 36.5% against 34.5% in the elections of May 1914” [source: *Bulletin Périodique...*, No. 415, 18 August 1932, p. 16].

The domestic situation justifies Hitler’s intransigence

What were Hitler and his collaborators to do in this situation of chronic crisis? In 1946, at Nuremberg, Franz von Papen declared that at the end of 1932, even the Centre party wished “a majority government with Hitler” [“The Center Party took an adverse position. They desired a majority government with Hitler...” [IMT XVI, 256].

The former Chancellor was not lying. Once the electoral results for the Reichstag were published (1 August 1932), most of the newspapers insisted on the fact that the National Socialists should enter the government. In its edition of 1 August 1932, the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* wrote:

“The election results attest to the desire of the German people to see the National Socialists share in the responsibilities of government. One could split hairs on the other aspects of the voting results of 31 July, but no doubt is possible on this point” [source: *Bulletin Périodique...*, No. 415, 18 August 1932, p. 17, col. A].

For its part, a Protestant paper, the *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, stated unambiguously:

“A government which expressly calls upon the will of the people cannot fail to take account of that will afterwards” [...]. The Centre will be obligated to demand that National Socialism no longer evade its responsibilities. When one has boasted of being a savior to this extent, one no longer has the right just to talk. One must share the

responsibilities of power. There are very simple ways to bring the National Socialists into power” [*Ibid.*, p. 17, col. B.].

Even more surprisingly, this message was also expressed by part of the Left-wing press. On 2 August 1932, the *Frankfurter Zeitung* declared:

“After these elections, people will demand that account be taken of the responsibility to no other party than the National-Socialists. And one must take account today of this expression in its literal sense. The National Socialists have the imperious duty to participate in governmental responsibility. There is no shortage of work to do. But the time has passed for threshing about” [*Ibid.*].

To these appeals, the National Socialists responded through the pen of Alfred Rosenberg in the *Völkischer Beobachter*:

“We hear it said that we should be obliged to share the responsibilities of power [...]. It is however quite clear that we do not dream of accepting any form of ‘participation’, but that we will remain free as until now or that will assume the management of affairs in an indisputable manner, leaving others with the care to recognize us or not” [source: *Bulletin Périodique...*, No. 415, 18 August 1932, p. 18, col. A].

For its part, *Der Angriff* wrote:

“Either the National Socialist Party will receive the management of the government of the Reich, or else, if this is refused, it will respond by a struggle without mercy” [*Ibid.*, p. 18, col. B].

Why this intransigence? Quite simply, because, in view of the frightful crisis which was ruining the country, the National Socialists were opposed to half-measures. As recalled by W. Funk at Nuremberg:

“[In 1932] The Government, or rather the governments, had no authority. The Government, or rather the governments, had no authority. The parliamentary system was played out...[...]. the Government itself had neither the power nor the courage to master these economic problems. And these problems could not be solved by means of economic measures alone. The first essential was the presence of a government possessing full authority and responsibility...” [IMT XIII, 79-80].

The National Socialists therefore wished for radical change in the institutions and methods of government in order to put an end to the political instability and, thus, to initiate a long-term job to lift the country out of its misery. It is clear that they wished full power to sweep away the Weimar Republic, parliamentarianism, democracy... and thus to get seriously to work without being annoyed by the

opposition, constant elections and changing majorities caused by the frivolity of the masses.

In this, they did nothing else than follow the advice of the “moderate” J. Eberle. In an article published on 28 September 1930, he had written:

“That which the people demand, is not the illusory democratic right, but assistance, help, a true direction. Let us recall the words of Reichs President [from 1919 to 1925], [Friedrich] Ebert, to Minister Gessler: ‘Mr. Gessler, we will one day be faced with the following dilemma: Germany or the Constitution. When that day comes, we will throw our people to the dogs just the same to save the Constitution’. If the Social-Democrat Ebert could speak this way, is it really true that Christian politicians must, much more yet, find in themselves the courage of the same profession of faith and, beyond words, the courage to act?.. Give the people of Germany that which Rudolf of Habsburg offered in past centuries after the ‘terrible period without Emperors’, and the people will carry you in triumph without asking whether or not you respected the ideas and paragraphs of the Weimar Constitution” [See *Schönere Zukunft*, 28 September 1930, op cit].

Hitler’s demand to govern for four years without hindrance

This is why:

– on 13 August 1932, during discussions with General von Schleicher and Chancellor von Papen, Hitler categorically refused the position of Vice-Chancellor, thus precipitating a new political crisis;

– after finally being called, as Chancellor, to form an initial government (30 January 1933), the Führer, in his first speech as Chancellor, announced:

“The national government wishes to realize the great work of the reorganization of the national economy according to two four year plans: the first, to save the German peasant in such a way as to preserve the food supply, and later the life, of the German nation; the second to save the German worker through a violent and massive attack on unemployment.

“For fourteen years, the ‘November Parties’ [= those originating with the November 1918 revolution] have ruined the agricultural profession of Germany. For fourteen years, they created an army of millions of unemployed.

“With an iron energy and tenacious endurance, the national government will realize the following plan: in four years, the German

peasant should be torn out of his misery; in four years, unemployment will be definitively overcome.

“The conditions of lifting the other parts of the economy will be realized at the same time” [source: “Declaration of the National Government to the German people”, pronounced 1 February 1933 by A. Hitler (reproduced in full in *Documentation Catholique*, No. 656, 29 April 1933, col. 1044)].

Hitler finished as follows: “German People, give us four years, and then judge”, which clearly announced the determination to remain in power for four years, at whatever cost, without being bothered by the institutions and the opposition. The next day, moreover, the *Hamburger Nachrichten* declared:

“Those who do not wish to rally [to the plan of national elevation], will not participate in the reconstruction of the Reich either, and will remain outsiders for four years. But they must not imagine that they will be permitted to disturb the work of the government” [source: *Bulletin Périodique...*, No. 421, 2 March 1933, p. 18, col. A].

This was unambiguously confirmed by Hermann Göring at Nuremberg thirteen years later. Under direct examination by his attorney, he simply declared:

“GÖRING: It was a matter of course for us that once we had come into power we were determined to keep that power under all circumstances. We did not want power and governmental authority for power’s sake, but we needed power and governmental authority in order to make Germany free and great. We did not want to leave this any longer to chance, to elections, and parliamentary majorities, but we wanted to carry out the task to which we considered ourselves called” [IMT IX -250].

The danger of Bolshevism

It was not very likely, however, that the other moving force in the Reich, the Communist party, would accept this situation. It should be recalled that, commenting on the results of the elections to the Reichstag of 31 July 1932, the *Deutsche Tageszeitung* had referred to the “severe repression of the Communists” as a “dangerous phenomenon to the State itself”. The daily paper knew in fact that, in keeping with its habits, the Communist party was already prepared for a revolutionary uprising. The preceding months had demonstrated this once again. At the end of 1931, shortly after the bloody disorders in Saxony, it was reported that the police had discovered stocks of weapons and had closed a Communist school preparing for a civil war.

Without waiting, the Central Committee of the Communist Party published a communiqué stating that it did not approve of political terrorism. But the disclaimer convinced no one. On 14 November 1931, a “moderate” daily paper like *Germania* had written:

“We believe that the platonic declarations of this type do not mean a great deal and that they are insufficient to ‘legalise’ a party capable of acts of terrorism.”

Three years later, during a conference between the Ministers of the Interior of the different States, General Groener, had “called particular attention to the attempts of the Communist party to break up the police and army” [source: *Bulletin Périodique...*, No. 406, 27 November 1931, pp. 21-22].

On 19 April 1932, police raids were conducted of the headquarters of all Communist organizations. Two days later, a police press release announced that the raids had established the illegal survival of Red combat organizations dissolved several years before, such as the Red Front or the Communist Youth Front (Jungfront) [source: *Bulletin Périodique...*, No. 412, 16 May 1932, p. 16, col. A].

On 9 July 1932, the Supreme Court of Leipzig sentenced thirteen Communists to up to eight years of forced labor for plotting against the security of the State and illegal possession of explosives.

Shortly afterwards, Chancellor von Papen received information on a concerted plan of “co-operation of the police department of the Prussian Ministry of the Interior with the Communists” [IMT XVI, 250]. Proof that underground cells in the service of Moscow had penetrated top levels of the machinery of State.

It was therefore to be feared that owing to unforeseen events, the Reds, equipped with widespread, powerful underground organizations and confident of support from a sizeable proportion of the population, would try to overthrow the new regime, representing an ideology of which they had been sworn and bitter enemies for more than ten years.

The Reds had been fighting the National Socialists for years

Let us recall in fact that from the beginning the Communist shock troops wished to crush National Socialism. In *Mein Kampf*, Chapter VII of volume II is entitled: “The Struggle against the Red Front”. Hitler tells of the first attempts of the Reds, starting in 1919, to smother a growing movement the danger of which they sensed immediately. He writes in particular:

“On the other hand the National Socialist meetings were by no means ‘peaceable’ affairs. Two distinct outlooks enraged in bitter

opposition to one another, and these meetings did not close with the mechanical rendering of a dull patriotic song but rather with a passionate outbreak of popular national feeling.

“It was imperative from the start to introduce rigid discipline into our meetings and establish the authority of the chairman absolutely. Our purpose was not to pour out a mixture of soft-soap bourgeois talk; what we had to say was meant to arouse the opponents at our meetings! How often did they not turn up in masses with a few individual agitators among them and, judging by the expression on all their faces, ready to finish us off there and then.

“Yes, how often did they not turn up in huge numbers, those supporters of the Red Flag, all previously instructed to smash up everything once and for all and put an end to these meetings. More often than not everything hung on a mere thread, and only the chairman’s ruthless determination and the rough handling by our ushers baffled our adversaries’ intentions. And indeed they had every reason for being irritated.

“The fact that we had chosen red as the color for our posters sufficed to attract them to our meetings.”

Further on, Hitler tells of the memorable meeting of 4 November 1921, which the Communists had chosen to settle their account with the enemy once and for all. Several hundred of them were there. At an agreed signal, while the meeting was proceeding normally, they started an assault:

“In a few moments the hall was filled with a yelling and shrieking mob. Numerous beer-mugs flew like howitzers above their heads. Amid this uproar one heard the crash of chair legs, the crashing of mugs, groans and yells and screams. It was a mad spectacle” [...].

“The SA on security duty counterattacked furiously. The brawl lasted twenty-five minutes, and, after some shooting, the enemy were finally expelled:

“About twenty-five minutes had passed since it all began. The hall looked as if a bomb had exploded there. Many of my comrades had to be bandaged and others taken away. But we remained masters of the situation.”

Although this victory had permitted the gaining of about two years resting time [“Up to the autumn of 1923, the *Münchener Post* did not again mention the clenched fists of the Proletariat” (Hitler, op. cit.), the fierce struggle recommenced starting at the end of 1923. In its edition of 8 November 1931, the *Völkischer Beobachter* announced that, since 1923, not counting the Munich uprising, 91 National Socialist militants had been killed in street fights. A few days later, the same paper wrote

of 14 deaths and more than 200 wounded, in no more than the month of October, which had just drawn to a close [source: *Bulletin Périodique...*, No. 406, 27 November 1931, p. 21, col. B].

On 17 July 1932, pitched battles between National Socialists and Communists at Altona, Hamburg and other localities caused 19 deaths and 285 wounded [source: *Documentation catholique*, No. 624, 10 September 1932, col. 382]. Between 1 June and 20 July alone, there were 322 political incidents and brawls in Prussia (with the exception of Berlin), causing 72 deaths and 497 wounded (*Ibid.*, col. 384).

The “symbolic” assassination attempt of 30 January 1933

In the night of 30-31 January 1933, the Communists carried out a “symbolic” assassination indicative of their determination: the murder of police agent Zaunitz and the commander of the 33rd assault company of Berlin Maikowicz, who were returning from a “victory parade”. The two victims were buried on 5 February 1933; an immense procession followed the coffins, including the ex-Crown Prince Wilhelm [source: *Documentation catholique*, No. 656, 29 April 1933, col. 1040]. In response, Hitler announced in his speech of 1 February 1933:

“[The national government] will conduct [...] a pitiless war against nihilist tendencies in the moral, political and cultural sphere. Germany must not sink, and will not sink, into anarchic communism” [source: “Declaration du gouvernement national...”, *op cit.*].

For the National Socialists, whose grip on power was still weak (many people thought they would not last more than a few weeks), the danger was therefore real of seeing the Reds attempt a revolutionary uprising as a result of an economic crisis. Starting on 16 February, moreover, a daily paper not widely suspected of fanaticism, the *Hamburger Nachrichten*, had written:

“The agglomeration of great masses of men found in the large cities and industrial regions requires, from the point of view of the Security of the State, police organizations particularly prompt to react. The struggle against a danger threatening the State, such as Bolshevism, cannot be abandoned to the local police, but must be placed in one single hand” [source: *Bulletin Périodique...*, no. 421, 2 March 1933, p. 23, col. B].

The calls were all the more pressing since at the time the German army and police were so weak that they were known to be incapable of maintaining order in the event of trouble and civil war. On 24 November 1932, during a conversation with Franz von Papen on

measures to be taken in the event of popular uprising, von Schleicher summoned an officer from the general staff. According to the officer:

“Then, the same evening, I started discussions with several ministers with regard to the formation of a new government. These ministers told me, ‘The plan is excellent, but Herr Von Schleicher has told us that we will have a civil war and in that case the Reichswehr will not be in a position to keep law and order in the country.’” [IMT XVI, 259].

This is why only a few hours after the Reichstag fire (on 27 February 1933 [see *The Reichstag Fire* by Fritz Tobias, 1965], the National Socialists chose to deal a heavy blow to the Left: between 28 February and 5 March, they suppressed the entire Communist press, both daily newspapers and periodicals, and ordered the arrest of 5,000 Communist leaders, including their leader, Ernst Thälmann (which still did not discourage 4.8 million Germans from voting Communist in the elections of 5 March).

And this is why Göring was anxious to dispose of a reliable secret police. At Nuremberg, he approached this topic without any embarrassment. After recalling the existence of a political police under the Weimar Republic, he stated:

“GÖRING: I could have simply put new people into this political police and let it continue along the old lines. But the situation had changed because of our seizure of power, for at this time, as I have mentioned before, the Communist Party was extraordinarily strong. It had over 6 million voters, and in its Red Front Organization it had a thoroughly revolutionary instrument of power. It was quite obvious to the Communist Party that if we were to stay in power for any length of time, it would ultimately lose its power.

“Looking back, the danger positively existed at that time of political tension, and with atmosphere of conflict, that revolutionary acts might have taken place on the part of the Communists, particularly as, even after we came to power, political murders and political shootings of National Socialists and policemen by that party did not stop, but at times even increased. Also the information which I received was such that I was made extremely fearful of a sudden swing in that direction. Therefore with this department as it was, I could not ward off that danger. I needed reliable political police not only in the main office, but also in the branch offices [...].

“I also wanted this police to be concerned exclusively with protecting the State, first of all against its enemies” [...]. Their mission was first of all to create as quickly as possible all assurance of security against any action from the left.

“I know – as was afterwards proved – that the headquarters of the Communists in Berlin, the Liebknecht House, was strongly fortified and contained very many arms; we had also at that time brought to light very strong connections between the Russian Trade Delegation and the German Communist Party. Even if I arrested, as I did, thousands of communist functionaries at one blow [reference to the arrests carried out from 28 February to 5 March 1933], so that an immediate danger was averted at the outset, the danger as such was by no means eliminated. It was now necessary to disclose the secret connections, the network of these secret connections, and to keep them constantly under observation. For that purpose a police leadership would have to crystallize. The Social Democratic Party [...] seemed to me not nearly so dangerous, especially as far as its members were concerned. But of course they were also absolute opponents of our new State. A part of their functionaries were radical, another part less radical. The more radical I likewise placed under observation, while a whole number of former Social Democratic ministers, heads of Prussian provinces and higher officials, as I said before, were quietly discharged and received their pensions, and nothing further was undertaken against them. Of course there were also other functionaries of the Social Democratic Party whom we definitely had to watch carefully. Thus the Secret State Police was created by me for these tasks” [IMT IX 2456-257].

The Gestapo: a defense organization

As we see, if the National Socialists hurried to create the Gestapo, it was not to impose a reign of police terror over the whole country: it was, above all, to become equipped to protect itself against political enemies with a very violent recent history. At Nuremberg, the witness Karl Hoffmann recalled this unambiguously:

“DR. MERKEL: Was the basic tendency of the Gestapo’s work therefore aggressive or defensive?”

HOFFMANN: It was defensive and not aggressive” [IMT XX, 157].

The deceptive figure of 75,000 Gestapo agents

I know that at this point, some will reply: “Of course, but it is very well known that the best defense is attack. To defend the Nazi state, the Gestapo set up networks of informants who constantly spied on the population and instituted a reign of terror”. These are the famous

“thousands of Gestapo agents, directed by Himmler” mentioned in the 3rd years secondary school textbooks mentioned above.

80% of the Gestapo personnel did not participate in the investigations

It is true that, according to Dr. Merkel himself, the Gestapo consisted “during the period when it was numerically strongest, [of] approximately 75,000” (IMT XXI, 543). This number sounds impressive, of course, but it must be placed in context. Since of these 75,000 members, the executive officials amounted to approximately 20% of the total, i.e., about 15,000 persons (*Ibid.*). This total included: officials from the superior service (from the Regierungsrat and Kriminalrat); service officials (starting with the inspector of police) and service officials (starting with police assistants) (IMT XXI, 505). The other members of the Gestapo were divided into three groups: administrative personnel (20%); auxiliary technical personnel (30%) and office personnel (30%) [source: testimony of Ernst Kaltenbrunner, IMT XI, 309-310]. Of course, these proportions varied, particularly during the war. In 1944, thus, the active on-duty enforcement officers represented 40 to 45% of all regular personnel (IMT XXI, 505); but at the time, the Gestapo had no more than approximately 30,000 persons [IMT IV, 351]. There were therefore no more than 13,500 members of the executive, i.e., less than before the war]. One would therefore be incorrect to consider the Gestapo as a group consisting solely of investigators, trackers and informants. In peacetime, the greatest proportion of the personnel (80%) in no way participated in police work properly speaking. They were stenotypists, typists, drivers (IMT XX, 130.), workers responsible for the installation, maintenance and service of the telephone and telegraph installations, administrative personnel who supervised staff matters and economic matters such as budgetary drafts, lodgings, uniforms, cash assets and accounting:

“The activities of administrative officials consisted of personnel matters; economic matters, such as setting up budgets, housing, clothing, cashiers’ office duties, etc. The administrative officials had the same duties abroad. They were what would be called in the Armed Forces, on the front as well as in task forces, quartermasters and paymasters. Towards the end of 1944 the number of administrative officials amounted to approximately 3,000, which was roughly 10 percent of the total regular personnel of the Gestapo” [IMT XXI 504-505.

At Nuremberg, these people were excluded from the indictment on the proposal of the prosecution itself:

“At the suggestion of the Prosecution, the Tribunal does not include persons employed by the Gestapo for purely clerical, stenographic, janitorial, or similar unofficial routine tasks” [IMT I, 267, judgment of 1 October 1946].

Only 9,000 to 10,000 investigators worked on political affairs.

Let us add to that that the investigators did not concern themselves with political affairs at all, since from the beginning the Gestapo included the counter-espionage police and border police:

“BEST: Besides the Political Police, strictly speaking, there were the Defense Police and the Border Police” [IMT XX, 129, testimony of K. Best at Nuremberg. See also Doc. Gestapo-18, dealing with the border police as a branch of the Gestapo, IMT XLII, 293-295].

The counter-espionage officials investigated on “cases of high treason, which, after investigation, were returned without exception to the courts” (*Ibid.*). This was a very stable group, isolated from the other services, so as to avoid any “leaks”.

“At the end of 1944, the Gestapo consisted of approximately the following: administrative officials, 3,000; executive officials, 15,500; employees and workmen, including 9,000 emergency draftees, 13,500. Grand total, 32,000. These members of the Gestapo may be considered to be the permanent ones inasmuch as they made up the normal staff. In addition to these persons, there were the following groups: detailed from the Waffen-SS, 3,500; taken over from the Secret Field Police, 5,500; taken over from the military counter-intelligence of the OKW, 5,000; personnel of the former military mail censorship, 7,500; members of the customs frontier guard, 45,000” [IMT XXI, 294].

As for the border police, it carried out the passport controls at the border, also controlled what was called the minor traffic along the border. It lent assistance to foreign police in receiving deported persons, etc. this police also contributed to the international struggle against drugs, and also proceeded with criminal inquiries along the border, which concerned persons and also certain fields:

“The Border Police were active at the border, checking passports. They controlled the so-called small border traffic. They lent legal assistance to the neighboring foreign police by receiving expelled people, they repressed international traffic of narcotics and carried out searches for criminals and goods at the border” [IMT XXI, 129, testimony of K. Best].

Together, counter-espionage and border surveillance employed 5,000 to 6,000 persons. The number of officials occupying themselves

with political affairs in the strict sense of the word amounted therefore to 9,000 or 10,000 agents, or 13% of the total:

“I estimate the number of its staff, during the period when it was numerically strongest, at approximately 75,000. The executive officials, numbering approximately 15,000 men, therefore constituted only 20 percent of the total strength. If we deduct from that the 5,000 or 6,000 men belonging to the Counter-Intelligence and Frontier Police, there remain 9,000 or 10,000 executives, or 12% to 13% of the total strength” [IMT XXI 543, final summation of Dr. Merkel].

It should be noted that Germany had approximately 72 million inhabitants in 1937 (not counting the Austrians). This means one political police agent for every 7,200 persons.

The Gestapo had no surveillance network

As a result, it is completely false to say that the Gestapo set up a tight surveillance network for the purpose of spying on the whole population. According to K. Best at Nuremberg:

“BEST: It is not true, as it often has been and still is being asserted, that the Gestapo had a net of spies and information agencies which kept track of the entire people. With the few officials who were always busy, anything like that could not be carried out” [IMT XX, 128].

The witness explained that information services were set up solely “[...] where organized grounds were suspected of carrying out their activities, such as the illegal Communist Party or in the case of espionage of enemy intelligence” [IMT XX, 127].

This surveillance also included telephone tapping:

“[I had erected a technical apparatus which [...]. monitored the conversations of important foreigners. It also monitored telephone conversations within Germany [...] of: [...] persons who for any reason of a political or police nature were to be watched” [IMT IX, 441-442, testimony of Herman Göring at Nuremberg].

Apart from these cases, the Gestapo had no intelligence service. In particular, it had no service covering the entire German territory. Its services worked solely based on denunciations received directly from or communicated by other police services. And nine times out of ten, no follow-up was given to these denunciations:

“Such individual charges about inopportune political remarks came to the Police from outside, and were not sought for, for 90 percent of these cases were not worth dealing with” [IMT XX, 128, testimony of K. Best at Nuremberg].

These explanations, it might be said in passing, agree perfectly with Göring's reply to Robert Jackson, who accused him of having suppressed "all individual opposition":

"GÖRING: Insofar as opposition seriously hampered our work of building up, this opposition of individual persons was, of course, not tolerated. Insofar as it was simply a matter of harmless talk, it was considered to be of no consequence" [IMT IX, 420].

Gestapo and concentration camps. The law on "preventive detention"

To this one will reply that by a law passed on 28 February 1933, the National Socialist authorities laid the legal foundations for "preventive detention", which permitted the sending of mere suspects to concentration camps (this was the case for thousands of Communists). At Nuremberg, the indictment declared:

"In order to make their rule secure from attack and to instill fear in the hearts of the German people, the Nazi conspirators established and extended a system of terror against opponents and supposed or suspected opponents of the regime. They imprisoned such persons without judicial process, holding them in 'protective custody' and concentration camps" [IMT I, 32].

Shortly afterwards, R. Jackson said:

"Concentration camps came to dot the German map and to number scores" [IMT XX, 128].

Thus it was claimed – incorrectly – Hitler's Germany as a country of policemen who tracked, arrested, and interned all citizens declared suspicious without any other form of process.

What was the real situation? While it is undeniable that the law of 28 February 1933 was indeed promulgated, let us first listen to Dr. Merkel. In his final summation, he recalled:

"In Germany, too, protective custody existed prior to 1933. At that time both Communists and National Socialists were arrested by the Police" [IMT XXI, 518].

See also Göring's statement: "Protective custody [...] was nothing new and it was not a National Socialist invention. Already before this such protective custody measures had been carried out, partly against the Communists, and chiefly against us, the National Socialists" [IMT IX, 257].

The National Socialists invented nothing new. The camps were not a National Socialist invention

The only difference lay in the place of detention: before 1933, the citizens arrested were put in prison; after 1933, they were sent to camps. Why the camps? Quite simply because, in February 1933, prisons could not be made available to Göring to intern the Communist leaders whom he intended to arrest: “The prisons were not available for this purpose” [IMT IX, 257, testimony of Hermann Göring at Nuremberg].

In consequence, the National Socialists took up the old idea which consisted of enclosing populations considered hostile in concentration camps. At Nuremberg, H. Göring said:

“I have stated my opinion with regard to the question of concentration camps and I should like to point out that this name was not created by us, but that it appeared in the foreign press and was then adopted” [IMT IX, 258].

This is indisputably true. During the Boer war, the French press designated the British camps where Boer wives and children were interned as “reconcentration camps” In a book published in 1921, the former French Minister of the Interior Louis Malvy wrote quite naturally:

“We had decided, on 15 September 1914, that the Austro-Germans [resident in France]. would be interned in concentration camps. There were 35,000 of these people by the beginning of October” [See L. Malvy, *Mon Crime* (ed. Flammarion, Paris, 1921), p. 43].

Let us recall finally that starting in 1923:

The Reichs Ministry of Justice had created camps and prisons in the agglomeration [of Papenburg] in the Emsland [source: *Catalogue alphabétique des concentration camps et de travaux forcés assimilés et de leurs commandos et sous-commandos ayant existé en Allemagne pendant la guerre 1940-45* (ed. by the [Belgian] Ministry of Public Health and the Family, 1951), p. 308].

In opening the camps, the National Socialists invented nothing: they were preceded by the English, the French and the Republicans of Weimar. Let us not moreover that at the same time, “democratic” Austria published an order authorizing “preventive detention” (Anhaltehaft) of political adversaries:

“Austria introduced in 1933 protective custody as so-called ‘Anhaltehaft’ and used it widely against Communists, National Socialists, and Social Democrats” [see final pleading by Dr. Merkl, IMT XXI, 518]. The latter were imprisoned in the various

concentration camps, the best known of which was located at Kaisersteinbruch. In 1946, Kaltenbrunner recalled:

“The Government was in the hands of a group of men who had very few followers among the people. There were two large groups of size which did not participate in the Government; the first being the leftist group, that is, the Social Democrats and Austro-Marxists, and the second being the National Socialists, which was at that time a very small group. The Government, then [1933-34], did put not only the National Socialists but also Social Democrats and Communists into their detention camps in order to eliminate any political strife originating from meetings or demonstrations. I was one of those National Socialists who were arrested at that time, whose number was approximately 1,800” [IMT XI, 234].

The members of the Gestapo had no power to send a suspect to the camps

Having said this, let us get to the main point. Under Hitler, could just any agent send a suspect to the camps? Absolutely not! Of course, article 1 of the Law of 28 February 1933 stipulated:

“Protective custody can be ordered for any person as a coercive measure of the Secret State Police in order to combat any activities hostile to the State and the people...” [source: document Gestapo-36, Nuremberg; see also document SD-31, IMT XXI, 336].

However, one would be mistaken to believe that just any agent could take such a decision. As remarked by Dr. Merkel:

“The activities of the Gestapo had been regulated by legal instructions issued by the State. Its tasks consisted, in the first place and mainly, of the investigation of politically illegal activity in accordance with the general penal code, in which connection the officials of the Gestapo became active as auxiliary officials of the public prosecutor’s department; and it further consisted in warding off such activity through preventive measures.

“Now, of course, the methods of the Gestapo are made the basis of serious accusations against it in three ways, and even held against it as crimes. One method is the protective custody and transfer of persons to concentration camps. I realize that the mere mention of the name sends a cold shudder down one’s spine. Nevertheless, even the imposition of protective custody was governed by exact regulations. Protective custody, which in addition is not a specifically German or specifically National Socialist invention, was recognized as legal in several findings

of the Supreme Reich Court and the Prussian Supreme Administrative Court, that is, fully constitutional courts” [IMT XXI, 509].

“The individual member of the Gestapo was concerned only with the investigation. After the completion of the investigation, it was determined whether the files were to be submitted to the public prosecutor, or whether an application should be made for an order for protective custody” [IMT XXI, 517].

In the case that the second option was chosen, the file was sent to the central headquarters in Berlin (which later became Amt IV of the RSHA) which alone could take a decision (simple referral to a court of placement in preventive detention). Article 2 of the Law of 28 February 1933 stipulated:

“The ordering of protective custody is exclusively the right of the Secret State Police [which later became Amt IV of the RSHA at Berlin]. Applications for such orders are to be directed through the offices of the State Police to the Gestapo. Detailed reasons must be given with each application” [IMT XXI, 517. Source: document Gestapo-36, op cit].

This article of law and all the application decrees which followed were intended, insofar as possible, to avoid arbitrary action. In his final summation, Dr. Merkel stressed:

“Certainly protective custody was attended by shortcomings. Above all it could not be examined by the regular courts. Nevertheless, the many orders issued in this field by the RSHA demonstrate that there was an endeavor to establish a well-ordered and legally fixed procedure for cases of protective custody and that arbitrary acts were to be excluded. The strict enforcement of the protective custody procedure certainly could not create the impression on the Gestapo officers that they were confronted with illegal measures of an arbitrary nature. Besides, the application of the protective custody procedure was a relatively infrequent one” [IMT XXI, 517-518].

Proof by figures

To prove his assertions, Dr Merkel recalled that in 1939, in the camps, there were 20,000 inmates in preventive detention, approximately half of whom were “political”; the others were common criminals (criminals, thieves, rapists, etc. *Ibid.*).

At the same time, of 300,000 persons in prison, one tenth of them were there for political offenses (*Ibid.*). We arrive at a total of (10,000 + 30,000 =) 40,000 “political” prisoners for a total population of approximately 80 million people, i.e., 0.05% of the population.

Let us go a bit further by admitting that these figures are underestimated. Let us multiply them arbitrarily by two (+100%). Let us suppose that in 1939, there were 80,000 political prisoners in Germany. Let us compare this estimate with the official results of the plebiscite of 19 August 1934, when the German population was invited to pronounce on the law of 2 August 1934 merging the powers of the Reichs President with that of Reichs Chancellor. At the time, there were 4,294,654 “no” votes and 872,296 blank or spoiled ballots. Or 5,166,950 persons qualified as “opposed” to the National Socialist regime [“More than five million people were opposed, despite official pressure” (See Albert Rivaud, *Le relèvement de l’Allemagne*, 1918-1938 [Librairie Armand Colin, 1939], p. 243)]. Jean Daluce adds that according to the “Nazis themselves”, “a plebiscite without pressure and without manipulation in which the secret ballot had been completely respected could give, for the totality of the country, from 30 to 40% NO votes instead of 12%” [See J. Daluces, *Le Troisième Reich* (ed. Andre Martel, 1950), p. 138]. OK, let’s admit that. It is deduced that in 1934, there were not just five, by approximately 15 million “opposed” to the Hitler regime.

As a result, if, truly, the thousands of Gestapo agents (police, informants...) had pitilessly tracked and sent to the camps all those opposed, even individuals, the persons held in 1939 in the prisons and camps would have numbered several hundred thousand, even millions (and in this case, they would have needed dozens of concentration camps). Now, we have seen that even adding 100% to the official figures (which is a lot) we arrive at less than 100,000 “political” prisoners.

It is therefore completely incorrect to claim that under Hitler, the mere fact of having expressed opposition to the regime of having criticized it in a conversation on the street would have you sent to a concentration camp on the order of an all-powerful Gestapo. In his opening summation, one of the assistant prosecutors at Nuremberg, Commander Frank B. Wallis, dared to declare:

“Any act or statement contrary to the Nazi Party was deemed to be treason and punished accordingly” [IMT II, 193].

Within the Third Reich, one could be in the opposition and remain free; all that was demanded of you was – as in all countries – not to disturb the peace or jeopardize the security of the State.

At Nuremberg, Göring declared:

“GÖRING: It is true that everyone knows that if he acts against the state he will end up in a concentration camp or will be accused of high

treason before a court, according to the degree of his crime” [IMT IX 424].

The former no. 2 of the regime was indeed speaking of an “action” against the State; there could be no question of interning every big mouth drinking in a cafe [of course, an article published in a reputed newspaper could be considered an action against the State; on 14 July 1933, thus a press communiqué announced, as the result of the publication of an article harmful to Germany signed by the émigré Scheidemann, the Gestapo “had taken the defense measure required by arresting and sending to a concentration camp five members of the Scheidemann family resident in Germany” (source: *Bulletin Périodique...*, No. 427, 10 August 1933, p. 12, col. A). As far as I know, however, such measures were an exception].

The Gestapo was not above the law

Let us add that, like all administrations, the Gestapo was not above the law. Appeals could be filed against its methods. In 1935, an administrative journal of the Reich wrote:

“Since the Law on the Gestapo of 30 November 1933 became effective, orders of the Gestapo Office can no longer be contested according to the provisions of the Law on Police Administration. The only remedy against them is a complaint through investigation channels” [IMT XXI, 283].

We understand that Dr. Merkel who, in his final summation, stressed:

“These tasks of the Gestapo had the same character as those of the Political Police before 1933, and as those of any other political police force in foreign countries. What is to be understood by ‘tendencies hostile to the State’ depends upon the respective political structure of a state” [IMT XXI, 509].

“I believe I can state that the duties and methods of the Gestapo before the war were a manifestation of a State institution existing in all civilized countries [...]. The individual Gestapo official fulfilled his duty as he had learned to do as a civil servant” [IMT XXI, 538]”.

Before 1939, many policemen from all over the world collaborated with the Gestapo

During the trial, Dr. Merkel introduced two sworn statements (Gestapo affidavits nos. 26 and 89) which recalled that before the war, very many police organizations had collaborated with the Gestapo and that

delegations from other countries had undergone periods of practical training in their premises. In his final summation, he declared with good sense:

“It never even occurred to Gestapo officials, at least not before the war, that they might be accused from abroad of acting arbitrarily. The tasks and methods, which were well-known and legally defined – not only for the members of the Gestapo but for all the world – cannot be considered criminal by the world, a world which not only formally recognized the German Reich Government, which bore the sole responsibility in this matter, but also repeatedly gave visible evidence of its recognition to the German people.

“If foreign countries had objected to the aims pursued by the Gestapo, it would not have been conceivable for numerous foreign police systems to have worked in close collaboration with the German Gestapo, a collaboration which was not negotiated through diplomatic circles, but obviously with the intention of learning from it” [IMT XX, 510].

The Nuremberg Tribunal vindicates Dr. Merkel

Despite all its attempts, the Nuremberg prosecution was incapable of refuting these arguments. If, at the end of the trial, the Tribunal naturally declared the Gestapo a criminal organization, but only starting on 1 September 1939. The judgment reads:

“...this group declared criminal cannot include, therefore, persons who had ceased to belong to the organizations enumerated in the preceding paragraph prior to 1 September 1939” [IMT X, 273].

And, once again, in the judgment:

“The Tribunal includes all executive and administrative officials of Amt IV of the RSHA or concerned with Gestapo administration in other departments of the RSHA and all local Gestapo officials serving both inside and outside of Germany, including the members of the Frontier Police” [IMT I, 267].

Proof that the Tribunal did not consider the activities of the Gestapo criminal in peacetime. It cannot be repeated often enough: until 1939, the Gestapo was a perfectly ordinary political police, as exists in all so-called “civilized” countries. It contented itself with pursuing those jeopardizing the security of the State. If one suspected the existence of armed clandestine networks or espionage groups, its methods of investigation were minimal; out of ten denunciations, nine were tossed into the waste paper basket...

The real reasons for the concealment of these facts

The decision of the judges at Nuremberg is very rarely mentioned correctly. Most of the time, writers content themselves with saying that the Gestapo was declared criminal, without elaboration, as if this statement were valid for the period between June 1933 and September 1939. For example, in his work entitled *The Nuremberg Trial*, Arkadi Poltorak declared that one must not underestimate “the political and legal scope of the Nuremberg judgment, which declared criminal organizations of Hitler’s Germany as the summit of the Nazi Party (NSDAP), the SS, SD, and GESTAPO” [See A. Poltorak, *The Nuremberg Trial* (Moscow, Progress, 1987), p. 375].

Jean-Marc Varaut, for his part, mentions a restriction in the condemnation, but he describes it as follows:

“The tribunal excluded groups declared criminal – Gestapo, SS, SD and the Leadership Corps of the Nazi Party [...] – persons whose membership was compulsory and ‘those who did not know’ that the organization was being used to commit the acts declared criminal by Article 6 of the Charter [see: Jean-Marc Varaut, *Le procès de Nuremberg* (Librairie académique Perrin, 1992), p. 382].

Beneath a veneer of great exactitude, he, too, conceals the fact that the Gestapo was declared a “criminal organization” only from 1 September 1939.

Why hide this fact? Because this decision disproves once again the notion that the National Socialists plunged Germany into terror starting in February 1933, prohibiting the German people from going back once they had seen their error.

Of course, Hitler was the head of a totalitarian regime which wished to work without being impeded by the institutions and the opposition; of course, it hit hard against the Communist leaders; of course, it preventively interned persons suspected of being political enemies. But as usual, these facts are presented out of context. People “forget” to describe the political situation in Germany in 1932: the total paralysis of the institutions caused by political party divisions, the division of the people due to the class struggle, the failure of parliamentarianism, the impossibility of carrying out any long term plan. They also “forget” to point to the Bolshevik danger which was increasingly dangerous insofar as it aggravated the crisis... In sum, it is “forgotten” to say that at this time, the health of Germany required a shock treatment. There was no question of replastering the walls, it was necessary to rebuild on a new foundation, that is, sweep away Weimar, put an end to political quarrelling, unify the people, crush the Red Front

and take the measures required to carry out a task of lifting Germany up over several years.

This is what Adolf Hitler did. From 1 February 1933, he announced:

“Every class and every individual must help us to found the new Reich.

“The National Government will regard it as its first and foremost duty to revive in the nation the spirit of unity and co-operation. It will preserve and defend those basic principles on which our nation has been built. It regards Christianity as the foundation of our national morality, and the family as the basis of national life. Turbulent instincts must be replaced by a national discipline as the guiding principle of our national life. All those institutions which are the strongholds of the energy and vitality of our nation will be taken under the special care of the Government.

“The National Government intends to solve the problem of the reorganization of trade and commerce with two four-year plans:

“The German farmer must be rescued in order that the nation may be supplied with the necessities of life..

“A concerted and all-embracing attack must be made on unemployment in order that the German working class may be saved from ruin.

“The November parties have ruined the German peasantry in fourteen years.

“In fourteen years they have created an army of millions of unemployed. The National Government will, with iron determination and unshakable steadfastness of purpose, put through the following plan:

“Within four years the German peasant must be rescued from the quagmire into which he has fallen.

“Within four years unemployment must be finally overcome. At the same time the conditions necessary for a revival in trade and commerce are provided.

“The National Government will couple with this tremendous task of reorganizing business life a reorganization of the administrative and fiscal systems of the Reich, of the Federal States, and the Communes.

“Only when this has been done can the idea of a continued federal existence of the entire Reich be fully realized.

“Compulsory labor-service and the back-to-the-land policy are two of the basic principles of this program.

“The securing of the necessities of life will include the performance of social duties to the sick and aged.

“In economical administration, the promotion of employment, the preservation of the farmer, as well as in the exploitation of individual initiative, the Government sees the best guarantee for the avoidance of any experiments which would endanger the currency.

“As regards its foreign policy the National Government considers its highest mission to be the securing of the right to live and the restoration of freedom to our nation. Its determination to end the chaotic state of affairs in Germany will assist in restoring to the community of nations a State of equal value and, above all, a State which must have equal rights. It is impressed with the importance of its duty to use this nation of equal rights as an instrument for the securing and maintenance of that peace which the world requires today more than ever before.

“May the good will of all others assist in the fulfillment of this our earnest wish for the welfare of Europe and of the whole world.

“Great as is our love for our Army as the bearer of our arms and the symbol of our great past, we should be happy if the world, by reducing its armaments, would see to it that we need never increase our own.

“If, however, Germany is to experience this political and economic revival and conscientiously fulfill her duties toward the other nations, one decisive step is absolutely necessary first: the overcoming of the destructive menace of communism in Germany. We of this Government feel responsible for the restoration of orderly life in the nation and for the final elimination of class madness and class struggle. We recognize no classes, we see only the German people, millions of peasants, bourgeois, and workers who will either overcome together the difficulties of these times or be overcome by them. We are firmly resolved and we have taken our oath. Since the present Reichstag is incapable of lending support to this work, we ask the German people whom we represent to perform the task themselves.

“Reichs President von Hindenburg has called upon us to bring about the revival of the German nation. Unity is our tool. Therefore we now appeal to the German people to support this reconciliation. The National Government wishes to work and it will work. It did not ruin the German nation for fourteen years, but now it will lead the nation back to health. It is determined, in four years, to remediate the ills of fourteen years. But the National Government cannot make the work of reconstruction dependent upon the approval of those who wrought destruction. The Marxist parties and their lackeys have had fourteen years to show what they can do. The result is a heap of ruins.

“Now, people of Germany, give us four years and then pass judgment upon us. In accordance with Field Marshal von Hindenburg’s

command we shall begin now. May God Almighty give our work His blessing, strengthen our purpose, and endow us with wisdom and the trust of our people, for we are fighting not for ourselves but for Germany.”

At the time, this declaration was ridiculed by the press violently hostile to National Socialism. In its issue of 2 February, the *Vösische Zeitung* wrote:

“This verbose and bombastic proclamation is a product of Hitler’s embarrassment. People only speak this way when they don’t know what they want” [source: *Bulletin Périodique...*, No. 421, p. 18, col. B].

For its part, the *Vorwärts* wrote:

“Some people have believed that Adolf Hitler is the turning point, that if he were Chancellor, that everything would be better. Here he is in front of us, his hands empty, without a program, without visible measure, and for consolation, a promise to fail in four years. Four years, four winters. Four years: that means: they don’t know anything, they can’t do anything, they are no good for anything!” [*Ibid.*]

But the truth is, in speaking like that, Hitler answered the choice of the German people. The more objective press could not dispute that he had the vast majority behind him. The *Lokal-Anzeiger* (morning edition of 31 January) noted: “The new cabinet has great forces [at its disposal or loyal to it]. which will follow it”. More clearly yet, the *Deutsche Zeitung* stressed:

“Never, since the crime of November [1918], has a government been in office which enjoyed, even approximately, such great authority, and which had at the same time roots as deep in the people as the government appointed yesterday by Hindenburg” [source: *Bulletin Périodique...*, No. 421, p. 16, col. A].

In 1933, the immense majority of the German people cared little for the Constitution, democratic rights and individual liberties. When they were living in a slum without a penny to their name and with their stomachs empty, they didn’t care about being “free” (in the “revolutionary” sense of the word). What they demanded was an orderly society, a society offering a true future for its children. This is why the first acts of cleaning up the society undertaken by the National Socialists (including the internment in Dachau of the principal Communist leaders) didn’t cause a revolution, quite the contrary. At the elections of 5 March 1933 for the Reichstag, most of the parties received stable results compared to the month of November 1932. And while the Communists lost 1.1 million votes, the National Socialists, for their part, gained 5.5 millions, increasing from 11.7 to 17.2 million votes, far ahead of the Socialists (7.2 million).

To those who speak of an alleged “terror” carried on in Germany against all citizens, I will recall that at these elections, the Germans in foreign countries could vote from abroad. These votes were in their immense majority favorable to the NSDAP. On 6 March 1933, the *Bayerischer Kurier* insisted on the fact that in southern Germany, the major success of the list supported by Hitler had been from “the contribution of votes of Germans living in adjacent foreign countries” [source: *Bulletin Périodique...*, No. 423, p. 8, col. A]. But it was not just the adjacent foreign countries. In Spain, for example, Germans living in Barcelona went to vote using the steamship *Helle*. Of the 746 who did so, 508 voted for the National Socialist list, or 68%. Now, in Germany, this list received 44% of all votes. If a climate of “terror” really existed inside Germany, so as to influence the voting results, not only should the list supported by Hitler have obtained 80% in the Reich (and not 44%), but also it should have received miserable results in foreign countries...

Let us add that at these elections, the “Black Red Front”, officially allied with Hitler, won approximately 150,000 votes, receiving 3.1 million votes. In total, therefore, 20.4 million citizens voted for the parties of the real right, or nearly 52% of all voters as against 41% four months before.

It is obvious that the results of the 5 March election show that the majority of the German people accepted the measures taken by the new government, including the exceptional measures taken against the Communists. There again, moreover, the press of the time could confirm. In its evening edition of 6 March, the *Berliner Börsen-Zeitung* wrote:

“The majority of the German people pronounced for the Hitler-Papen government and gave its consent so that the government might continue to proceed in the same direction to which it had committed itself in the first few weeks of its existence, taking a certain number of measures to combat Marxism” [source: *Bulletin Périodique...*, No. 423, 1 April 1933, p. 2, col. A].

For its part, the *Kreuz-Zeitung* stressed:

“Democracy is beaten with its own weapons. The German people have confirmed and continue from the bottom the revolution begun by von Papen at the top. Thus the road of the future is traced out. The national government will not be a Weimar of the right [...]. It will build an original and vigorous German state” [*Ibid.*].

Same message from the *Deutsche Tageszeitung*, which stated:

“One decisive consequence of this 5 March, is that one can finally get rid of the habit of thinking in parliamentary terms. The time when

head-counting of representatives of the people, in the parliamentary cloakroom, to see if, in each particular case, they would barely obtain a majority or where they would not obtain it, is over once and for all” [*Ibid*].

Finally let us cite a Centre-Party (Protestant) newspaper, the *Kölnische Zeitung*, which wished good luck to the new government in declaring:

“The age of perpetual elections is over and one can wish the government good luck in starting the work of the national elevation of Germany in the four years available to it” [*Ibid*].

All these quotations show that the National Socialist was popular and remained popular, even after the adoption of its first “anti-democratic” measures. Since the German people knew that these measures were dictated not against the masses, but against individuals, who, incapable of overcoming their ideological or philosophical prejudices, risked impeding the promised work of national salvation. In this climate, the Gestapo was a simple tool of protection of the State against subversive minorities. It did not think of sending hundreds of thousands of people to the camps, or of instituting a reign of terror, for the good and simple reason that the immense majority of people followed Hitler voluntarily. Hence the fact that at Nuremberg, the judges gave up attempting to declare the Gestapo criminal before 1939. It was impossible since the evidence showed that the prosecution evidence was fallacious.

All this, however, must be hidden from the masses. This is why sixty years after the verdict at Nuremberg, our public controllers continue to conceal the fact that at the end of the Nuremberg Trial, the Gestapo was never declared “criminal” for the period from 1933 to September 1939.

Post-War French Gestapo Trials

The real stakes of the Allied Crusade and the consequences for Germany

Self-defense

First of all, I think that only a person of bad faith can pretend that, during the war, this or that German organization revealed the “true face” of Hitlerism. I will explain: if you kick a dog and he bites you, does this reveal a ferocious nature? If you threaten someone with a knife and he wounds you with a revolver shot, does this reveal a murderous nature on his part? Surely not. Both acted in self defense, to protect their physical integrity, even their life. Their acts are precise and solely intended to respond to a precise aggression. Under normal circumstances, both the dog and the man may be very peaceful; we don't know. This is why, faithful to the teachings of Christian morals, traditional justice permits “self-defense” and does not declare someone a murderer if he has acted under these circumstances [the Fifth Commandment declares: “Thou Shalt Not Kill”. But Saint Thomas Aquinas wrote: “If therefore one kills someone to defend one's life, one is not guilty of homicide” (IIa, IIæ, question 64, art. 7). More generally, Christian morals do not condemn the act of killing an aggressor if three conditions are met:

1) The values defended must be of great value. These values include: life, the integrity of the limbs, chastity and temporal goods of great value;

2) The aggressor must act unjustly and immediately (i.e.: the attack must be immediate or imminent such as when the aggressor draws his dagger, his pistol, raises his rifle, calls his accomplices, incites his dog to attack, etc.);

3) The defense must not occasion any harm to the aggressor in excess of that absolutely required to repel the attack. Thus one must not kill if flight is possible (unless flight is dishonorable) or if the adversary can be rendered harmless through mere wounding (source: Héribert Jones, *Précis de théologie morale catholique* [publisher: Salvator, Mulhouse, 1959], § 215)].

The war declared on Germany on 3 September 1939 was a war of extermination

Well, what is true of a dog or a man is also true of Germany. On 1 September 1939, an armed conflict broke out between two adjacent countries, an armed conflict such as there have been thousands in the past. Two days afterwards, the local conflict expanded to Western Europe; there again, this was not exceptional. But the new belligerents (England and France) soon transformed it into an ideological war to the death. The question was to destroy National Socialist Germany. This truth appears:

- for the first time, on 5 September 1939, when England torpedoed the last attempt at mediation [source: *Sans Concession*, No. 8, pp. 5 ff.];
- for the second time, on 17 September 1939, when the democracies refrained from declaring war on the USSR which had just committed the same “crime” as the German Reich: invading Poland;
- for the third time, on 7 October 1939, the democracies contemptuously rejected Hitler’s offers of peace [see: Reynouard, *6 October 1939. La furie des bellicistes* (published by VHO)].

On 22 March 1940, moreover, the French government published a very strange “Ministerial declaration” stating: “France is engaged in a total war [...]. For this reason, the stakes of this war are total” [source: Ministerial declaration of war of 22 March 1940, read by Paul Reynaud before the Chamber of Deputies and by Camille Chautemps before the French Senate. Reproduced *in extenso* in *Documentation catholique*, No. 911, 5 April 1940, col. 332]. Now, a few months before, this same France had claimed to enter the war to protect the independence of Poland. What was this more general declaration of war intended to conceal? The answer was provided less than three months later. On 11 June 1940, at the Supreme Council held at Briare, Winston Churchill threw off the mask. He rejected all possibility of peace with the enemy and said on the contrary:

“Even if Germany succeeded in occupying all of France [...] the Allies retain after all, the means to defeat and destroy the National Socialist regime” [source: Maxime Weygand, *Rappelé au service* (ed. Flammarion, 1950), Appendix VI: “Procès verbal de la séance du Conseil suprême tenu au château du Muguet, near Briare, le 11 June 1940” (reproduction *in extenso*), p. 596; see also XXX, “Churchill’s Confession”].

An enormous confession. There was no longer any question of the independence of Poland (we will see moreover in 1945, when the country was purely and simply abandoned to Stalin...). The protection

of small nations was only a pretext. For Churchill and his clique, the real objective was the destruction of the Third Reich, incarnation of National-Socialism. This objective, they will attain. Hitler was therefore right when, on 19 September 1939 at Danzig, he said:

“Poland, too, was only a means to an end. Because today it is being declared quite calmly that Poland was not the primary thing, but that the German regime is” [source: A. Hitler, *Discours. Du 28 April 1939 au 4 May 1941* (ed. Denoël, 1941), p. 95].

On 19 July 1940, before the Reichstag, Hitler stated (emphasis added):

“If we compare the causes which prompted this historic struggle with the magnitude and the far-reaching effects of military events [the German-Polish dispute over Danzig and the Corridor], we are forced to the conclusion that its general course and the sacrifices it has entailed are out of proportion to the alleged reasons for its outbreak – *unless they were nothing but a pretext for underlying intentions*” [*Ibid.*, p. 205].

These “hidden causes”, were naturally the destruction of the Reich. Starting in 1940, thus, Hitler’s Germany knew that it was fighting for its existence, against the Allies who were fighting for its total destruction.

In his speech on 19 July, moreover, the Führer did not conceal it: “Alas, I am fully aware that the continuation of this war will end only in the complete shattering of one of the two warring parties” (*Ibid.*, p. 242).

German actions between 1939 and 1945 must be placed in the context of a war of extermination

Now, at such times, most actions taken must be considered from a new point of view. Just like the dog or man mentioned above, these are precise actions dictated solely by the necessities of the moment, particularly, to protect its integrity. One cannot therefore recognize in all these acts the result of any ideology. When one defends his life, one no longer acts according to one’s philosophical principles, but rather in according to the instinct for self-preservation.

If one wishes to judge National Socialism (or more particularly the Gestapo), one must judge it in times of peace, not in wartime, and above all not during the two last years of the war, when everything was collapsing in Germany faced with an enemy which destroyed its cities one by one, exterminated its women and children and which promised to continue until unconditional surrender.

Since 1916, in a response to French Catholics who repeated stories of “German atrocities”, Wladislas Switalski had written:

“To draw conclusions on the character of the enemy, with objective authority, based on the facts gathered, one must not only judge the particular case according to the scale of an ideal value, but it is important at the same time to give it its place in the general conduct of the adversary, and above all not to lose sight of the general framework of the events of the war” [source: W. Switalski, *La psychologie des récits de cruautés* [The Psychology of Atrocity Stories], published in: *La culture allemande, le catholicisme et la guerre. Réponse à l'ouvrage français “La guerre allemande et le catholicisme”* (ed. C.L. van Langenhuysen, 1916), p. 165].

That which was true in 1915 was infinitely more true in 1943-1944. That which is habitually presented as acts imputable to “Nazi barbarism” is, in the majority of cases, the consequences of the war of extermination declared by the Allies against the Reich on 3 September 1939. This truth, Dr. Merkel had the courage to say – insofar as it was possible – at Nuremberg. While his final summation was drawing to a close, said:

“One last point, however – perhaps the most profound – must not be overlooked in this connection. The German soldier, the German civil servant, the German working man, and every German man knew that the world had placed us in a situation which meant a life-and-death struggle. In the course of the war it gradually became appallingly clear that it was a question of existence or extermination. Indeed, you would be misjudging the soul of the German people if you overlooked the fact that every decent German, when he realized this horrible truth, felt himself under an obligation to do everything which was expected of him in order to save his country. And when we judge the behavior of the German people and its political police we must take these factors into consideration in order to do them justice” [IMT XXI, 540].

In his *Report on the German Atrocities Committed during the Occupation*, Professor H. Paucot admitted that the Gestapo “became increasingly cynical and impatient with the growing antipathy to the occupying power and the growing resistance” [IMT, XXXVII, doc. F-571, p. 264]. It is clear: the Germans stiffened when the situation worsened and when behind the front some people launched an illegal war.

We will unceasingly continue to repeat this basic truth.

On the omnipresence and omnipotence of the Gestapo in the occupied territories

The official argument

The reader may perhaps respond that it is dishonest to take refuge in very general considerations to attempt to excuse inexcusable acts. To counter this criticism, I will now invoke the action of the Gestapo during the conflict.

If one believes the stories of the Resistance members, the Gestapo was everywhere in the occupied territories. An illegal arms cache is discovered? It's the work of the Gestapo! A search is conducted? It's the Gestapo! A network is dismantled: It's the Gestapo! Resistance members are deported? It's the Gestapo! Innocent people are arrested? It's the arbitrary power of the Gestapo! In sum, from 1940 to 1945, the Gestapo is said to have been a monster with immense power, present everywhere at once to cause a reign of terror in the occupied territories.

The Gestapo was not prepared for the war

Naturally, this version does not correspond to reality. In the first part of this study, we have seen that within Hitler's Germany, there were between 9,000 and 10,000 Gestapo agents, that is, one agent for every 7,200 persons. Therefore, we cannot see how this State police force could suddenly carve up territories extending from the point of Brittany to the heart of Russia. At Nuremberg, Dr Merkel asked the witness K. Best whether the Gestapo was "ready for war". Best replied:

"BEST: No. On the one hand they were not prepared with regard to material. They especially lacked arms, vehicles and signal material, et cetera, for use in occupied territories. There was, on the other hand, no possibility of calling in police reserves, a possibility which the regular police had. The whole work of organizing the Gestapo was still in its initial state. Directives for careers were formulated. Office buildings were built and it can, therefore, not be said that the Secret Police or the Security Police were ready for a trial of such dimensions" [IMT XX, 134].

Very few Gestapo officials in the occupied territories

Of course, execution officials belonging to the Gestapo were just the same sent into the occupied territories; but in a maximum proportion of 13% [IMT XXI, 543]. In view of the estimates cited above, one may

deduce that 1,500 inspectors at most were sent abroad. This is ridiculously few...

Under questioning, former head of the RSHA, Ernst Kaltenbrunner, declared himself incapable of providing a figure, even approximate. But he stated that to his knowledge, 800 members of the Gestapo had been sent to France.

“DR. MERKEL: Approximately how many Gestapo officials were active in the occupied countries?”

KALTENBRUNNER: That I cannot tell you even approximately, but I believe I have heard a figure of 800 people, for example, for the occupied region in France” [IMT XI-408].

If we accept the data according to which 20% of these persons were enforcement officers (the others concerning themselves with administration), we arrive at 160 inspectors properly speaking for France. Now it must be recalled that in the occupied countries, the Gestapo had four services:

1. Jewish matters;
2. Suppression of the black market;
3. The criminal section (search for German deserters, counterfeiters, etc.);
4. Repression of sabotage, terrorism.

Let us note that the criminal section also pursued German officers suspected of black market activity. In 1947, at the trial known as the “French Gestapo auxiliaries” trial, one of the defendants Schoumacher, declared:

“SCHOUMACHER. – My work consisted, all the time I was with them, of causing the arrest of German officers who stole goods and were reselling it on the black market [...].

THE PRESIDENT. – There was a lot, it’s well known.

SCHOUMACHER. – There were a few” [PAFG, hearing of 24 February 1947, pp. 125 and 126].

At any rate, all the inspectors sent into France – where the Gestapo had its central headquarters in the Rue des Saussaies – did not concern themselves with tracking down Jews or fighting the Resistance. Only a few dozen could have been assigned to these tasks. This simple observation is enough to judge all the stories which present the Gestapo as an omnipresent, omnipotent monster in the occupied territories.

In France, the Gestapo lacked means

Precise example: The files found at the concierge

One precise example illustrates this lack of means and relative powerlessness: on 13 June 1944, in Paris, agents working for the Germans conducted a raid on a concierge's lodge being used as a mail drop for a Resistance network. The action bore fruit: "Pamphlets, address lists, documents, and 2 typewriters were confiscated and taken away. A sum of 50,000 F was discovered in an envelope [...]" [PGG, 1, p. 52]. On the 6th floor, moreover, they "placed their hands, in a maid's room, on a rather large quantity of weapons (grenades, submachine guns, incendiary bombs, etc.) which had been stored there [...] and which constituted the arms cache of their Resistance group" (*Ibid.*, p. 57). It was obviously a large network, well-structured and financed.

The Gestapo should have ordered a search of all the addresses discovered. Nothing came of it. The agents received the following order: "place a guard in the lodge [...], arrest everyone who comes by for any reason related to this affair or asking to speak to any of the Resistance members in the lodge" (*Ibid.*, p. 52). As to the address list, it was not exploited, due to lack of means.

Marcel Paul confirms this lack of means

The fact that the Gestapo was not equipped with enormous power in France was confirmed by... Marcel Paul personally. Interrogated on 31 July 1945 during the trial of Marshall Petain, he declared in a language in conformity with the time:

"If the occupying authorities had not disposed of and enjoyed of the permanent and ruthless assistance of the Vichy police, nine tenths of the patriots who were arrested would have been able to continue the liberating action [...].

"In the ranks of Resistance fighters, and particularly in the ranks of the active combatants, we especially feared the so-called French police, who obeyed the orders of Vichy. We feared them especially, because the policemen from the Gestapo, were not generally assisted by the French; they could not gather the information which would have permitted them to arrest us" [source: "Trial of Marshall Petain", stenotyped transcript, Part 8, p. 127, col. C].

Nothing could be clearer: the Gestapo had, in the end, little means.

Marcel Paul nevertheless "forgot" to say that, in addition to the "Vichy police", the French population also assisted the occupant with

anonymous denunciations. During the so-called “Bonny-Lafon” trial, one defendant, Alexandre Villaplana, declared:

“[...] every day, the Germans received anonymous letters [from informants]. [...] Because they took no initiative, they are no more effective than any other police force in the world, without denunciations” [PBL, 3, p. 147.]

Why didn’t the German police take “any initiative”? Once again, the answer is: because they were cruelly deprived of the means. This is why, in the occupied territories, they counted on the local police and on... denunciations.

The amateurism of the auxiliaries

Their means were so deficient that they had to resort to the assistance of auxiliaries recruited all over the occupied territories. Chosen in haste, they were sometimes guilty of incredible amateurism. During the “Bonny-Lafon” trial, a former Resistance member who had been arrested with his wife and companions in a cafe in connection with the struggle against clandestine organizations was called upon to testify. He declared:

“During this time, my wife was with me. I saw her every day. Because I must tell you that they are not very smart; they locked you up all together, so that we could tell each other what we were going to say” [PBL, 6, p. 121, deposition of Andre Wagner].

The same witness also stated that before acting, the German police had kept his shop under surveillance. But the young people responsible for doing so had not been discreet, far from it. At the hearing, M. Wagner stated:

“I noticed that, for a long time, we were under surveillance, because, several times, I noticed that young people who were not always the same people, who took notes, parked on the sidewalk opposite the shop, who noted the license plate numbers of all the bicycles of people who visited us” [*Ibid.*, p. 122].

Spies who take notes openly, in full view of the shop to be kept under surveillance, suspects locked up together between two interrogations; this is far removed from the super-efficient police force equipped with all the necessary means and the most professional agents. Truly, the official image of the Gestapo in France is not the image usually presented, super-powerful and omnipresent...

The origin of numerous misunderstandings

The Gestapo becomes a scapegoat

Of course, witnesses who have falsely implicated the German secret police did not always lie deliberately. Many of them were mistaken in good faith, since they were not familiar with the flow chart of the different German police units. In his final summation, Dr. Merkel explained:

“Among the German people, and perhaps even more abroad, it was customary to ascribe to the Gestapo all police measures, terror acts, deprivations of freedom, and killings, as long as they had any police connection at all. It became the scapegoat for all misdeeds in Germany and the occupied territories, and today it is made to bear responsibility for all evil. Yet nothing is more mistaken than that. The error arises from the fact that the whole police system, whether Criminal Police, Wehrmacht Police, Political Police, or SD, without distinction of the branches, were considered Gestapo” [IMT XXI-500].

Immediately afterwards, Dr. Merkel cited a precise example of confusion: the assassination of the French general, Mesny (end of 1944 or beginning of 1945) had been attributed by the Nuremberg prosecution to the Gestapo while it had been committed by the criminal police (*Ibid.*, p. 530).

The interpenetration between the services in the occupied territories

In France, a source of error was the following: in Paris, the Germans installed their intelligence services in the Hôtel Lutetia. These were military police services, who were naturally subordinate to the Wehrmacht (PAFG, hearing of 24 February 1947). Nevertheless, out of a concern for efficiency, the intelligence gathered by their members was then transmitted to Rue des Saussaies (former headquarters of the Surété Nationale) and Avenue Foch, where the Germans had installed their political police services (Gestapo and SD). This Police centralized the intelligence gathered [it should be noted that the services of the SD in France were working with a British captain, who after being captured, agreed to serve Germany. “Gifted with a intelligence and a prodigious memory, as well as talent as an artist, such that it permitted him to draw quite accurate sketches of the persons with whom he had been in contact, this man was able to cause the arrest of numerous Allied agents and parachuted patriots” (PBL, 1, p. 48. For confirmation

at trial, see PBL, 3, 24-25)]. Hence, finally, a certain interpenetration between these police bodies. In November 1945, an official of the Judicial Police, Roger Sirjean, who had investigated the activity of these services, confirmed:

“There was [...] interpenetration between, on the one hand, the services of the Gestapo, and on the other hand, the anti-espionage services of the SRA properly speaking, and all these services, or almost all, are camouflaged under a comfortable façade: that of purchasing offices” [PGN, 3, p. 41].

This is why the agents of this military police were erroneously taken for members of the Gestapo, when they didn't belong to the Gestapo at all.

A great number of annexed services constituted of dubious persons

Let add that this military police came to work with police forces consisting of foreigners. In France, the police forces employing a majority of Frenchmen were located at Paris, Rue Lauriston (Bonny-Lafon [Lafon's real name was Henri Chamberlin (born 22 April 1902). An unhappy childhood (orphaned of both parents at 11 years, obliged to work at Les Halles and sleep under bridges until the age of 16...) had placed him on a dangerous slope. At the Armistice, he had 9 convictions for theft, confidence swindles and writing bad checks. In addition since 5 February 1940, he was wanted by the police as a draft dodger (PBL, 1, p. 9). As for his companion in arms, Pierre Bonny, he been fired from his position as chief inspector of police as a result of the Stavisky scandal and the “affair of the Prince Counsellor” (PBL, 1, p. 122). At the beginning, the “French Gestapo” was located at 23, Ave Pierre Ier de Serbie. But towards mid-1941, it moved to 93, Rue Lauriston (PBL, 1, 6).]), and at Neuilly-sur-Seine, Boulevard Maurice Barrès (Martin and Van Houten group) [actually created in February 1941 (prior to which time, it existed in the form of a “purchasing office” only, in Rue Petrarque, Paris), the group was split in two one year later. Gédéon Van Houten remained at Boulevard Maurice Barrès while Frederic Martin moved to Boulevard Victor Hugo. One year later, Martin moved to Ave. Général Dubail, Paris]. The Gestapo consisting chiefly of Georgians – most of them refugees living in France since the 1920s – were located in Rue de Londres, Paris, and, later, Rue des Varennes (the Odicharia group).

We should also mention the “Corsican gang” in the Boulevard Flandrin (Leandri group); the “Berger Friedrich gang” in the Rue de la

Pompe, the “Merode gang” in the Rue Mallet Stevens (Rudy group), the” Courbevoie team” in the Rue Cardinet (Olaff group)...

All these police units were composed of more or less dubious persons, acting above all from a concern for material gain and very few out of political conviction. During the trial of the “Bony-Lafon gang”, the President of the Tribunal spoke of the defendants as “men who could never conceivably be tried on political charges” [PBL, 1, p. 5].

An exception, the young Georges Collignon

Just the same, there were exceptions. Among them, let us mention the young Georges Collignon. Born 4 July 1917, “from a very respected family” (PGG, 1, p. 152), he had been a good student and was, at the beginning of the occupation, earning from 3 to 5,000 F per month (not counting bonuses) as a broker in a commissions agency. His joining the “Georgia Gestapo” was therefore not due to the need for a job, but a desire for adventure and easy money. During the “Georgia Gestapo trial”, he was the most dignified and respectable defendant [XXX “Collignon CV”]

Case of the wives of Resistance members: the Gestapo could have done much worse. Faced with his judges he had the courage to explain frankly what led him to work for the occupier:

“Government Commissioner Reboul. – Did you ever consider going over to the Resistance?

COLLIGNON. – I wanted to go over to the regular troops.

Reboul. – You think that Resistance members who didn’t belong to the regular troops were not really Resistance members?

COLLIGNON. – That wasn’t the idea at all, but if you’re going to fight, you should fight openly inasmuch as possible, there was nothing to hide. If you fought in a foreign country, starting out by going to Algeria, I would have had to join a regular army. I had nothing to hide [...].

Reboul. – That’s a funny opinion [Note: It is in perfect conformity with the Fourth Hague Convention on Land Warfare. – *C.P.*].

THE PRESIDENT. – You weren’t successful?

COLLIGNON. – No, I didn’t succeed.

THE PRESIDENT. – You returned from the other side?

COLLIGNON. – It was necessary to prevent the cases which were occurring [i.e., Communist sabotage and assassinations], because the Germans threatened to carry out mass deportations and executions, as at Chateaubriand. It was a question of preventing, to a certain extent, in my view, assassination attacks and bombings against the army, either

the occupying forces or any other, which could place French people in almost hopeless situations [...]. I'm not talking about ideals. I have said that I am an advocate of order.

Reboul. – What order?

COLLIGNON. – The order that prevails when our lives are not constantly in danger [...] When there was a bombing attack, the Germans, for one person killed, took 50 or 100. That's what I thought" [PGG, 1, pp. 7-8]

The defendant later persisted:

"COLLIGNON. – I have explained that I did all that in a special order of ideas. I did not agree that 50 Frenchmen should be killed for one dead German. I tried to prevent all that, that's all.

Reboul. – Yes, but you killed and wounded Frenchmen in lamentable operations.

COLLIGNON. – The origin is one thing, the facts are something else. The facts are there, I have never denied them. Then, I was, not forced, but I could not refuse. I had them behind me [...]" [PGG, 4, p. 109].

Not surprisingly, the defendant was finally sentenced to death (see *Le Monde*, 5 August 1945, p. 3). Personally, I take my hat off to him. All Hail, Roger Collignon [XXX "Collignon-Death"].

Services which did not all work for the Gestapo

Having made the above remark, let us return to our main subject. Some of these services, such as those in the Rue de Londres (the "Georgia Gestapo"), were working for the military police; they were therefore subordinate to the Hôtel Lutetia. Others, like those in the Rue Lauriston ("Bonny-Lafon gang"), depended on the SD, therefore Avenue Foch ["The organization of the Rue Lauriston were on principle subordinate to the German SD organization in the Avenue Foch, which had detached two German non-commissioned officers there Hess, and Willy Karhof" (PBL, 1, pp. 34-5)]. But here again, there is a confusion, since, although people speak of the "French Gestapo", the "Neuilly Gestapo", the "Georgia Gestapo" [...] as if they were directly subordinate to the Rue des Saussaies and the Avenue Foch, which was not the case.

Deliberate confusion since the "Liberation"

After the "Liberation", this confusion was carefully maintained. During the "Georgia Gestapo" (10-28 July 1945), the following dialogue

occurred between the government commissioner and the young Georges Collignon:

“THE GOVERNMENT COMMISSIONER. – [...] At this time, you could not know that you were working for the Gestapo?”

COLLIGNON. – You could never have called that the Gestapo. The Gestapo are the state police.

THE GOVERNMENT COMMISSIONER. – You couldn’t suspect that you were working for a Gestapo annex?

COLLIGNON. – We were working for the German military police to be exact, the Militarish Polizei...

THE GOVERNMENT COMMISSIONER. – I’ve never studied German and I don’t intend to learn it now. For me, you were people who belonged to a Gestapo annex, although you answered negatively when I asked you whether you belonged to a Gestapo annex” [PGG, 3, pp. 62-3].

The confusion persists today. When in early 2005, the daily *Le Monde* revealed the remarks of Jean-Marie Le Pen to Jerome Bourbon for the weekly *Rivarol* on the Occupation, the editorialist of the *Sud Ouest* spoke of “tortures of the Rue Lauriston and other Gestapo jails” [see *Sud Ouest*, 14 January 2005, p. 2.], as if all the jails in the north zone had been Gestapo jails, which was far from the case.

All these facts show that in France and elsewhere, the Gestapo was not the omnipresent, omnipotent police force described today, far from it. It is presented in this way by distorting the facts, since all German police agents have been confused with the Gestapo since 1940.

Was the Gestapo authorized to torture people?

The case of “aggravated interrogations”

To this people will reply, “All this quibbling is useless. When a Frenchman gets arrested, we don’t care who beats him up and who tortures him. You can’t deny that all the German police services, Gestapo and others, practiced torture. [...] That’s the only thing that matters”. In support of this allegation, people cite two decrees published in 1937 and 1942, decrees which authorized “aggravated interrogations”.

Content of the orders authorizing “aggravated interrogations”

However, what is the real situation? At Nuremberg, witnesses Best and Hoffmann openly admitted the existence of these two documents:

“DR. MERKEL: And how did the so-called third-degree interrogations take place?

BEST: Concerning the third-degree interrogation methods, Heydrich issued a decree in 1937” [IMT XX-134].

“THE TRIBUNAL (Mr. Biddle): Was that decree in writing?

HOFFMANN: That was a written decree by the Chief of the Security Police and the SD [...].

THE TRIBUNAL (Mr. Biddle): What was the date of the second decree?

HOFFMANN: 1942” [IMT XX-180].

Why? Quite simply because the decrees were in no way criminal. Under interrogation, K. Best explained:

“Heydrich gave me the reason that he had received permission from higher authority to issue this decree. This measure was thought to be necessary to prevent conspiracy activity on the part of organizations hostile to the State and thus prevent actions dangerous to the State; but confessions were in no way to be extorted. He called attention to the fact that foreign police agencies widely applied such methods. He emphasized, however, that he had reserved for himself the right of approval on every individual case in the German Reich; thus he considered any abuse quite out of the question” [IMT XX-134].

Shortly afterwards, K. Hoffmann confirmed all points:

“HOFFMANN: The contents of the first decree provided that for the purpose of uncovering organizations hostile to the Reich, if no other means were available, the person involved could receive a certain number of blows with a stick. After a specified number, a physician had to be called in. This order could only be used for extracting a confession for conviction in individual cases. Approval for this had to be obtained in every case from the Chief of the Security Police and SD” [IMT XX-180].

Since he stated that the second decree passed in 1942:

“HOFFMANN: According to the second decree the only measures approved were those which were milder than blows with a stick – standing at interrogations, or fatiguing exercises” [IMT XX-180].

The bad faith of the Nuremberg Tribunal

Let us not that on this subject, the Tribunal revealed its dishonesty once again. In fact, among the other justifications that in 1937, R. Heydrich had given to K. Best, appeared the fact – beyond dispute – that “he called attention to the fact that foreign police agencies widely applied such methods” [IMT XX-134], which was obvious. When he

interrogated Kaltenbrunner, defense counsel for the Gestapo wished to stress this reality. This is the exchange:

“DR. MERKEL: Do you know of the so-called ‘severe interrogations’? Are these in force in other countries, too?”

KALTENBRUNNER: I was President of the International Criminal Police Commission, and in this capacity I had the opportunity to speak about this topic at a meeting in the autumn of 1943. From this conference and also from my reading of the foreign press over a number of years I gathered that the police system of each state also makes use of rather severe measures of interrogation.

DR. MERKEL: Could a State Police official...

THE PRESIDENT: What happened at some international police commission does not seem to be relevant to anything in this case” [IMT XI-312].

Here it is: as soon as the Defense attempted to invoke the “*tu quoque*” argument (you do it, too) to show that, basically, at least, there was nothing abnormal about acting in a certain way, the Tribunal immediately interrupted, claiming this was irrelevant.

A flagrant example of this systematic obstruction occurred on 19 March 1946, during the prosecution interrogation of Göring. Seeking to show that the National Socialists had conspired very early to trigger a war of aggression, Prosecutor Jackson produced a document from the Reichs Defense Council (EC-405). Dated 26 June 1935 and marked “Secret”, it mentioned mobilization. H. Göring declared that the document spoke of nothing of the kind, since it simply stated as follows: “Those were general preparations for mobilization, such as every country makes” (IMT, IX-507). R. Jackson thought it well and good to retort: “But of a character which had to be kept entirely secret from foreign powers?” (*Ibid.*) Which received the following ironic reply:

“GÖRING. – I do not believe I can recall the publication of the preparations of the United States for mobilization” [IMT IX-507].

Just common sense. No country is going to publicize its offensive or defensive mobilization plans. But this greatly angered Jackson, who accused as follows: “This witness, it seems to me, is adopting, and has adopted, in the witness box and in the dock, an arrogant and contemptuous attitude toward the Tribunal which is giving him the trial which he never gave a living soul, nor dead ones either” [IMT IX-508]. Not surprisingly, he was upheld by the President of the Tribunal who declared:

“Any reference to the United States’ secrecy with reference to mobilization is entirely irrelevant, and that the answer ought not to have been made” [IMT IX-509].

“...As far as this particular answer goes, I think it is entirely irrelevant” [*Ibid*].

This method of action was denounced very early on by Maurice Bardèche. In his work, *Nuremberg ou la terre promise*, he wrote:

“[...] here is where the bad faith begins. On one side, one digs through all the files, one probes the walls, one scans the councils, one uses things supposedly said in secret: all is up-to-date, the most secret conversations of the German statesmen are exposed on the evidence table, they did not even forget the phone-tapping. On the other side, silence. One reproaches the German general-staff for studies of operations which were found in their files: you were preparing for war, one tells them. Who will believe that the other European general staffs were not making plans, preparing to face a strategic crisis at the same time? Who will believe that other European statesmen did not act in concert? Who will believe that the drawers of London and Paris were empty and that the German preparations surprised some lambs who thought only of peace? When the defense attorney asked the court to place into evidence similar documents on the French policy for extension of the war, on the English policy for extension of the war, on the maps of the French staff, on the Allies’ war crimes, on the instructions given by the English general-staff to their commandos, on the partisans’ war in Russia, he was told that that does not interest the court and that the issue raised ‘is absolutely irrelevant’. It is not the United Nations which is on trial, they told them. This answer is quite correct: but then why call *history* what is only a skilful bit of scene lighting? In this case, there is still only half of the earth which has been illuminated. It is on the basis of such appearances that it was formerly denied that the earth was round. History starts when light is spread evenly around, when each one deposits his documents on the table and says: judge. Apart from that, there are only propaganda campaigns.” [Internet translation, pp 24-25 (originally published in French in 1948, pp. 62-64)] [XXX, “Mobilization”]

In practicing “aggravated interrogations”, the police of the Third Reich invented nothing

In authorizing “aggravated” (or “severe”) interrogations, Hitler’s Germany was only imitating most foreign police forces. This truth must be recognized even if the judges at Nuremberg preferred not to.

Did “aggravated interrogations” turn into torture sessions?

Having made the above remark, let us return to the Gestapo. In occupied territories, “strict interrogations” were naturally practiced. For Denmark, thus, the witness Hoffmann declared:

“HOFFMANN: Yes, third degree was carried out during interrogations. To explain this I have to point out that the Resistance organizations occupied themselves with the following: First, attacks on German soldiers; secondly, attacks on trains, means of transport, and Armed Forces’ installations, in the course of which soldiers were also killed; thirdly, elimination of all so-called informers and people collaborating with the German Police or other German authorities.

In order to forestall those dangers and to save the lives of Germans, third-degree interrogation was ordered and carried out, but only in these particular cases” [IMT XX-164].

Some people will reply by quoting Marshall von Rundstedt. Interrogated at Nuremberg as a witness, he declared that faced with the Resistance, it was necessary to “My point of view is the following, based on quite understandable patriotic feeling: Disorderly, irregular warfare behind the front of the enemy army must bring very great misery to the population of the country affected. No army in the world can tolerate such conditions for any length of time, and in the interests of the security and protection of its own troops, it must take sharp, energetic measures. But this should, of course, be done in a correct and soldierly manner” [IMT XXI XXI-28].

Now, we will be told, “Nazis” did not content themselves with practicing “strict” interrogations in conformity with the two directives of 1937 and 1942; they were not content with sentencing snipers to death and executing them as permitted by international law, either. But because of their monstrous doctrine, they tortured horribly all those who fell in their hands...

As the question of torture is very important, I will stop for a moment.

The official story born at Nuremberg

At Nuremberg, the prosecution naturally claimed that, wherever they dominated, the “Nazis” never ceased torturing their adversaries. On 22 November 1945, the correspondent for the daily *Le Monde* wrote:

“[...] this summation for the prosecution against Göring and his accomplices, this monumental document, is the history of the

terrorization and torture of Europe for more than ten years [...]; a history of assassination attempts, murders, tortures [...]. Everywhere the Nazi reign prevailed, deportations, tortures camps, and gas chambers were the result” [source: *Le Monde*, 22 November 1945, p. 1].

On 17 January 1946, in his opening summation, the French prosecutor F. de Menton spoke of “so many of whose sons were tortured and murdered in the jails of the Gestapo or in concentration camps IMT V-368]). Shortly afterwards, he said:

“We are, in fact, faced by systematic criminality, which derives directly and of necessity from a monstrous doctrine put into practice with deliberate intent by the masters of Nazi Germany” [IMT V-379].

The defense witnesses disputed the existence of superior orders having authorized recourse to torture

But “systematic criminality” put in place for four years on a European scale would have required general orders. But during their interrogations, the (defense) witnesses and defendants were adamant: between 1933 and 1945, no order was ever received by the police services authorizing recourse to torture against Resistance members. On 16 April 1946, the Tribunal interrogated Rudolf Bilfinger. Starting in 1943, this former member of the RSHA had been expert on legal questions, and legal questions in connection with the police [IMT XII-46]. Under questioning by Dr. Merkel, he declared:

“No ill-treatment or torture of any kind was permitted; and, as far as I know, nothing of the kind did happen, still less as it known generally or to a larger circle of persons. I knew nothing about it” [IMT XII, 51].

Four days beforehand, the defendant E. Kaltenbrunner had spoken in the same sense, as witness the following:

“DR. MERKEL: The Prosecution have put in evidence a considerable amount about ill-treatment and torture during the questionings which took place in occupied Western countries, especially France, Holland, Belgium, Norway. Were there any instructions from the RSHA in this connection to use torture?

KALTENBRUNNER: No, certainly not.

DR. MERKEL: How do you explain the fact of this ill-treatment?

KALTENBRUNNER: I have heard nothing about such ill-treatment with which the State Police is charged. In my opinion it concerns only excesses of individuals. A decree to that effect certainly was never issued” [IMT XI, 313].

The defendant then explained that for the police guilty of mistreatment, there was a “particular jurisdiction”.

“DR. HAENSEL: According to your knowledge were there regulations prohibiting the physical ill-treatment of concentration camp inmates and were these regulations known in the SS?

KALTENBRUNNER: They were issued in print: that is, contained in nearly every gazette of the Reichsführer SS and the Chief of the German Police. Every SS man knew these regulations were laws, and they were punished heavily if ill-treatment was reported or became evident. They had their own SS and Police courts. In one sentence I may characterize this system by stating that the penalties were much more severe than in a civil court. I do not know to what extent and in what state the SS Punishment Camp Danzig-Matzgau fell into the hands of the enemy, but I am convinced that all those who underwent a term of imprisonment there will give information about this severe punishment in connection with any ill-treatment which may have occurred” [IMT XI, 316].

Three months later, the witness K. Hoffmann confirmed:

“DR. MERKEL: What happened to the members of the State Police who at interrogations committed excesses or trespassed on foreign property?

KALTENBRUNNER: The same rules were followed which applied to all organizations subordinate to Himmler. They had their own SS and Police courts. In one sentence I may characterize this system by stating that the penalties were much more severe than in a civil court.

DR. MERKEL: A certain man has asserted that for an offense of taking away a few unimportant things from a prisoner, he had to serve a long period in the penitentiary. Was that the ordinarily normal and just punishment?

KALTENBRUNNER: Yes” [IMT XI, 312].

“DR. MERKEL: Was there a uniform order to use physical cruelty or torture during interrogations?

HOFFMANN: Brutal treatment and torture were strictly prohibited and were condemned by the courts.

DR. MERKEL: Do you know of any cases in which interrogation officers were sentenced by courts?

HOFFMANN: I remember two Gestapo officials in Dusseldorf who were sentenced by a regular court for maltreatment of prisoners” [IMT XX, 164].

The prosecution was unable to produce one single German order

Naturally, it might be possible to say that these individuals were lying to save their necks, either at the time or in some future trial. But it was up to the prosecution to demonstrate the existence of such orders, the existence of which was disputed, by producing them. During the morning session of 17 January 1946, the French prosecutor took up the challenge by saying (emphasis added):

“They deliberately willed, premeditated, and ordered these crimes, or knowingly associated themselves with this policy of organized criminality” [IMT V, 391].

But a few hours later, during the afternoon session, the pretense was abandoned. Concerning the “crimes of the Police”, F. de Menton conceded:

“Those who carried out these measures had every latitude for unleashing their instinct of cruelty and of sadism towards their victims” [IMT V, 400].

“True, no definite order, no detailed directive emanating directly from one of the defendants or from one of their immediate subordinates and valid for all the German police or for the police of the occupied territories of the West, has been found” [IMT V, 400].

Eight hours later, his assistant, Charles Dubost, confirmed the documentary vacuum in which the prosecution was floundering. Addressing the Tribunal, which was beginning to become impatient, he declared (emphasis added):

“I said that I was going to demonstrate how through the uniformity of ill-treatment inflicted by all branches of the German Police upon prisoners under interrogation, we are able to trace a common will for which *we cannot give you direct proof*” [IMT VI, 165].

“M. DUBOST: I must bring proof that the crimes committed individually by the leaders of the German police in each city and in each region of the occupied countries of the West, were committed in execution of the will of a central authority, the will of the German Government, which permits us to charge all the defendants one by one. *I shall not be able to prove this by submitting German documents.* That you may consider it a fact, it is necessary that you accept as valid the evidence which I am about to read” [IMT VI, 159].

And yet again:

“...*we cannot give you direct proof* – as we did yesterday, regarding hostages, by bringing you papers signed in particular by Keitel” [IMT VI, 165-166].

Or as French prosecutor Fauré put it, “As I indicated to the Tribunal this morning, I wish to say that the Prosecution has no proof that such crimes were due to a German governmental order” [IMT VI, 448].

The prosecution had therefore found nothing: not the slightest trace of a directive from the authorities, not the slightest instruction from the most insignificant subordinate. Nothing. A complete vacuum.

The dishonesty of the prosecution in attempting to make up for the absence of orders

To palliate this absence, the French delegation cited a few dozen scattered testimonies – some of them not even sworn – of “Nazi atrocities”. Most of these stories concerned mistreatment in the prisons under the occupation. After the discussion, the Tribunal accepted them based on Article 21 of the Statutes, which authorized them as follows:

“The Tribunal shall also take judicial notice of official governmental documents and reports of the United Nations, including the acts and documents of the committees set up in the various Allied countries for the investigation of war crimes” [IMT I, 14].

On the fact that the Tribunal accepted “testimonies” produced by the French by virtue of this article, see IMT, VI, 173:

“THE PRESIDENT. – The Tribunal has considered the arguments which have been addressed to it and is of the opinion that the document offered by counsel for France is a document of a committee set up for the investigation of War Crimes within the meaning of Article 21 of the Charter. The fact that it is not upon oath does not prevent it being such a document within Article 21, of which the Tribunal is directed to take judicial notice” [IMT VI, 164].

Nevertheless, in the absence of precise inquiries, all these declarations were completely unverifiable and therefore without any probative value. Likewise, even supposing that they describe the reality, how could a sampling of scattered testimonies, describing individual occurrences in troubled times, prove the existence of superior orders? They could not, of course. Starting in 1948, M. Bardèche wrote:

“The second dishonesty of the French delegation consisted in replacing the evidence that they did not have and the orders that they did not have (and about which it was incorrect to say in front of a court that they existed, since they were not provided) by an enumeration. I will not provide evidence, said the French delegate, but I will make appear so many witnesses, I will deposit so many reports, that it will be

the same thing as a proof, for one will see that everything happened in the same way everywhere, all of which presupposes orders”.

“We are merely trying to show that the torturers everywhere used the same methods. This could have been done only in execution of orders given by their chiefs” [IMT V-169].

“Beautiful thing to say in the country of Descartes! Fourteen-year-old boys, in our high schools, are told that the first rule of the scientific method is indeed to be based on *complete* enumerations. This small adjective is essential, for in this small adjective lies honesty. However, the French delegation (in this it acted like French courts of justice) detests complete enumerations. The French delegation confuses enumeration and sample. It picks out some police reports which talk of massacres, and it concludes: one massacred everywhere; Mr. Keitel, within your general district on the Dnieper, you gave *the order* to massacre in Annevoye, in Rodez, in Tavaux, and in Montpezat de Quercy. It makes appear three or four deportees who describe their concentration camps, and it concludes: things were similar in all the concentration camps, and that well proves, that there was everywhere in all of you, in you Speer, in you Dönitz, in you Hess, and in you Rosenberg, a *systematic will* to exterminate. I expose, therefore I prove. I show photographs: it is as if you had been everywhere. I complain, I ask for revenge, and this complaint must have for you the same value as a legal proof: all the more so as these are “résistants” whom you have the honor to hear. The French delegation believes itself to be before the Court of Justice of the Seine, and it does not understand when the president interrupts rather coldly. However, the documents with which the French delegation replaces evidence are due to the same optical error, and it is that which is so embarrassing for this whole part of the trial. Sometimes the French delegation harps on particular incidents which, however painful they are in themselves, have no general significance at all: thus the arrest of General Giraud’s family, about which there would be much to say, by no means proves that the families of Resistance members were systematically deported to Germany, and we all know that that is nonsense. Good statistics would have made the point better. Sometimes, they brandish small pieces of paper that they sniff, examine, hold up to the light and look over and through, all the while seeming very suspicious: there is the senior police officer of Saint-Gingolf (Var) who certifies something about the administrative internments, there is the Military Security of Vaucluse which assures us that life was unpleasant in prison, there is the chief of staff of the F.F.I. who found an instrument with balls. For those which know that the majority of the impromptu police officers at the time of

the liberation had to be demoted later, that a certain number of the members of the Military Security are now incarcerated, and that the chiefs of staff of the F.F.I. had often gained their stripes only the day before, these over-stuffed “reports” are not very impressive. A serious investigation would have revealed that the staff varied from prison to prison, that one could be locked up in Fresnes and not be tortured, that certain police forces behaved correctly and that others were composed of torturers, that even the methods of the Gestapo in France varied according to the subordinates who were in charge” [*Ibid*, pp. 41-42].

In producing these documents, the prosecution wished, at most, to show that, under the occupation, the German police forces or other police working with the Germans, had committed certain excesses. But in troubled times, who doesn’t? There again, everything must be placed in context; one cannot impute to an ideology acts committed under the pressure of the moment, in the midst of a life and death struggle.

The only tortures described were, in the end, performed by lone auxiliaries

In his final summation, Dr. Merkel openly recognized that, particularly towards the end, cases of torture had been noted:

“Apart from certain legally admitted types of more severe interrogations which were subject to the strictest rules and regulations, ill-treatment, torture, and the inflicting of pain were not only not permitted, but expressly prohibited under the threat of the severest penalties. If they have nevertheless occurred, and even in comparatively large numbers, then we are here concerned with excesses on the part of individuals, in which connection it must be taken into consideration that towards the end of the war there were more non-policemen serving in the German Police than policemen. Numerous sentences passed by SS and Police Courts, which have been confirmed by witnesses, prove that strictest proceedings were instituted against any such excesses” [IMT XXI-529].

And again:

“He also mentioned ill-treatment by groups of Frenchmen who acted on behalf of some German agency in carrying out some task” [IMT XXI-529].

The fanatics of “memory” will smile at my naiveté and will thank me for supplying them with an important argument: “Of course, they will say, the Nazi authorities no doubt never published a public written directive authorizing recourse to torture. Of course, the occupant

himself perhaps did not torture on a large scale. But he had his auxiliaries perform this dirty job in his place...”

This argument may impress the neophyte; but it will not destabilize those who have been curious enough to read the records of the trials held in France after the Liberation, of these auxiliaries having worked for the Germans.

The four main trials were:

- the “Bonny-Lafon gang” trial (December 1944);
- the “Georgia Gestapo” trial (July 1945);
- the “Neuilly Gestapo Trial” (November 1945);
- the “French Gestapo auxiliaries” trial (February-March 1947).

The stenotyped records are available for consultation at the Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine (BDIC), at Nanterre. I have read them [XXX “Lafon”].

The statements heard during these post-war trials reduce the official thesis to a nullity

Before entering into the living flesh of the subject and responding to the argument concerning torture, I will report two very surprising facts which I discovered in studying these documents. They place in question the black and white official thesis, particularly when it involves “Nazi” racism”.

The no. 2 man in the “Georgia Gestapo” was... a Jew

The first fact concerns the “Georgia Gestapo”, the chief of which was named Chalva (or Chaliko) Odicharia, usually described as a troubled adventurer, born on 10 November 1903 at Kloni, Georgia, a refugee in France since the 1920s. The fact which is usually ignored is that the principal subordinate of this Odicharia was... a Jew. Born 4 March 1902 at Kertch (Crimea), his name was Henri Oberschmuckler [“Oberschmuckler is in fact, an Israelite and his father was deported to Silesia” (PGG, 1, 75 and 151)]. His story deserves to be told: in 1939, while he resided in France, he volunteered, and was accepted, into the 21 infantry regiment. Taken prisoner in 1940, he was interned in Stalag VI D. Although he was a Jew, not only was he not deported to a concentration camp, but, also, he succeeded in becoming the “general interpreter” of the Stalag. At the end of 1941, he was freed as a wounded veteran. In April 1942, he returned to Paris. Far from going to ground, he worked for four months in an Opel factory as an interpreter under the name of “Obermucker” (proof that the Germans were not

very observant). Having apparently given satisfaction, he was sent in the same capacity to Buc, in a factory of the... Luftwaffe. But there, he was denounced as a Jew. Did he then suffer deportation? No. He returned quietly to Paris and, unemployed, he joined Odicharia, that is, the service of the German police. Having become head of the searches and confiscations office, he remained there until the end, that is, until August 1944, when he left with the Germans, taking 800,000 F with him.

For all this information and more, see PGG, dossier 1, pp. 151-2. We will quote the French original:

“A volunteer in 1939, he served with the 21st infantry regiment, was taken prisoner in 1940, [interned at Stalag VI D, he acted as general interpreter (PGG, dossier 2, p. 41)] and was freed as a male nurse towards the end of 1941 [in reality, he was repatriated because he had been wounded in the war: “I was repatriated, since I had been wounded, and not as a nurse” (*Ibid.*, p. 40).] and returned to Paris in April 1942 after a stay of several months at Avignon.

“He then stayed 4 months as interpreter at Opel, a German manufacturer [under the name of Obermucker (*Ibid.*, p. 41).], after which he was sent to Buc, with the Luftwaffe, where he served in the same capacity.

“Denounced as Jew, he was compelled to leave his post and accept a position with Odicharia, whom he did not previously know, as an interpreter at 10,000 francs per month.”

“He rapidly became head of the requisitions office [...].

“He left his domicile on 24 August [1944], transported by German trucks. He had managed to accumulate 800,000 francs (sic) in their service”.]

A Jew as the no. 2 man in the “Georgia Gestapo” in France, that’s not what we expected.

I add that H. Oberschmuckler was not the only Israelite who worked for the German police. At his trial, he asked the prosecutor: “Have you seen a lot of Jews among Gestapo agents?”, to which the judge’s answer was as follows: “Here, I saw another one before you, he got sentenced to twenty years hard labor” (PGG, dossier 2, p. 55) [XXX “2 juifs...”] The other Jew was no doubt Jacques Lazareff, who, after being interned at Drancy, had later worked for the occupant in denouncing his fellow Jews. Arrested upon the “Liberation”, in the beginning of July 1945, he was sentenced to forced labor [source: *Le Monde*, 17 July 1945, p. 7.] [XXX, “Lazareff”].

Mohamed El Maadi: a National Socialist Moslem protected by the “Neuilly Gestapo”

Who was El Maadi?

Another very surprising fact and which is hardly compatible with the official claims of the “Nazi racist madness” concerns the “Bonny-Lafon gang”. We know the story of the Grand Muphti of Jerusalem who supported Hitler’s Germany. But it is not generally known that France also had its Moslem “collaborator”. His name was Mohamed El Maadi. In his *Dictionnaire commenté de la Collaboration française*, Philippe Randa mentions El Maadi, but only three times, in little more than a single sentence [source: P. Randa, *Dictionnaire commenté de la Collaboration française* (ed. Jean Picollec, 1997), pp. 199, 649 and 651]. The following is a little more information on this very interesting person: his views and his relations with the “French Gestapo” [XXX “El Maadi-1”]

Born at La Sefia (Constantine), to an Arab-Berber family of ancient nobility, convinced Moslem, M. El Maadi was a knight of the Légion d’Honneur, holder of the Médaille Militaire and the Croix de Guerre. On 10 April 1941, he founded the Comité Musulman de l’Afrique du Nord and the Cercle d’Etudes Nord-Africaine. Although he had loyally served France, he was dissatisfied with the style of French colonization in North Africa. His principal objective was to combine Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia in a federation enjoying total administrative autonomy and guaranteeing absolute equality between colonizers and natives (particularly in the recruitment of high officials) [XXX “Souscription”].

M. El Maadi joins the German service

Then came the Allied disembarkation in North Africa on 8 November 1942. The events which followed allowed him to observe the manner in which the “Liberators” behaved towards the natives, in comparison with the Germans. The latter were much less racist. In January 1943, at Paris, M. El Maadi founded a monthly newspaper, *Er Rachid* (the Messenger). From the first issue, he clearly announced his objective: the struggle for the liberation of North Africa alongside the Germans. Thus, one article read:

“Our duty is to free ourselves from the Judeo-Anglo-Saxon ascendancy. No force will be able to prohibit us from doing so. Alongside the European armies, we must undertake the struggle for the

liberation of our territory” [source: *Er Rachid*, No. 1, January 1943] [XXX “Er Rachid-6”].

M. El Maadi requests assistance from the “Neuilly Gestapo”

After a few issues, M. El Maadi had serious problems in obtaining enough paper to print his monthly. What did he do? He went to Neuilly, headquarters of the “French Gestapo”. There, he asked H. Chamberlin (aka Lafon) to intervene on his behalf to obtain the paper [“LAFON. – He asked me if it was possible to ask for paper for him for his newspaper” (PBL, 3, 104)]. Did Lafon tell the “sand nigger” not to bother him? Not at all. On the contrary. He intervened before the three largest newspapers of the time and M. El Maadi received “substantial assistance” [“Towards mid-1943, an Arab, El Maadi, head of the Moslem group in France, came to see Lafon in the Rue Lauriston to interest him in the publication of a newspaper in the Arabic language [this is incorrect: it was published in French] which he edited and which was called *Er Rachid*].

“Thanks to Lafon’s intervention before the newspapers *Paris-Soir*, *L’Echo de la France* and the *Nouveaux Temps* [...], El Maadi received substantial assistance.

“Er Rachid received the paper delivery and printed his newspaper on the presses of *Paris-Soir*.” (PBL, 1, p. 58-9)]. *Er Rachid* was thus able to continue publishing until August 1944, using the presses of the collaborationist newspaper *Paris-Soir* [XXX “Er Rachid-1”].

These are a few extracts from Mr El Maadi’s monthly newspaper (in the absence of indication to the contrary, the extracts are from editorials written by Mr. El Maadi, which always appeared on the first page).

El Maadi goes further than Le Pen on the occupation of France

On the occupation of France (5 November 1943):

“For over three years now, France has experienced the occupation of its territory by a foreign conqueror. Whatever the self-proclaimed patriots may argue, this occupation is the most benign possible. It could have been draconian, but National Socialist Germany and its leader, who were under attack from France, thought otherwise, considering it wiser to leave France its sovereignty and its heritage” [...].

An occupation “as benign as possible”: Jean-Marie Le Pen never went as far as this in Rivarol in January 2005.

“Liberators” more racist than the occupant

On the behavior of the “Liberators” and the “Crusaders for Civilization” compared to that of the Germans:

5 August 43

“The Germans had hardly disembarked in Tunisia when they hired a native work force, employed by their various services at salaries identical to those paid to workers of the same category in France, Germany and Norway, while on the other hand the “Liberators”, when they deigned not to pay in ‘monkey money’, offered 10 to 18 francs for 12 hours work.

“German racism, the great bugaboo of the conscience of the world, OK, let’s talk about it. Soldiers and officer maintained the most cordial and correct relations with the natives. Over the course of two months in Tunisia, I never heard any objections or complaints. On the contrary, on the attitude and conduct of the “Liberators”, I heard a whole load [...]. While in Tunis [under the German occupation] the public transports were open to everyone, on the other side, the natives travelled in special coaches” [XXX “Er Rachid-9”]

5 November 1943

“And while I advocate and accept racism when it signifies selection and protection against the mongrelization of a given race in order to preserve its virtues, I reject the camouflaged racism of the democracies, which, under the cover of civilization, murders and plunders the weak” [XXX “Er Rachid-2”].

This text should be compared with a totally forgotten article by Georges Suarez (political director of *Gringoire*) published by *Er Rachid* on 3 May 1944. Entitled “Racism and Xenophobia”, its author (who was shot after the “Liberation”) wrote:

“Racism, like all doctrines, has its false prophets. While for Gobineau it was simply a means of defending one’s race, for some of his interpreters, it is an instrument of hatred against others [...].

“That which is called racism at the top becomes vulgar xenophobia at the bottom. Then, the petty rivalry of life, the elbow-rubbing of peoples, and low-down back-alley quarrels escape break away from remarks of the street stall and the sidewalk, in which skin color, race and religion are reflected in grievances and insults [...].

“That which racism really demands, it that the race preserves intact the characteristics of its history, its relationship with human progress. It does not destroy, rather, it restores to each person his share, so that he may increase it and enable it to contribute more effectively to the needs

of humanity. Racism does not imply hate between the races, but rather, it stimulates the efforts of all. It does not catalogue the species, but it selects it. It gives biological laws back all their force, to nature a logic too long thwarted” [source: *Er Rachid*, 3 May 1944, p. 1; see also XXX “Er Rachid-5”].

The primitive racists who, today, fill the ranks of the “Nationalist Right” would do well to meditate upon these lessons.

Let us however continue with the editorials of M. El Maadi.

German victory, ardently desired

20 May 1943:

“Our intellectual and racial affinities bring us close to Europe. Our ideals, compared with the National Socialist ideals of the New Europe, prove – disturbing fact – to be identical. Over the course of a recent trip to Tunisia, we were able to estimate at its true value this reality in observing German-Moslem relations. At no time in our existence, did we observe between two peoples unaware of each other the day before and of different cultures, such a current of sympathy or understanding.”

26 April 1944:

“While we espouse the cause of Europe and that of Germany in particular, it is after having examined, meditated upon and compared its ideology with that of its adversaries. This examination convinces us that it alone does not nourish any criminal dream of subjugating us and exploiting us to the maximum.”

10 October 1943

“Our sympathy has been won over forever to National Socialist Germany which has always preached its disinterested friendship with Islam, shamelessly oppressed and exploited by the democracies. Our attachment remains unfailingly with revolutionary Europe, which will elevate human dignity. Here, not only we take our vows for a German victory but we are determined to assist by all means, including by arms.”

25 October 1943

“The victory of National Socialist Germany is the end of the exploitation of one people by another; it is the end of iniquities, it is the light at last [...].

“[...] the event we are waiting for: the instauration in North Africa of a National Socialism permitting us to be born and die with dignity, without these school masters who whack us on the fingers with a ruler of iron.”

Arabs in the LVF

[Legion of French Volunteers Against Bolshevism,
collaborationist French militia]

20 August 1943

“Our duty and our interest are those at the sides of Europe, which has opened unsuspected and unhoped-for horizons to us, and not to listen to treacherous voices of propagandists, the judeocracies preaching a ‘go-slow’-ism which will aggravate our slavery.

“I know this attitude requires bravura, and self-sacrifice; one must be motivated by patriotism and stoicism without equal, one must free oneself from all terrestrial links. It is necessary, in a word, to have both the land of one’s birth and one’s birth ‘in one’s skin’; it is necessary to be soldiers. You are these things, Arabo-Berbers, my brothers” [...] [pp. 1 and 8].

Answering this call, North Africans joined the LVF. In its editorial of 20 December 1943, M. El Maadi wrote:

“As to the new Europe which Germany and its allies will build, the Arabs venerate it and place their hopes of emancipation in its victory. As a pledge, they, for their part, a miniscule group of émigrés, formed a magnificent Legion, a brotherhood, the effective members of which are perceptibly equal to those of the LVF formed by France, which has freely given hundreds of thousands of men to the ‘judeocratic’ armies.

“All of Islam is on the side of Germany; as one whole, it prays for its victory, despite the agitation of a few statesmen” [XXX “Er Rachid-7”].

“Among the volunteers was the Afro-Frenchman Louis Joachim-Eugene, who became attached to the German headquarters of the LVF before occupying himself with Arab manpower in the Organization Todt” (see below).

On “Nazi racism”

2 February 1944, p. 4. Article entitled: “Returning from the Reich, an Algerian speaks to us of Germany at war” [XXX “Er Rachid-3”]

“Having left voluntarily to work in Germany, our comrade Amitouche has just returned from being invalided out. [...]”

“We were very well treated by the German workers and even friends. Really, I had to change my ideas a little bit while spending time with such great people who felt no hatred for the French in general and who respected North Africans.

“Our relations with the population were excellent. Everywhere we went, we were treated politely and even kindly; they said we must feel sad being so far from our warm climate, they always used friendly phrases when speaking of our country.

“Note that we were not unhappy. For the Aïd-el-Kebir, the Germans and French of Bitterfeld did everything they could to help us hold a celebration. We received cakes, tea, sugar. We were able to do quite a respectable job of cooking a few of our little dishes. We had everything we needed, we even had a perfectly successful Franco-Arab party and concert.”

At this time, the Organization Todt employed Arabs and had set up a radio broadcasting station at 26 Rue Bayard, Paris, which managed any problems. The person responsible was an Afro-Frenchman named M. Louis Joachim-Eugene, ex-attaché to the German headquarters of the LVF, having become general manpower manager of the Organization Todt (see *Er Rachid*, 16 February 1944, p. 4).

In the issue for 16 February 1944, L. Joachim-Eugene published an article entitled:

“The situation of French blacks has long been settled with the occupant”. The author began by recalling that at the beginning of 1943, following a decision by one of the French administrations, colored musicians were no longer authorized to play in the cabarets and night clubs of occupied France. He continued as follows:

“It was an excellent chance to talk frankly about the matter with the superior German authorities, who, I must admit, had quite a benevolent attitude towards me, and attitude of understanding. Men of our race had, in fact, fought hard on the Eastern front to ensure the triumph of the Euro-African cause; others were still there; some of them had even lost their lives. In the National Socialist Reich, I had seen, with my own eyes, blacks [i.e., North-Africans] decorated with the Iron Cross or wearing the Party insignia; others still occupying auxiliary linguistic positions at the Institute pour la Connaissance de l’Etranger. I was always treated with consideration and respect. I could not therefore bring myself to believe in an alleged anti-black racism ‘made in Berlin’. I also easily obtained everything I needed.

“In fact, by letter dated 12 June 1943, the occupation authorities gave me an assurance that, from that time onward, citizens of the French colonies would be considered truly French by the occupation authorities, and that, as a result, there would be no impediments to their practicing any of their professions, whatever it might be” (p. 4).

Call to the Moslems of France not to join the Resistance (5 November 43).

Photograph [OMITTED]
National Socialist Arabs [XXX “Arabs NS”]

Photograph [OMITTED]
BBt of Paris, p. 1 [XXX “Er Rachid-4”]

In France, Arabs join in the struggle against the Resistance

Little by little, as a result of the relations between M. El Maadi and the occupant, some people thought of recruiting North Africans to help Germany. According to Lafon, the first idea came from the German services in the Avenue Foch, headed, at the time, by M. Boemelburg, who “knew El Maadi and his secretary” (PBL, 3, p. 105, statement by Lafon). “Boemelburg, he said, wished to recruit North Africans the way he had recruited Georgians” (*Ibid.*). He wished to use them solely “for guard duty” at German premises.

“LAFON. – For guard duty, to relieve the service. For example avenue Foch...

THE PRESIDENT. – He intended to use these North Africans in the struggle against the Resistance.

LAFON. – No: for guard duty.” (PBL, 3, p. 105)].

Finally, after several interviews, “about 300 Arabs” were recruited and lodged in a house at 21 Avenue de Madrid, Neuilly (PBL, 3, 107).

“The Germans [...] were rather evasive at first and only authorized the recruitment of 300 Arabs in the end, after several interviews, who, trained by the French, were to be divided into groups at Toulouse, Limoges, Perigueux etc.” (PBL, 1, p. 59)]

After the rejection of about one hundred recruits who had failed to give satisfaction, five sections of thirty to fifty men were set up (PBL, 1, p. 59-60). The Arabs enrolled were “given special uniforms” (supplied by the Jew Joseph Joinovici) and armed by the German services of the Avenue Foch (PBL, 1, p. 60). Their wages were approximately 5,000 F per month, “paid by the Germans along with all equipment expenses” (PBL, 1, p. 60 et 3, p. 110), [XXX, “Joinovici”].

In February 1944, the sections were allocated to Limoges, Perigueux, Tulle and Montbeliard in order to... combat the Resistance, which they did with varying success [XXX “Er Rachid-8”].

All these facts demolish the official thesis in black and white. One must never forget: the true history of National Socialism and the Second World War remains to be written...

The alleged “arbitrariness” of the Gestapo

The official claim

Having stated the above, let us return to the Gestapo. For 60 years, we have been told all about the “arbitrary” actions of the German police, who, in the occupied territories, are said to have arrested people at random on mere presumption of guilt or for no reason. In his opening summation on 17 January 1946, the French prosecutor at Nuremberg, François de Menthon, said:

“On a simple, unverified denunciation, without previous investigation, and often on charges brought by persons not qualified to bring them, masses of arbitrary arrests took place in every occupied country” [IMT V-401].

This allegation is, however, incorrect. The remarks heard during the trials brought against French and other auxiliaries of the Germans clearly contradict it, as do certain testimonies which appeared shortly after the “Liberation”.

Some denunciations were never followed up

The first thing we find is that certain denunciations never gave rise to any police action. In February 1944, for example, a member of the “Georgia Gestapo” reported rumors concerning the existence of a Resistance group in the middle of Paris, in the Latin Quarter. One of them was named Frepin. There was no follow-up to these statements (PGG, dossier 1, pp. 33-4).

Three months later, an auxiliary belonging to this same service said that, in the city of Saint-Remy-lès-Chevreuses, luminous signals had been given from the ground for Allied airplanes flying over the country and dropping pamphlets. There, again, in the absence of more precise information on these alleged signals, the case was closed without follow-up.

Now, in both cases, it would not have been difficult to strike arbitrarily and make several arrests.

Let us also mention the so-called “Prévoyance affair” (from the name of an insurance company). During the “Georgia Gestapo” trial, the youngest of the defendants (a certain Renato Gamma, of Brazilian

origin, aged 18), said that, as he had supplied no information for a long time, his superior, Terrile, had asked him to act. The fact that his mother worked for La Prévoyance gave him an idea. He claimed that there was a Resistance network in the midst of this company and he gave names at random. At the hearing, this is what he said:

“GAMMA. – My mother worked at La Prévoyance [.]. I supplied some names.

THE PRESIDENT. – That could be rather serious.

GAMMA. – Terrile took note. He told me: ‘I’m counting on you to follow the matter up’.

There was nothing to follow. A few days afterwards, I told him: ‘I can’t do anything. I’m burnt out. I can’t find anything’. He answered, ‘OK, case closed’ ” [PGG, dossier 6, pp. 77-8].

Shortly afterwards, THE PRESIDENT OF THE TRIBUNAL conceded:

“THE PRESIDENT. – It seems from the dossier that no member of the Prévoyance staff was ever bothered.

Reboul. – Terrile was really in bad shape!

THE PRESIDENT. – He must have been drinking those days” [*Ibid.*, p. 79].

An action didn’t always lead to an arrest

When action was nevertheless taken, it did not necessarily result in any arrests. For example, within the framework of the struggle against the Resistance in the region of Romorantin, an initial expedition was carried out by the German police in a neighboring village of this city. “Armed with submachine guns, the Germans and their French auxiliaries searched all the houses in the village, one by one. All the young people were assembled in the village square and their identity was controlled. No arrests were made” (PAFG, dossier 1, p. 21).

Let us also recall two incidents which occurred at Paris, rue Notre-Dame-des-Champs, at the Fathers of Zion [Pères de Sion]. In July 1940, the Gestapo searched their premises:

In the room of a nun who was absent, the searchers discovered a sealed envelope containing a large sum in dollars and pounds, last resources put aside by a wanted Jew. Since they had no orders in this regard, they ostensibly put the banknotes back in the desk. But five days later they come back to get it. The sum had disappeared. The Father refused to explain himself on the disappearance and they did not insist [source: *la Documentation catholique*, No. 939, 27 May 1945, col. 403].

Three months later, a new search was performed, at the end of which a large sum of documents was taken away. Surreptitiously, one of the priests or monks took a photo of the policemen carrying away the boxes. But he was betrayed:

“The next day, a very angry officer of the Gestapo presented himself and demanded to know who was responsible. The person responsible presented himself. He declared that he was ready to be arrested. However, since the photos had been found at the photographer who was to develop them, the Father was released” [*Ibid.*, col. 403-4].

Let us also state that except in case of emergency, when several persons met the description of a wanted suspect, the Gestapo took care to ensure that they were arresting the right person. Thus, in an affair known as the “de Giverny Affair”, an anonymous informant gave a description of a man who, he said, possessed weapons. At the Bonny-Lafon trial, the same informant described the matter as follows:

“Escorted by a non-commissioned officer and four German soldiers, Lafon carried out an initial inquiry which was said to have produced no results, since several people answered the same description [of the person who possessed the weapons]” [PBL, 1, p. 47].

Finally, the German commander (who no doubt possessed a more exact description) arrived from Paris to “identify the guilty party in person. Was he mistaken? No, because the individual identified the location where he had hidden 36 parachute cylinders containing 5 tons of weapons” (*Ibid.*).

Proof that the inquiry was carried out to the end with the aim of avoiding all form of arbitrary procedure.

Persons arrested against whom nothing could be proven were very often released

Finally, when arrests were made, persons against whom nothing could be proven were finally freed (unless they were being held as hostages). The list of examples which I shall now give is rather long, but the seriousness of the subject prevents me from dealing with it superficially.

In June 1944, H. Oberschmuckler caused – as the result of an error on his part – an incident in a tavern and ordered the arrest of the cashier, Mlle Burgnières. What happened to her? Taken away by the German police, she “was interrogated at Rue des Saussaies, then released” (PGG, statement of the facts, dossier 1, p. 38).

At the same time, in a bar in Toulouse, the owner refused to serve an Armagnac [a good brandy] to a member of the German police (a certain Schweitzer). The conversation became heated and finally, the trouble maker left without having had his drink. Shortly afterwards, the owner was arrested and taken to the “Gestapo”.

Later, an employee of the bar recalled:

“When he came back, he said that he had had a tough time. Fortunately he spoke German and he understood what they were saying; he had been arrested for insulting the German army: it was for the little matter of the Armagnac which he had refused to serve [Schweitzer], who was downstairs. Finally he was released just the same, but he had a tough time” [PGG, dossier No. 7, p. 192, deposition of Albert Pelisson].

On 23 July 1945, at the “Georgia Gestapo” trial, Honoré Callas, a Resistance member who, under the Occupation, had been apprehended with several other persons, was interrogated as a witness. Here is what was said:

“D. – When you were arrested, you were not arrested alone?”

R. – There were [several names of members of the Resistance] and two other persons who had nothing to do with the matter, named Prouvet and Devaut, who worked at the Maison Tecalemit. These two last persons spent a month in prison at Fresnes” [PGG, dossier 11, p. 26].

Please note: they were released after the inquiry had definitively cleared them.

At this same trial, the Court read the written statement of a man who had been arrested at the same time as other people in a garage in Lyon where Resistance Members repainted vehicles so as to disguise them. The witness recalled:

“These people underwent a tough interrogation for the purpose of finding out the purpose of the activity [at the garage]. Since I didn’t know anything about this activity, I didn’t answer, and I was released 42 days later” [PGG, dossier 8, p. 163; deposition of Marcel Berthel, read at the hearing].

At the Bonny-Lafon trial, a young man, Edmond Bidaud, came to testify. At Paris, he had fallen into a trap organized in a bookstore which served as a meeting place for a clandestine organization, “Défense de la France”. Although he was a member of the group [“THE WITNESS. – I was a member of this organization” (PBL, 6, p. 140)], he was able to justify his presence in the store by claiming that he had come to buy a book. Since they found nothing suspicious on his person (no weapon, no false papers, no letters, etc.), the Gestapo agents

released him immediately. At the trial of these agents, the witness declared:

“THE WITNESS. – [Lafon] interrogated me. I justified my presence in the “*Défense de la France*” bookstore, and I said that I had come to the bookstore to buy a book. I actually had bought a book.

He asked me my profession [...]. After this interrogation, he seemed satisfied. He released me [...]

THE PRESIDENT. – You were not the object of any violence?

THE WITNESS. – None” [PBL, 6, pp. 140-1 et 144. Deposition of Edmond Bidaud.]

At the same trial, another witness, Françoise Thierry, testified that she had been arrested at Montbard as suspected of having cared for some *maquisards* [members of the rural Resistance] and that her home had been searched, but without finding anything. Taken to the premises of the Feldkommandantur, she was interrogated by P. Bonny. She testified as follows:

“THE WITNESS. – He asked me for an explanation of the receipts I had for registered letters, shipments of packages, things absolutely without any importance. He asked me to think about it.

I went back to the large room of the Feldkommandantur. Then they called me back. They released me saying, Don’t start again, you can go.” (PLB, 6, pp. 159, deposition of Françoise Thierry)

We should also mention the arrest, during the winter of 42-43, of a certain number of persons “suspected of belonging to “a [Resistance] organization with headquarters at Paris and Gentilly, the head of which was said to have been M. Paul Appel, former depute from La Manche”. Nevertheless, according to the defendant P. Bonny, the information at the origin of this operation were “recognized to be incorrect and the arrests were not upheld” (PBL, 1, p. 46. For the confirmation of P. Bonny at the hearing, see PBL, 3, pp. 22-23).

At the “Neuilly Gestapo Trial”, a certain M. Caron appeared to testify. “Communist or Communist Party sympathizer” [PGN, 3, p. 66, deposition of officer Roger Sirjean], he was arrested on 12 November 1942 because he was “suspected of having, in the Oise, committed sabotage against the railway, cutting telephone wires and burning wheat mills in a farm” [PGN, 3, p. 95, deposition of police inspector Police Emile Nouzeilles]. He was interrogated at the headquarters of the “Neuilly Gestapo”, Boulevard Victor Hugo, and:

“After about twelve days, Caron was liberated, since there was no proof against him” [...] [PGN, 1, p. 19].

In a written statement read at the “Neuilly Gestapo Trial”, the victim confirmed:

“Five or six days after [my arrest], since I had always said nothing and they had no evidence against me, I was transferred to the third floor of the building, in a small room, and five or six days after that, I was released” [PGN, 4, p. 78].

Here is another example, not very well known, but very revealing. In June 1942, the abbey Louis Foucher, vicar of Montargis, heard the confession of a Czech enrolled in the German army. Shortly afterwards, the Czech deserted. In *Documentation catholique*, we read:

“On Friday, 12 June 1942, at 20 h [...], three members of the Gestapo entered the presbytery, searched the chamber of Abbey Foucher and, when he returned, he was subjected to a very short interrogation:

– You have received a German soldier?

– Excuse me, a Czech soldier.

– There is no Czech soldier, there are only German soldiers. Now, you received him. And then he escaped. What did he come here to do?

– I cannot answer you. I am bound by professional secrecy [the secrecy of the confessional].

– There is no professional secrecy against Reason of State. Speak, or we will arrest you.”

In view of his refusal to speak, the abbey was thrown into the automobile of the Gestapo and taken to Orleans where he was shut up in a cell of the German military prison [which leads one to think that the police who came to arrest him did not belong to the Gestapo, but to the Military Police] and held in the most absolute secrecy for seven weeks.

Insinuations, lies, threats, promises, repeated interrogations to attempt to catch him in contradictions, moral torture, everything was employed to attempt to tear his secret out of him.

Finally, one morning, two officers entered his cell who told him:

– Monsieur, we have carried out a very serious inquiry in your case and this inquiry has taught us nothing harmful about you against the German army. You are therefore free. Please excuse us, Monsieur. But know that we are very respectful of the secrecy of confession” [source: la *Documentation catholique*, new series, No. 14, 31 December 1944, p. 15. Abbey L. Foucher died in August 1944 of two bullets received in combat...].

Let us finally mention a much more serious case which could have turned out badly without the cool disposition of a French agent in the German service. In the village of Eymet (Dordogne), certain inhabitants had been denounced as providing assistance to British parachutists (PBL, 3, p. 139). In his letter, the anonymous informant had given

several names, including those of MM. Reynaud and Lormand. This was in the spring of 1944.

A raid was conducted. The German chief proceeded with the arrest of the persons mentioned by the anonymous informer, then he gave M. Reynaud five minutes in which to speak, in the absence of which he would be shot with other inhabitants and the village would be burnt [PBL, 3, pp. 140-1, declaration of Alexandre Villaplana].

A French auxiliary of “Bonny-Lafon Gang”, Alexandre Villaplana, then intervened and interrogated M. Reynaud. Reynaud protested his innocence and declared that he had been the victim of a machination. The auxiliary succeeded in obtaining a reprieve of execution of a few hours from the German chief [“I was then able at this time to delay the execution by asking the chief adjutant to grant me a few hours to find out if I could find the weapons. He told me, after some hesitation, all right, but this evening at 7 o’clock...” (PBL, 3, p. 141)]. Having continued his interrogation, he learned from a resident of the village, M. Morganti, that the anonymous denunciation might have originated from M. Lormand’s daughter-in-law, who was angry with M. Lormand because and was in the process of divorcing his son. This woman had already sent an initial letter of denunciation (apparently without results) [“I resumed the interrogation of the entire Lormand family. There was a real family drama going on in that village, in which everybody is very small-minded [...]. At six o’clock, M. Morganti give me an indication and caused me to understand that this could come from M. Lormand’s beautiful daughter-in-law. I asked him why. He said: because she is in the process of divorcing M. Lormand’s son; she already sent a first letter and I saw her take 50,000 F from her father-in-law’s safe; she must have done that for revenge” (PBL, 3, pp. 141-2).] [XXX, “stenotyped record”]

A. Villaplana caused the suspect to be searched for immediately:

“I am informed and I have sought to know the whereabouts of M. Lormand’s beautiful daughter-in-law; she was found 500 meters from the mayor’s office, hidden behind a tree: she was waiting to see what would happen. She was taken to the mayor’s office [...]. After three quarters of an hour of interrogation, she finished by admitting that it was she who had sent the two anonymous letters against her father-in-law” [PBL, 3, p. 142].

The members of the Reynaud and Lormand families (as well as the other designate victims) were saved. A few days, they came to Périgueux to thank A. Villaplana (PBL, 3, pp. 141-2).

Where is the arbitrariness of the Gestapo?

Some suspects were given the benefit of the doubt and released

Some French people even had the good luck to be released on the benefit of the doubt because, even if there were some clues, there was no tangible proof against them. Let us cite first of all the case of Bernard Humbert: on 2 October 1941, he was arrested as the presumed distributor of Communist tracts and books to the Germans “I was then handed over to the Germans at Montrouge. At Montrouge, they asked who supplied me with the tracts. [...] I gave them his name [Odicharia]. They asked me if I was quite sure that it was really Odicharia. I held firm to the end. They kept me to go look for this famous Odicharia, who lived in the Rue du Cherche-Midi. He was arrested. I did not see him. Then they changed my prison” (PGG, dossier 2, p. 88)]. They carried out an inquiry in proper and correct form. They began to search his house, but did not find anything [“They searched my house; they didn’t find anything” (*Ibid.*)]. Finally, the prosecutor acquitted him on the benefit of the doubt.

B. Humbert was nevertheless kept as a hostage after the Communist *attentats* [bombing or assassination attempts] which had just been committed [“As there were no tracts [at my house], I was acquitted on the benefit of the doubt. They told me: “The prosecutor has acquitted you on the benefit of the doubt, but they’re keeping you as a hostage” (*Ibid.*, p. 89)]. Ten days later, however, he was released. Why? He personally explained the reasons why at the “Georgia Gestapo Trial”:

“This happened on 14 November [1941], my mother and my wife, who was about to give birth to our sixth child, came to Rue Boissy d’Anglas to see me, and they mentioned the birth of my sixth child, which was about to occur; they waited until noon; and seeing that my sixth child was about to be born, they then released me” [PGG, dossier 2, p. 90].

H. Chamberlin, known as Lafon, released “a great many Frenchmen”

In December 1944, Lafon’s lawyer asked commissioner Clot, who had handled the affair, whether his client had not “benefited from the incontestable credit which he enjoyed before the Germans in obtaining the release of a great many Frenchmen”. The commissioner explained:

COMMISSIONER CLOT. – There is no doubt of that. I owe it to the truth to say so, since Lafon, who had betrayed his country, released a great many Frenchmen, did good to individual people, without doubt [PBL, 6, p. 22.] [XXX, “Lafon saves Frenchmen”]

Other arrested persons were finally released

Having said that, let us follow the testimony of this teacher arrested at Montbard by the Gestapo on the grounds that he was thought to have supported the local Resistance. At the Bonny-Lafon trial, he recalled:

“I was tried at Auxerre, and no proof was supplied against me. I remained as a suspect and I was sentenced by the military court to one month in prison and then released” [PBL, 6, p. 151, testimony of Leon Theobalt].

Let us also cite the case of Henri Phegnon, an insurance agent at Vernouillet (Seine & Oise) who had been arrested because he was suspected of acts of resistance. The suspicions were justified because he was the head of the local Resistance. Nevertheless, no tangible proof could be produced. After a harrowing interrogation by French agents, he was transferred to the headquarters of the Gestapo, Rue des Saussaies. There he was interrogated in a correct manner by the German judges:

“Those who really interrogated me at Rue des Saussaies were correct. I was pressed with questions, always on the same grounds: they wanted to know the name of the organization I was responsible to, the names of the people with me. But I was never mistreated at all” [PGN, 5, p. 91].

Finally, he was released and this is what the German judge told him:

“I argued in your favor. I didn’t want to send you to Germany. And then, after all, I had no proof against you. I asked for your release, which was granted” [PGN, 5, p. 92] [XXX “Phegnon released”, XXX “Perfect correctness”].

Let us mention another case, a more surprising one, that of M. Ouizam. M. Ouizam was a Jew of Moroccan origin in an irregular situation: under the occupation, he “hid in Paris with false papers” (PGN, 1, p. 17). By bad luck. He was arrested within the framework of a minor matter linked to the black market (sale of chronometers). During the search, documents were found attesting to his false identity [“[The Frenchman] took the “police” to Ouizam. By bad luck, at the same time, Ouizam’s mistress arrived with a letter in her purse establishing that he had false papers” (PGN, 1, p. 18)].

Ouizam and his mistress were then taken to the headquarters of the “Neuilly Gestapo” and interrogated. What happened to them?

Martin interrogated Ouizam and tried to get him to confess that he was a Jew, a spy and a gold trafficker. Ouizam was interrogated for 48 hours and struck [...].

Due to lack of evidence, he was released as well as his mistress, not without having received offers to “work” with Martin, offers which he never followed up [PGN, 1, p. 18].

Here is a Jew who was arrested by the “Gestapo” for a minor matter and who was released shortly afterwards because no serious crimes could be attributed to him based on real proof.

The Gestapo did not act without proof

All these facts tend to confirm that the German police (and the Gestapo in particular) worked like any other police force in the world: they did not act without proof and they released those who had been cleared.

The defense recalls this during the post-war trials

During the “French Gestapo Auxiliaries Trial”, the lawyer for one of the accused, Mme Sialelly, had the courage to recall this, concerning the arrest and deportation of Messrs Colongelo, Rocca and Vitti (see below), he declared:

“Yes, but again, as ferocious as the Germans were, when we took them somebody who had been arrested, there had to be some evidence against him” [PAFG, hearing of 1 March 1947, pp. 45-6].

Two years before, during the “Georgia Gestapo trial”, the accused, Renato Gamma, had clearly explained:

“[...] a denunciation of a person who did not belong to a service could bear fruit, but someone belonging to a German service had to provide information accompanied by proof of some kind. I could not just tell Terrile: ‘These people are in the Resistance’. Terrile could not arrest them like that. Terrile did not have the authority to arrest anyone without information. He had to have orders from higher up; he needed tangible proof” [PGG, dossier 6, pp. 10-11].

The procedure

In the present case, these orders to be followed from “higher up” were issued by Dr Schmidt. Schmidt worked for the account of the Gestapo in France. The procedure was as follows: when one of the police

services had taken note of a suspect, a report was sent to Rue des Saussaies and Dr Schmidt decided (perhaps after consultation with a superior) on the action to be taken in the matter. At the “Georgia Gestapo trial”, a secretary who had worked in this service, Hélène de Tranze, explained:

Cases could not be decided before Dr Schmidt read the report [PGG, dossier 2, p. 18].

Without proof, the occupiers did not waste their time

Knowing that he had relatively restricted manpower, the occupiers did not waste their time ordering actions for not very important cases, particularly if there was not enough proof. Thus, in the case of the alleged false signals at Saint-Remy-Chevreuses, the informant had contented himself with bringing a few tracts dropped by airplane (“[Terrile] asked me for proof, something in support. I gave him some tracts which I had [picked up], and that was all” [PGG, dossier 2, p. 20]. Now, tracts do not constitute proof that signals were sent to this airplane. This is why there was no follow-up to the matter...

Hence the fact, also, that before transmitting any report to Rue des Saussaies, the police services looked for obvious proof. Interrogated during the hearings, H. de Tranze mentioned the case of a young man arrested for trafficking in weapons:

“Fernandez Parphyre informed us of the matter. Terrile conducted it until there was some proof that this young man was mixed up in arms dealing. The day of the arrest, Odicharia arrived at the office, called a few men including Krammer and the others I named” [PGG, dossier 2, p. 34].

It could not be clearer: Terrile did not content himself with a denunciation. As the matter was relatively important, he ordered the continuation of the inquiry until he obtained proof. It was only when proof was found that the authorities ordered the arrest. Without proof, we believe the case would have been abandoned, like those of La Prévoyance, the Resistance members of the Latin Quarter or the signals at Saint-Remy.

In-depth inquiries

There are abundant examples of in-depth inquiries before any arrest.

In January 1943, a certain Serge Marongin [on S. Marongin, see P. Randa, *op. cit.*, p. 674.], pharmaceutical student, handed over to the Germans on the basis of information relating to an organization “which

was said, according to him, to have committed several *attentats* in the metro and attacked an escort of prisoners headed for Fresne” (PBL, 1, p. 51). He provided the address of the meeting place, Boulevard du Marechal Lyautey. Did the occupant act without waiting? No. The Germans assigned Français Lafon with the inquiry. Lafon organized “some night time surveillance” in order to note the persons involved. Once the suspects were clearly identified, nine persons were apprehended [“Lafon agreed to take charge of the inquiry and at the head of about a dozen men from Rue Lauriston [...] and a few German non-commissioned officers, he proceeded with the arrest of five men for his account, however the Germans assigned as his adjutants arrested three men and a woman for their account. These men were handed over to Kieffer [...].” (PBL, 1, p. 51).

Shortly afterwards, Marongin “provided information on Defense de la France, the clandestine organization concerned. It was a group disposing of a print shop and disseminating clandestine tracts” (PBL, 1, p. 51). There again, the occupier took care to avoid acting precipitously:

“Marongin assisted the preliminary inquiry, which lasted three months [...].

The information provided, both by him and by the investigators, was centralized by Bonny, who drew up the card files and reports, a copy of which was transmitted by Lafon to Hess.

After three months, twenty names of Resistance members were revealed and the meeting place and its annexes were known [...].

As the inquiry was completed, the Boemelburg criminal council, which, with Kieffer, had concerned itself with the case, gave the order to take action, which took place on 26 July 1943” [PBL, 1, p. 51-2].

144 arrests were made in two days, 15 of them on a definitive basis, while the other persons being finally released after being cleared (PBL, 1, p. 53). Among those arrested was Genevieve de Gaulle, who was finally deported to Ravensbrück (PBL, 1, p. 54).

The occupiers were unhappy when they wasted time over an innocent person

As we see, the Germans did not act arbitrarily. Except in emergencies, they carried out sometimes very lengthy inquiries before arresting suspects.

When, by the way, one or more individuals were arrested who turned out to be innocent, the occupiers were very unhappy at having wasted their time and energy. Let us mention, for example, the case in

which a French agent of the “Neuilly Gestapo”, former policeman L. Jouanneteau, had caused the arrest of a Communist sympathizer suspected of illegal acts. After several interrogations, the man was acknowledged to be innocent and was released. Very irritated, L. Jouanneteau’s superiors told him: “Look at this mess!... You, a policeman? He brings us a case that doesn’t hold water” [PGN, 3, p. 99 deposition of police inspector Emile Nouzeilles].

Did the Gestapo spread terror? Four significant anecdotes

People may say that if the Germans did not act arbitrarily, they could not have spread terror everywhere as they did. My response would consist of the following question: did the Germans really spread terror, including among innocent people? Four very revealing short anecdotes show that, there as elsewhere, one must be careful of jumping to conclusions.

A French prefect resolutely refuses to carry an order from the Gestapo

In December 1943, the prefect of Isere, Jacques Henry, was warned by the commander of the Gestapo of Lyon that he was going to receive a sealed bag containing a cadaver. He was to incinerate the bag without opening it. Later he testified:

My indignant refusal was absolute; any bag brought to the prefecture would be opened, any cadaver would be identified in the presence of the public prosecutor and the mayor of Grenoble, and the cause of death investigated.

In view of my refusal, the commander got angry, declared that:

“The regional prefect of Lyon never raised similar objections in such cases.

“I had too great respect for the regional prefect, M. Angeli, to believe such an allegation.

“But to prove that the German was lying; I immediately called M. Angeli on the phone.

“Alerted, he asked me to put the Commander on the phone. I held the receiver and was thus able to hear the regional prefect deny the allegation and call the German a ‘liar’. The Gestapo made repeated requests for 48 hours, while I repeatedly and firmly refused. Then they gave up and I never found out what happened to the body of their unfortunate victim” [source: deposition of Jacques Henry, filed at the

Hoover Foundation and published in *La vie de la France sous l'occupation, 1940-1944* (ed. Plon, 1957), p. 497].

A tavern owner files a complaint against the Gestapo for theft

On 29 July 1944, the French auxiliaries mounted an expedition in a tavern at Cours-Cheverny where, according to the information received (which proved exact), Resistance members were being sheltered [PAFG, statement of facts, p. 18]. After surrounding the house, they penetrated the interior. The clients were taken out into the courtyard to check their identify papers. The patron, M. Pointard, who was coming home, was arrested in turn.

The auxiliaries searched for two hours. Not long afterwards, M. Pointard (who had not been taken away) noted the disappearance of jewelry and 15,000 F (p. 19). According to the official thesis, he should have been relieved to get off so easily and should have said to himself: "I'm alive and free, that's the main thing. Better forget about the theft". But far from acting this way, the owner... filed a complaint (p. 21). Yes, the next day, he filed a complaint against the "Gestapo" for theft.

This same day, the auxiliaries came back for another search and to check the identity of all clients on the premises. Did they spread terror? No; the statement of the facts says: "Nevertheless, the conversation was held in a calmer tone than the day before and they all drank several bottles of wine together" (pp. 20-21). They all had a drink, then.

On 31 July, finally, the auxiliaries came back one last time and asked M. Pointard to withdraw his complaint. The tavern owner agreed and the case was dropped (p. 21).

Two women file complaints against the Gestapo for theft

M. Pointard was not the only one to take such action. After a search of her premises (at Montbard), Françoise Thierry, who had just been released by the Gestapo after being interrogated (see above), noticed that some jewelry had disappeared. Did he thank his lucky stars to escape the clutches of the horrid Germans? No, she hastened to... file a complaint against the Gestapo. She stated as follows at the Bonny-Lafon trial:

"[...] I filed a complaint. I went to the prefecture at Dijon. I went to the Gestapo. They sent me to the Gestapo of Dijon. I got the impression that they wanted to send me all over France. I never got any results" [PBL, 6, p. 159, deposition of Françoise Thierry].

At Montbard, jewelry also disappeared in the home of a family named Plait, while the father, mother and son were being interrogated in the offices of the Feldkommandatur. When Mme Plait returned home, she noticed the theft. Far from being intimidated by the arrest of her son and her husband (who were finally deported), she went straight to the Feldgendarmerie to complain.

Did the German officer tell her to get lost, since she came from a guilty family anyway? No, he sent a telegram to Paris. At his trial, P. Bonny recalled:

“BONNY. – [...] Lafon gathered all the men in his service together in his office. I was present. He said: ‘I have received a telegram from the Feldgendarmerie at Montbar. A theft has been committed. I want to know who did it. Nobody leaves here until we find out’. After a few minutes, the thief admitted his guilt. His name was Ferrando.

THE PRESIDENT. – He was from the Corsican gang?

BONNY. – Not exactly. But he was part of it just the same. He wasn’t Corsican; that’s why I say “not exactly”.

Lafon asked him where the jewelry was. He gave an address. Some of the jewelry was found. Lafon asked me to draw up a letter to Mme Plait, which I did immediately. A certain time later, Mme Plait came to take possession of the jewelry that had been found.

THE PRESIDENT. – She came back to Rue Lauriston?

BONNY. – Yes, she came back to take possession of the jewelry that had been stolen from her. Every time there was a theft, and, unfortunately, there were a few, Lafon did not hesitate to punish the guilty party very severely. Only, obviously, in these surroundings, it was a little bit difficult [PBL, 3, pp. 102-3. There can be no doubt that Lafon did what he could to combat thievery. For example, at Tulle, two of his men stole some things in a grocery store. At his trial, he recalled, without being contradicted ‘The grocer came to tell me about it; I struck them in front of her and I gave them six months in prison’ ” (PBL, 3, 134).

The witness was asked whether Lafon had kept for himself everything his men might have stolen. He answered:

“COMMISSIONER CLOT. – In a precise way, I don’t believe so. I know that on several occasions, Lafon had sums of money returned. One can cite the case of the jewelry store [...] which had been assaulted by a team of Corsicans from Rue Lauriston [...]. This woman had had jewels stolen. Lafon learned about it. He summoned a certain Suizoui in particular [...] he told him to bring back the jewels and he returned them, or at least in large part” (PBL, 4, p. 20).]

A Commander of the Gestapo who was called a liar over the phone, a prefect who obstinately refuses to carry out an order, a tavern owner and two women who file complaints against the French auxiliaries of the Germans for theft... When one reads all that, it is hard to believe that the German police spread terror everywhere due to their arbitrary actions.

A complete list permits a revision of history

Having arrived at this stage of my demonstration, some people will accuse me of acting like the French delegation at Nuremberg, that is, “cherry picking” a few incidents here and there to arrive at general conclusions, but without drawing up a complete list.

Arbitrary action on the part of the Gestapo? A myth contradicted by the figures

The 63 cases selected by the prosecution

The complete list has been drawn up for us by the prosecution. At their trials held between 1944 and 1947, the auxiliaries of the Germans were principally tried for their actions against the Resistance. At the end of rather detailed investigations (except as regards the “Bonny-Lafon gang”, in which the prosecution, too hasty, was spotty [the trial of the Bonny-Lafon gang” was held in December 1944, or only two months after the complete “Liberation” of France. After the serious excesses of August-October 1944, its objective was to show the country that (legal) Justice was going to concern itself with condemning all the “traitors” and “collaborators”, therefore, that it was useless to pursue savage acts of private vengeance or possessing only a simply appearance of legality. In this climate, the investigation was carried out in such a way as to establish facts justifying the condemnation of the accused. But it went no further. Hence its very rapid and spotty character, which the Court did not even try to deny:

“THE GOVERNMENT COMMISSIONER. – We are obliged to acknowledge that the investigation has been extremely rapid [...].

THE PRESIDENT. – I admit it given the circumstances...

Me DELAUNEY. – [...] It must be admitted that there are gaps in the dossier.

THE PRESIDENT. – There is no doubt.” (PBL, 3, pp. 10-11).

One could hardly hope for a more explicit admission.

63 cases were discovered and selected concerning the struggle against the *maquisards*: 18 against the “Bonny-Lafon gang”, 10 against the “Neuilly Gestapo”, 21 against the “French auxiliaries of the Gestapo” and 14 against the “Georgia Gestapo”. These 63 cases permit us to make a complete list.

Guilty or not guilty?

Before going any further, allow me one short remark: I will consider as a victim of arbitrary action any person who:

- was arrested without any solid grounds for the arrest (no evidence, no denunciation, etc);
- was sentenced to prison, held as hostage or, worse, deported, despite an obvious absence of evidence;
- was violently beaten when no tangible evidence had been discovered against him.

Four cases very probably involved innocent people

The principal conclusion that one can draw from the 63 cases examined, is that the “Gestapo” did not act arbitrarily. In fact, if it had acted blindly, arresting just anybody on just any vague denunciation, very many innocent people would have been affected. Well, it’s not the case, far from it. Of these 63 cases, four very probably involved innocent people. One is charged to the “French auxiliaries of the Gestapo”, two to members of the “Neuilly Gestapo” and the last to the “Bonny-Lafon gang”. These cases may be briefly summarized as follows:

1) Case attributable to the “French auxiliaries of the Gestapo”: at the end of 1943, in a cafe in a suburb of Paris, three persons, Benoit Colangelo, M. Rocca and Tino Vitti, were fortuitously arrested by French auxiliaries.

In 1947, B. Colangelo declared: “My arrest, and that of my comrades, was not premeditated. It was an accident” [source: PAFG, hearing of 1 March 1947, p. 45)]. Taken to Fresnes, all were finally deported to Buchenwald. And while the first two came back, Tino Vitti, died, probably in deportation.

“THE PRESIDENT. – So you were sent to Fresnes, then deported to Buchenwald. And your two comrades, who were arrested at the same time as yourself, only yourself came back?

M. COLANGELO. – Yes, Tino Vitti certainly died” (*Ibid.*, p. 35).

Now it appears from the hearings that, of these three young men, only B. Colangelo had committed an offence (he was an escaped prisoner). The two others had apparently done nothing illegal. The only thing they did wrong was to be accompanied by the “wrong” people, in the wrong place at the wrong time...

2) First case attributable to the “Neuilly Gestapo”: the arrest, on 12 November 1942, of a man with Communist party associations, Caron, suspected of *attentats*. Interrogated and badly beaten, he provided no information. And for a good reason, he was perfectly innocent. He was moreover released after a few days, as nothing had been proven against him. At the hearing, police inspector E. Nouzeilles declared:

Fortunately, Caron was not a Resistance member; otherwise, with the beating he took, he could have denounced his comrades and this could have led to the arrests of about ten good patriots, maybe more [PGN, 3, p. 99].

3) Second case attributable to the “Neuilly Gestapo”: a regrettable incident during which a member of the Neuilly team, Pierre Lahaye, whose wife had obtained a divorce and custody of the children, took the children away by force, with the help of police colleagues. Lahaye succeeded in procuring the arrest and holding as hostage of M. Chain, the police commissioner who had carried out the order concerning custody of the children (perhaps with a bailiff). Then he visited his ex-wife “with an agent of the Gestapo and a German officer” (PGN, 1, p. 20). There he declared that the hostage (or perhaps both of them) would only be released when his children were returned to him. The ex-wife had to comply...

Commissioner Chain was perfectly innocent in this matter.

4) Case attributable to the “Bonny-Lafon gang”: I have long hesitated to cite this one, since it is not entirely clear what happened. The case occurred at Montbeliard (Doubs) where Arabs recruited by Lafon and responsible for the surveillance of factories having raped “several women”, which were said to have resulted in “measures of repression by the Germans” against the guilty parties and their accomplices (PBL, 1, p. 65).

Nevertheless, while, at the trial of the “Bonny-Lafon gang”, this story of the rapes was confirmed by one of the defendants, he only repeated things “told him in confidence”, by another person:

“THE PRESIDENT. – It appears from the remarks made in confidence made by Maillebeau to Deleheye mentioned in the dossier, that these excesses, committed by Arab guards and particularly the rape

of several women, had led to measures of repression by the Germans against the brigade. Deleheye, is that correct?

[Edmond] DELEHEYE. – That is correct” [PBL, 3, p. 137].

I add that none of the victims was called to testify during the trial and to my knowledge, no guilty Arab was ever found. In short, the facts of the case are far from established. I had chosen to mention it after all so as to avoid being accused of distorting my case.

52 out of 56, or 93% of the cases concerned people who were undeniably guilty

If an exception be made for these four cases (and seven others which permit no conclusion [seven cases involving persons who, due to insufficient information, cannot be considered either innocent or guilty. For a summary of these cases, please see the annex. These cases are: case I.4, the “Georgia Gestapo Trial; case IX, in the “Neuilly Gestapo Trial”; cases II, IV.1, IV.2, VII.1 and VIII.4 in the “Bonny-Lafon Gang Trial”. I add that an unsuccessful search conducted at the premises of a suspect does not always imply the innocence of the person involved.

On 23 March 1944, for example, in Dordogne, members of the Bonny-Lafon gang visited the home of a married couple named Marceron, who were suspected of possessing explosives. During the trial, The President of the Tribunal declared:

“This woman and her husband were suspected of possessing cases of explosives; she responded at the same time as her husband that she had no explosives and did not know what that meant. A search was conducted, with the participation of North-Africans. There were in fact six cases of explosives belonging to the Resistance hidden on the property, but quite luckily, they were not discovered” (PBL, 3, pp. 152-3.)] All the dossiers mentioned during the trials of the Neuilly Gestapo involved persons who were obviously guilty of illegal acts (manufacture of false papers, giving information to the enemy, contacts with the armed Resistance, weapons dealing, attempted murder of police agents, etc.).

All of them! That is, 52 out of 56, that is, 93%. During a troubled period of history like the years 1940-1944, such a high proportion shows that the German police did not act arbitrarily, but rather on the contrary: they acted with discernment, for which they deserve respect.

Did the Gestapo practice torture in France?

But the defenders of the official version of history have not exhausted their arguments. “We are not going to praise the Gestapo”, they say”,

“for sparing the innocent in the vast majority of their cases. For a police force, not striking arbitrarily is the least of our worries. What we reproach them for, it having mistreated the ‘guilty’ persons whom they had arrested. Since even if the persons arrested had violated the Fourth Hague Convention and could be executed for so doing under international law, no law permitted the Germans to practice torture.

“What we accuse the Germans of is the beatings, tortures, deportations, summary executions of the ‘heroic martyrs of the Resistance, who are among the greatest heroes of our national legend’ ” [IMT V, 368], and who [according to the French prosecutor at Nuremberg, François de Menthon (IMT V, 372)] “numbered thousands of persons”.

Some people will consider this argument impossible to answer. Not me.

Facts presented out of context

Initially I would like to call for caution in dealing with all these tales of violence, torture or summary execution with which we have been force fed for 60 years.

Case of the suicide of a Jew under arrest

One of the first examples, a very precise one, will illustrate my remarks: on 7 August 1944, a Jew arrested by French auxiliaries was violently interrogated at the Gestapo headquarters in Rue des Saussaies. Taking advantage of a moment of distraction on the part of his guards, he jumped from the fourth floor window into the courtyard and was killed instantly.

Presented this way, everyone will believe in the martyrdom of a poor innocent Jew arrested for some futile motive and having preferred death to the abominable tortures to which he had been subjected (out of pure sadism, of course). The truth, however, is as follows: the Jew formed part of a group of three Resistance members who had set a trap for the Gestapo (yes, the Resistance set traps for members of the Gestapo, too). Passing themselves off as black marketers, they took obvious actions in order to be noticed. The objective was to kill the agents who came to arrest them. But the operation failed and the three accomplices were arrested without killing anyone.

I’m not making this up. During the “French Gestapo Auxiliaries Trial”, the statement of facts declared:

“They were, in reality, [...] agents of the Resistance who had unmasked Combier and his acolytes and had set a trap for them. In fact, one of the ‘street vendors’ fired shots upon the arrival of the agents [of the Gestapo]. A gun battle immediately broke out on both sides. Combier arrested the Jew while the other agents arrested the two other individuals” [PAFG, statement of facts, p. 26].

Taken to Rue des Saussaies, the three accomplices were subjected to severe interrogation. The Jew succeeded in jumping from the window and killed himself.

The other two were shot the next day at the Fort de Vincennes (*Ibid.*).

In this case, one easily understands the severity of the interrogation: an attempt had just been made to murder several French auxiliaries of the Gestapo. It was absolutely necessary to attempt to discover the network for which the three guilty parties were working. Any police force in the world would have acted in a similar way to protect its own agents.

The death of a Resistance member, Mlle Muller: a flagrant example of bad faith

Now, here is a second, even more obvious, example: in June 1944, in Paris, a young nurse in the Resistance, Mademoiselle Muller, was shot at point blank range by two members of the “Georgia Gestapo” named Solina and Fontini [born at Tunis in 1911, of Italian nationality, Sebastien Solina had been sentenced to one year in prison in 1943 “for practicing the profession of pimp” (PGG, dossier 1, p. 153).

Having become a surveyor’s assistant, he worked in the Organization Todt and later entered the “Georgia Gestapo” (*Ibid.*). In short, it would be mistaken to consider this individual a “fanatical Nazi”; he was small time hoodlum whom circumstances had taken along a twisted path...]. Summarized without these details, this would be described as the brutal murder and Mlle Muller would be included among the “heroic martyrs of the Resistance”.

Before, however, judging, one should interest oneself in the circumstances of the death. Now, the circumstances are as follows: with another Resistance member, Roger Boulet, Mlle Muller had fallen into a trap. As R. Boulet himself later described it:

“M. BOULET. – [...] [Sebastien Solina] asked me for my papers; I gave them to him and he searched me. I had a revolver in my belt; he did not draw my revolver and that’s when I said to myself: with some luck, I can get out of this; but just when I was about to draw my

revolver, Solina shot at me, together with Fontini. Solina was to my left and he shot first” [PGG, dossier 10, p. 121].

It’s clear: the two agents of the “Georgia Gestapo” acted in self-defense: they fired their weapons because the Resistance member whom they had arrested had tried to draw a gun on them which they had not noticed before. The gun fight was such that the bullets went in all directions, riddling the room [PGG, dossier 1, statement of facts, pp. 57-8]. M. Boulet got off with superficial wounds. But Mlle Muller, who was also armed,

“THE GOVERNMENT COMMISSIONER. – Did Mlle Muller have a revolver?

M. BOULET. – Yes, but she didn’t use it” (PGG, dossier 10, p. 124)]. Mlle Muller was mortally wounded and died two days later.

Knowing that it was absolutely necessary to present the case as a “Gestapo crime”, the government commissioner showed incredible bad faith. Interrogated during the trial of the agents, Solina and Fontini, R. Boulet declared that he had not had the time to draw because he had not been able to undo the safety catch on his weapon:

“M. BOULET. – No, I didn’t fire; since my pistol had the safety catch on, the weapon didn’t fire” (*Ibid.*).

The commissioner deduced:

“THE GOVERNMENT COMMISSIONER. – Consequently, they fired without the necessity for self-defense. You drew your pistol and they could not know whether or not the safety catch was on or not, but it’s as if you had no weapon at all, since you had not had the time to release the safety catch; and Mlle Muller did not draw her weapon?

M. BOULET. – No.

THE GOVERNMENT COMMISSIONER. – The testimony is of exceptional seriousness for Solina” [*Ibid.*].

This is how an act of legitimate self defense becomes a “crime”; just because, before firing, the French auxiliaries forgot to ask R. Boulet: “Just a minute, now. Does your weapon have a safety catch? It does? OK, would you be so kind as to release it so we can shoot you?”

Naturally, any person of good faith can only reject the Jesuitical hair-splitting of the government commissioner. Mlle Muller was not a “victim of the Gestapo” or of “Nazi barbarism”. She had chosen to combat the occupation government in violation of international law; she died because her accomplice had rather stupidly drawn his pistol in the presence of two men armed with firearms. Things would have turned out the same way with any police force in the world.

Both these examples show the necessity of caution when we hear of the “crimes of the Gestapo”. People have a tendency to “forget” that France was at war from 1941 to a 1944, an illegal war carried on by illegal combatants, but war just the same...

The wounded were not finished off

I must add that if the auxiliaries of the Germans had shot with an intention to kill, they would have finished off the wounded. Now, during the trials which I have consulted, there was never any question of the murder of any wounded person. Quite the contrary, all individuals wounded in a gunfight were immediately taken to hospital. In July 1944, for example, a young man was apprehended with a hand towel filled with papers in Russian hostile to the German army. Taken by car, he escaped from the vehicle during a traffic accident. While he was running along the sidewalk, Odicharia and Blanchet shot at him and wounded him. At his trial, G. Collignon, who had witnessed the scene, testified:

“COLLIGNON. – [...] At this time, Odicharia and Blanchet [...] told me: get out of here, it’s not going any further. I had hardly had time to take a step backwards, when two shots were fired. The young man fell to the ground. I immediately [...] took the necessary steps, that is, I got busy trying to call an ambulance [...].

THE PRESIDENT. – You took him to the Hôpital de la Pitié.

COLLIGNON. – It wasn’t me who took him. I returned to Rue de Varenne on foot, since I was injured myself [in the car accident] [PGG, dossier 2, pp. 22-23].

The wounded man was actually taken to the Hôpital de la Pitié [PGG, dossier 1, statement of facts, p. 35].

One month previously, a Resistance member, Dr Birau (or Biro), had been wounded by R. Collignon, who arrested him. In July 1945, a witness, Mme Memain, testified:

“Mme MEMAIN. – [...] M. Biro was therefore taken to the lodge in a wounded condition; he had a pistol bullet at the top of the waist, and the wound was bleeding rather seriously. We asked for a doctor. There was a doctor in the house; he came and said that the bullet was lodged in the spinal cord. Dr Biro was taken to hospital in an ambulance.

THE PRESIDENT. – Who called the doctor?

Mme MEMAIN. – Blanchet [a member of the ‘Georgia Gestapo’] asked for him [...]” [PGG, dossier 10, p. 114].

Proof that the auxiliaries of the Germans did not shoot to kill, but to defend themselves or arrest fugitives...

The myth of the “torture chamber”

The so-called “cold room” in the Rue de Londres

Having said this, let us get to the “refined tortures” properly speaking. There as well, caution is required. During the trial of the “Georgia Gestapo”, for example, this service was accused of possessing a “cold room” in which prisoners were confined. The prosecution based on the statements of H. de Tranze during the investigation. But at the hearing, Tranze explained that the phrase was the result of a misunderstanding:

“THE GOVERNMENT COMMISSIONER. – [...] you spoke of a ‘cold room’.

HELENE DE TRANZE. – It was an office which was not heated; I said that they put [Resistance member] Joël in this office for a certain period of time. That’s why I mentioned a ‘cold room’, I called it that, I was so confused; when I said a ‘cold room’, I meant an unheated office” [PGG, dossier 12, p. 27].

If a “cold room” had really been installed at Rue de Londres, it should have been possible to find traces of it in September 1945. Now the prosecution produced no report and the case was quickly forgotten... proof that the story of the cold room was a fairy tale.

The alleged “traces of blood” at Rue Lariston

During the so-called Bonny-Lafon trial, a witness named M. Secq appeared to testify. Upon the “Liberation”, he had been one of the first persons to enter the Gestapo headquarters at 93 Rue Lauriston. At the time, there was talk of traces of blood said to have been discovered there, attesting to abominable tortures. M. Secq was able to see everything, including the arrangement of the cells. This is what he testified:

“THE PRESIDENT. – You saw no inscriptions on the walls, no traces of blood?

M. SECQ. – Traces of blood, no. There were inscriptions on the walls; the unfortunate persons confined there must have been very bored; they kept calendars on the walls. There were names of parachutists: arrested on such and such a date, transferred here in such and such a date. But no traces of blood and no instruments of torture” [PBL, 6, p. 113, deposition of M. Secq.]

To my knowledge, no proof of the existence of any “torture chambers” was ever discovered in the premises occupied by the German police forces.

Dubious tales of violence

The case of the two young Resistance members from Lyon

With regards to violence, finally, let us note the existence of numerous cases in which the versions diverge perceptibly. At Lyon, for example, two young Resistance members, J. Choux and G. Cochet, were apprehended in a cafe in the city. During the “Georgia Gestapo” trial, a witness who had witnessed the scene from outside described it as follows:

“THE WITNESS [M. Charles Favreau]. – There [in the cafe], I saw two of my adjutants being kicked and beaten, slapped, and so on, by the whole gang [...]” (PGG, p. 117).

Under interrogation, the principal defendant, H. Oberschmuckler, disputed this:

“THE GOVERNMENT COMMISSIONER. – Oberschmuckler, do you admit that you had Jean Choux subjected to an interrogation and that you beat him with your fists and kicked him?

Oberschmuckler – No, I just gave him a few slaps” [PGG, dossier 3, p. 94].

The case of M. Rio aka Lenoir

Let us also mention the case of M. Rio (aka Lenoir), a Resistance member who fell into a trap. The statement of facts presented at trial affirmed:

He was immediately identified by Collignon, who possessed his photograph. He asked him if he was M. Lenoir. He denied it. Collignon slapped him a number of times and hit him with his fists, this time in the stomach, after putting him in handcuffs and threatening him with his revolver [PGG, dossier 1, pp. 55-6].

At the hearing, Collignon denied hitting him with his fists:

“COLLIGNON. – I gave him one or two slaps [...].

THE GOVERNMENT COMMISSIONER. – And you hit him in the stomach with your fists.

COLLIGNON. – I gave him one or two slaps [...]. I only slapped him” [PGG, dossier 3, p. 17].

The hatred of the accusers in 1944-47

For 60 years, this type of denial has invariably been disbelieved on the grounds that the accused were lying to diminish their responsibility. It is true that they had obvious reasons to lie. But let's not forget that, for their part, the accusers could also blacken the facts in order to crush those for whom they felt an avowed, inextinguishable hatred [XXX "Defendants beaten"].

Since this hatred really existed. On 1 March 1947, at the so-called "French auxiliaries of the Gestapo" trial, the wife of the deported Resistance member, Mme Memely, got carried away and, in the midst of the hearing, called the defendant Duquesnoy a "*salaud*" [bastard] and had to be called to order by the The President of the Tribunal [PAFG, hearing of 1 March 1947, p. 24; see also [XXX "Memely"]. At the "Georgia Gestapo "trial, a witness for the prosecution, Roger Foucher, addressed the defendants in general and H. Oberschmuckler in particular as follows:

"[The witness]. – The death penalty, that is what you deserve, the whole gang of you here in court, including the women. All traitors to France should be executed. From the moment they betrayed the country, the moment they did harm, delivered families the way you did, there is one thing to do: that's pay for it with your life... The guillotine is too good for you... There are enough people in court to lynch you right here and now" [PGG, dossier 10, p. 29].

Far from calling the witness to order, the President of the High Court added to the verbal violence:

"THE PRESIDENT. – They will never have suffered the torments of Buchenwald..." [*Ibid.*]

Who can believe that in such a climate these hateful witnesses would not have suffered from a tendency to "forget" facts favorable to the defendants, either adding to the accusations or lying to increase the responsibilities of the accused and thus obtain the death penalty they so wished to see inflicted?

Lying stories

Two witnesses "forget" to report a good action by the Gestapo

A small example of a "forgotten" fact might be noted in the Bonny-Lafon trial. In the Kellner case (a Resistance member from Boulogne-Billancourt), several totally innocent persons were arrested (and then

quickly released) because they had been in the company of the suspect when the Gestapo arrived to arrest him.

Summoned later as a witness, one of them, Jacques Cardeillac, had the frankness to reveal, that initially, the agents were very friendly and that they went so far as to offer them coffee: “At Avenue Foch, they put us in a very luxurious cell and told us to wait, they were very friendly [...], they offered us coffee, they told us to wait” (PBL, 7, p. 4).

But the next two witnesses “forgot” to mention these facts. Georgette Paget contented himself with saying: “We went into a room which must have been the lunchroom, we waited there until our brother arrived” (PBL, 7, p. 20). Monique Paget then appeared, and declared: “We were taken up to a dining room, with drinks, we remained there and then a policeman came to tell us that my uncle had returned home” (PBL, 7, p. 27). Exit the friendliness of the agents and the offer of coffee...

The witnesses contradict each other in their stories

Sometimes, the divergent versions between the witnesses give rise to doubt. During the “Neuilly Gestapo Trial”, Henri Phegnon and his daughter appeared to testify. They had been arrested because M. Phegnon was the head of the local Resistance. At the hearing, his daughter declared that she had been severely beaten during her interrogation:

“THE PRESIDENT. – You were beaten? He [the defendant Rudy Martin] beat you with a rubber truncheon perhaps?

THE WITNESS – No, with his fists. He pulled my hair.

THE PRESIDENT. – You, a young girl, he didn’t hesitate to hit you!” [PGN, 5, p. 96]

Shortly beforehand, however, her father had testified that his daughter was able to find out what had been said (since before making her deposition, a witness does not participate in the hearings). Now this is what he had stated at that time:

“I heard that my daughter had been beaten, they brought her to me a little bit tired, although she was very peppy and was acting normally” [PGN, 5, p. 89, deposition of Henri Phegnon].

Supposing that his daughter had really been beaten, she would not have appeared full of pep and acting normally, even if she was a little bit tired”; she would have appeared stumbling, depressed, with her face swollen up. Everything leads us to believe that the young lady was exaggerating. Maybe she received a few slaps, but nothing else...

More seriously, on two occasions, during the trials held after the “Liberation”, the lies of the accusers appeared in broad daylight.

Marcel Memain was not beaten up

In the case already mentioned in which a trap was set permitting the arrest of a certain number of persons in the Rue Margueritte, the indictment stated that a Resistance member who had been arrested, Marcel Memain, was “beaten up in the presence of his mother and fiancée” [PGG, dossier 1, p. 52]. “Beaten up” means receiving numerous blows, with the fists, feet, elbows, etc. During the hearing, R. Collignon denied this:

“THE PRESIDENT. – You did not notice that one of the men had beaten Marcel Memain?

COLLIGNON. – That’s just it, that’s something that astonishes me, because at first everybody was very calm. For Marcel Memain, I didn’t see that anything like brutality had happened at all. Maybe there was a slap” [PGG, dossier 3, p. 11].

Called as a witness, Marcel Memain’s mother confirmed the statements of the accused:

“THE PRESIDENT. – He [your son] was said to have been mistreated immediately, I believe?

Mme MEMAIN. – Yes, at first. They gave him a rather violent slap, they put handcuffs on him and searched him” [PGG, dossier 10, p. 113].

Proof that R. Collignon was telling the truth and not the prosecution, which had lied by turning a slap, even a “rather violent one” into a “beating” (he was “beaten up”).

All this may appear hair-splitting. But in wartime, when feeling in running high and death is everywhere, a simple slap or blow with a fist is not synonymous with torture. In the case of the Lyon garage which was repainting cars for the Resistance, the organizer, Jean Bergognio, was arrested in February 1944. Taken to the German police headquarters, he was interrogated. During the “Georgia Gestapo” trial, he gave this significant reply:

“THE PRESIDENT. – Were you brutally beaten?

THE WITNESS. – I got two blows with the fist. They didn’t beat me, in sum. I got a few blows with the fist, that’s all” [PGG, dossier 8, pp. 170-1].

These remarks must surprise a young person born after 1960. Because in peacetime, when everything is calm and authority is hardly contested, a simple slap given to an opponent who has gotten himself

arrested appears an unacceptable level of violence. But in wartime, when the enemy has already penetrated the territory, when the winds of revolt are blowing, and, behind the front, civilians have unleashed an illegal war, a blow with a fist to an arrested enemy becomes, unfortunately, something normal... Here again, everything is a question of context. We should not forget that in its *Report on German Atrocities Committed during the Occupation*, Prof. H. Paucot has admitted:

“Slaps and blows with the fist were rarely missing at the beginning, but these were minor forms of mistreatment which are unfortunately quite common in most police services” [See IMT, XXXVII, document F-571, p. 263].

Resistance member Dr. Biro lied knowingly

But let us return to our subject. This distortion of the facts (turning a slap into a serious beating) is not the only one. In this same entrapment case, another Resistance member, Jean Bireau (or Biro), received a bullet wound which left him with a paralyzed leg. During the trial of the French Gestapo auxiliaries, the statement of facts stated as follows:

“[J. Biro] understood that he had fallen into a trap and attempted to escape. It was at this moment that Blanchet jumped him and a violent struggle began. Dr Biro was stronger. He flattened Blanchet and *struck Collignon violently* [emphasis added], who unfortunately for him managed to free himself, and, drawing his weapon, opened fire on Dr Biro.”

At the hearing, R. Collignon confirmed that he had opened fire after being struck by his adversary:

“I found myself assaulted by Dr Bireau; I received a violent blow on the temple, a struggle began and my jacket was torn. We both succeeded in freeing ourselves; I tried to draw my pistol but it got caught on the hammer, since it was a revolver; I told him: “Hands up”. He no doubt saw that I no longer had my glasses, he made a move and I fired. He was struck in the right side” [PGG, dossier 3, p. 14].

Now, called as a witness, Jean Biro told a different story. In contradiction not only with the defendant as well as the statement of facts, he claimed that R. Collignon had fired on him without warning and without being struck violently:

“One of the two individuals [Blanchet] came towards me and grabbed me by the jacket. I understood that I had fallen into a trap and I

began to fight with him. I got him down and half knocked him out. Unfortunately, he continued to hold me by my clothing and I didn't have time to approach the second person at the end of the room. He drew a pistol from his inside pocket and shot at me from a distance of approximately two meters, while I was trying to get close to him. I collapsed, my legs paralyzed and I remained on the floor of the lodge" [PGG, dossier 9, p. 43].

If he had "not have time to approach the second person at the end of the room", this means he couldn't have hit him; therefore, the individual had not been directly threatened and he had drawn without warning.

Shortly afterwards, however, R. Collignon corrected this and recalled that they had fought and he personally had not fired his weapon ("after a short struggle I fired at him", *Ibid.*, p. 45). While the witness should have protested that this was a lie, he did nothing of the kind:

"THE GOVERNMENT COMMISSIONER. – Doctor, you had already knocked your first adversary down and you attacked the second one. Were you the strongest?

M. BIREAU. – Yes. Unfortunately, the first one was still holding onto me" (*Ibid.*).

This absence of protest and this method of remaining vague are significant: obviously, the witness was the one who was lying, not the accused, who contested the witness's version of what happened... And if the witness was lying, it was to get revenge on the accused.

Conclusion as to the story of tortures

This is why it is necessary to be very cautious about all these stories of Gestapo violence: beatings, tortures, shooting without provocation, cold-blooded executions, etc. The fact that the accused could have been interested in diminishing their responsibilities is not enough to reject their denials without examination. Because the "good guys" could have lied – and did lie – too, out of hatred or resentment.

Of course, the existence of two lies does not discredit all the testimony presented during the trials. Many witnesses were sincere in describing violent treatment suffered at the hands of German police. But far from bothering me, these honest testimonies reinforce my thesis. Let us now see how.

Why did the Gestapo sometimes use violence?

The purpose of interrogation is to obtain information

Above, we saw that Gestapo interrogations were all intended to obtain information. The trials held after the “Liberation” confirm this fact.

A significant dialogue.

The following is some significant dialogue heard during one of the hearings in the trial of the “Georgia Gestapo” (testimony of Roger Boulet, Resistance member arrested during the Occupation):

“THE PRESIDENT. – They interrogated you several times.

M. BOULET. – Yes, to find out where my chief was, and my men...

THE PRESIDENT. – They seemed to consider it very important, obviously...

M. BOULET. – Particularly my chief, Lieutenant Georges Lefee, who was arrested at la Santé” [PGG, dossier 10, pp. 122-3].

This example is far from the only one.

The information obtained permitted the capture of the head of a network

In the so-called “PTT” case, a Resistance network was detected in a Paris suburb. “The group was very active, with a budget and relatively large quantities of weapons” [PGG, statement of facts, p. 44]. As the network could have been infiltrated by a double agent, the first arrests occurred in June 1944, at the cemetery of Thiais, during a trap held in the form of a meeting with Resistance members. The prisoners were interrogated. For fun? No, to obtain information. At the end of these interrogations, the Gestapo learned that the members of the organization had a mail drop in a concierge’s lodge at 4, rue Marguérite, Paris. The concierge was named Mme Memain, wife of René Memain.

On 13 June 1944, a search of the lodge was held: “Tracts, address lists, documents, 2 typewriters were seized and taken away... A sum of 50,000 F was discovered in an envelope...” (*Ibid.*, p. 52) In a maid’s room on the 6th floor, the agents “found a rather large quantity of weapons (grenades, submachine guns, incendiary bombs, etc.) placed there for storage by Marcel Memain, and which was the weapons cache of his Resistance group” (*Ibid.*, p. 57). A trap was then laid, permitting the capture of the head of the network.

Thus; the initial interrogations provided one essential piece of information, the address of the mail drop. This information was later exploited.

Unexpected confirmation from a Resistance member

Another example: on 5 February 1944, at Lyon, four vehicles used by the Resistance were found in a garage. The German police immediately looked for the name of the garage owner. At the “Georgia Gestapo” trial, the following testimony was heard:

“The [French Gestapo auxiliaries] surrounded the adjacent cafe and arrested four young people who were handed over to the Germans, who had to find out, after an interrogation conducted in their style, the name of the garage owner, M. Buffet, who was absent during the search” [PGG, dossier 1, p. 73.]

Here again, therefore, the interrogations were conducted so as to obtain necessary information.

Among the people arrested were Jean Choux and Georges Cochet: “these two little guys were liaison agents for Colonel Descoures” [PGG, dossier 8, p. 121, deposition of Charles Favreau]. At the hearing, H. Oberschmuckler confirmed that their interrogation was violent: “I hit [...] them several times”, he admitted.

“I was present at this interrogation. I admit that I was very nervous. I was not very correct. I even hit them a few times” (PGG, dossier 3, p. 80). See also the statement of facts, p. 83: “M. Choux, agent of the Resistance, under the orders of M. Buffet [network of Lyon], was arrested on 5 February [1944] between the cafe and the garage. Choux was subjected to a very hard interrogation and was beaten with punches and kicks. M. Choux was then taken to the Gestapo headquarters in the company of his friend Cochet, was arrested with him. Both were hit again. Oberschmuckler got mad, then Choux and Cochet were deported to Buchenwald and have just come back”.

Sadism? No, just because G. Cochet was found to be carrying “small sheets of paper with the indication of a *maquis* near Valence, with all the useful details: the comings and goings, weapons, resistance locations” [PGG, dossier 3, p. 81].

“I understood that it was a very big case,” H. Oberschmuckler (*Ibid.*) explained. Hence his determination to obtain information at any cost to capture the leaders.

It should be noted that elsewhere during the trial, Choux and Cochet’s “superior” in the Resistance admitted that the Germans had used violence to extort information:

“There [in the cafe], I saw two of my aides who were being beaten, with fists, kicks, slaps, and so on, by the whole gang [...]. They had obviously found papers on these two little guys. They wanted to know where the papers came from, what their connections were” [PGG, dossier 8, pp. 117 and 120].

Unexpectedly, the President of the Tribunal intervened and upped the ante:

“THE PRESIDENT. – Maybe that’s what motivated these brutalities, because they had found important papers on them?

THE WITNESS [C. Favreau]. – Obviously.

THE PRESIDENT. – And on you, they found nothing?

THE WITNESS. – Nothing at all” (PGG, dossier 8, p. 121).

Hence the fact that, contrary to Choux and Cochet, he was not beaten. On the contrary, he was rapidly released.

A severe interrogation reveals the location of a clandestine radio transmitter

In another case, six American intelligence agents (“parachutists”) were arrested in the Boulevard Suchet and taken to police headquarters. The Germans wished to seize their radio transmitter at any price. They interrogated them until they obtained the desired information. During the “French Gestapo auxiliary” trial, the statement of facts declared:

“By Combiér’s own admission, the tortures were extremely violent. Under their effect, one of the Americans indicated the location of a radio transmitter in the Bd Suchet. Berger [a German police officer] and Combiér visited the premises [...] Berger visited the basement and came back with the transmitter” [PAFG, statement of facts, p. 25].

All these facts show that the Germans interrogated people in order to obtain useful information in their struggle against the enemy.

Violence does not include just talk

In this climate, a person who agreed to talk was not seriously harmed (he might receive a few blows). A flagrant example was that of Armand Crahes. On 29 July 1944 towards 23 hours, the man was apprehended in passing the cafe in which Resistance members were meeting. At the “French auxiliaries of the Gestapo” trial, he was questioned by the President of the Tribunal:

“THE PRESIDENT. – They arrested you, then took you to Blois. They interrogated you at Blois?

M. CRAHES. – At Blois, Combiér interrogated me with Jouaire.

THE PRESIDENT. – How were you interrogated? Did they beat you?

M. CRAHES. – Yes, they beat me.

THE PRESIDENT. – On what part of the body?

M. CRAHES. – I got hit in the face with a fist [...] [PAFG, hearing of 1 March 1947, p. 212].

This blow was enough to break the witness, who betrayed a *maquisard*: the nephew of the gardener for whom he worked (see below). From this time onwards, not only was A. Crahes no longer beaten, but he was finally released:

“M. CRAHES – I was arrested on 29 [July 1944] and I got out on 7 August [...] The Gestapo got me out of jail and released me” [*Ibid.*, pp. 212-3].

No violence in minor matters

Case of the editor in chief of a clandestine newspaper

Let us also state that in minor affairs (local sabotage, dissemination of anti-German leaflets), the persons interrogated were not generally tortured, even if they gave no information. Under the occupation, in Paris, the Russian editor of an anti-German newspaper was arrested with three of his collaborators. He was interrogated during the “Georgia Gestapo trial” by the President of the Tribunal:

“THE PRESIDENT. – [...] Were you violently mistreated during your stay [in German hands] or were you treated appropriately?

M. BORISSOF. – Not too well. I was beaten at the time of my arrest and when I got taken to the Rue de Varenne, they stuck a gun hard in my ribs, I could feel it for several weeks” [PGG, dossier 9, p. 125].

Of course, it is painful to be struck upon justified arrest and to have a gun jammed in your ribs, but this is not what most people imagine when they think of “torture”.

Case of the depot at Vaize (Lyon)

In another case, at Lyon, *attentats* and sabotage had been committed at the depot at Vaize, damaging several locomotives. H. Oberschmuckler was assigned to interrogate the workers. At his trial, he testified as follows;

“THE WITNESS [Marcel Renni]. – Yes, he conducted the interrogation.

THE PRESIDENT. – According to what you said, he was very hard and arrogant?

[Government commissioner] Reboul. – You didn't see any brutalities?

THE WITNESS. – No.

[...] THE PRESIDENT. – And you did not see him commit any brutalities?

THE WITNESS. – No [PGG, dossier 8, pp. 149 et 151].

“THE PRESIDENT. – What happened? Did he commit any brutalities against you?

THE WITNESS [Paul Chivre]. – No. He didn't touch me. He interrogated me very hard. I was the head of service when the bomb explosion occurred. He tried to make me confess, but without touching me. He wanted to know whether I knew who might have done it [...]. He tried to make me confess by the force of words” [*Ibid.*, pp. 152 and 154).

Another Resistance member interrogated without violence

Sometimes, even Resistance members arrested in more serious cases were not tortured, either. Xavier Alessandrini resisted with his two sons. A search conducted after a denunciation permitted the discovery on his premises of “stamps used to make fake ID cards” (PLB, 7, p. 65). The men was arrested and sent for interrogation. He later declared:

“[...] I was interrogated by Dr Sam, a German. I have no complaints about my interrogation at the hands of this person” [*Ibid.*].

Finally, no one was arrested.

Brutalities committed when the person under arrest refused to talk

On the other hand, those who obstinately refused to talk in more serious affairs were beaten, sometimes very seriously.

This is confirmed by an arrested person

During the investigation stage of the “Neuilly Gestapo Trial”, the young man under arrest, Jacques Labussière (born in 1923), declared:

“The arrested patriots were taken to 93 Rue Lauriston, where they were interrogated. They only remained at the service a day at most [...].

“When the suspects refused to answer, they were hit, and I often saw men with swollen faces as a result of blows received” [PBL, 1, p. 38]. It should be noted that at the hearing, J. Labussière only spoke of one person he saw in this condition” [“M. LABUSSIÈRE. – I saw one person, frankly”] (PBL, 2, p. 98). Nevertheless, this minimization at the hearing does not appear very credible to me.

Case of the Bisson couple

It is indisputably true. Thus, after A. Crahes betrayed the nephew of the gardener for whom he worked, auxiliaries de la German police visited the gardener concerned. He was M. Bisson. At the trial held in 1947, we learn the following (emphasis added):

“Bisson and his wife were badly mistreated *because they refused to reveal their nephew’s hiding place*. Bisson was taken away by the Gestapo of Blois, where he was interrogated and beaten by Jouaire, was incarcerated at the jail in Blois, where he was released on 10 August by the Resistance” [PAFG, statement of facts, p. 20].

It is clear: M. Bisson was subjected to far harder treatment than A. Crahes because he refused to talk...

Abundance of examples

There are many examples of this kind, which show that people were beaten because they obstinately refused to talk. The following are a few examples (emphasis added):

Charles Caron, arrested for suspected acts of resistance:

“Caron was interrogated for five days by Martin and his agents under the accusation of being a Communist, and, *as he refused to answer*, he was struck violently each time” [PGN, 1, p. 19].

Confirmation at the hearing by the witness himself:

“THE PRESIDENT. – Was it because they failed to obtain the desired information from you?

THE WITNESS. – Not at all [?]: I didn’t speak” (PGN, 4, p. 75).]

Alfred Sirot, arrested on 20 July 1943:

“I was interrogated on 23 July 1943. *Since I wouldn’t answer* their questions, they tortured me. They broke a rib and my lower jaw” [IMT, XXXVII, 273.]

Francisser Guilbert, arrested on 23 September 1943 for weapons trafficking (a search of his premises found nothing):

“*Since I wouldn’t confess anything*, they beat me with a rubber truncheon and a whip, they broke two of my teeth. They even went so

far as to give me the bathtub treatment fully dressed, brought me back all wet and left in that condition for three days and three nights” [*Ibid.*, p. 277].

Marcel Rémy, arrested on 2 May 1944 for acts of resistance:

“*Since I wouldn’t tell them anything*, they undressed me and gave me the bathtub treatment [...]. *Since I still wouldn’t say anything*, they untied me and I was placed on my stomach again” [*Ibid.*, p. 285].

Henri Phegnon, an insurance agent at Vernouillet (Seine & Oise) and head of the local Resistance group, arrested on 1 December 1943:

“THE WITNESS – [...] Since I was the head of the Resistance at Vernouillet, they wanted to know the names of my comrades. *Since I wouldn’t answer*, they beat me with whips on the head, and they held my head under water five or six times in a row” [PGN, 5, p. 90].

Joguer, member of the Mithridate Resistance network, was arrested at his home:

“The Gestapo agents proceeded with my interrogation and beat me violently *because he refused to talk*” [PAFG, statement of facts, p. 11].

Above, I spoke of a young Russian arrested with a hand towel containing tracts hostile to the German army, who was wounded when he attempted to flee, and was transported to the Hôpital de la Pitié. Summoned as a witness at the “Georgia Gestapo Trial”, he testified:

“M. NOVO BOROWSKY. – [...] At the entry of la Pitié, the man who had arrested me and beaten me while asking me the same questions over and over again from the very beginning, that is, to try to obtain information. Obviously, *I refused to give them the information they wanted*. I gave them one or two absolutely invented phrases; that it was somebody called Jacquot who gave me the papers (Jacquot did not exist, of course).

After a quarter of an hour, they quit hitting me. He spat in my face. He told me I wasn’t telling the truth, they would leave me without medical treatment, etc.” [PGG; dossier 12, p. 45/3]

Another case: Joël, a Jew, aka Henri Boucher, aka The Boxer, was a Resistance member in Paris. He “manufactured fake German stamps for the Resistance” [PGG, statement of facts, p. 126bis]. Agents set a trap for him by pretending to be Resistance members wanting a stamp. Joël was arrested.

“Taken to Rue de Londres, [he] was interrogated, struck and even tortured, then handed over to the Germans” (*Ibid.*, p. 126). “Terrile and Sautet subjected Joël to all kinds of torture for two hours” (*Ibid.*, p. 131). “Joël ended up with a very bad cut on the scalp” [*Ibid.* See also PGG, dossier 6, p. 32:

“THE PRESIDENT. – When you saw him, did you think he had been mistreated?

GAMMA. – His face was a little bit swollen”, PGG, dossier 12, p. 26:

“THE GOVERNMENT COMMISSIONER. – For the Joël case to make such an impression on you, the tortures to which he was subjected must have been horrible, isn’t that it?

HELENE DE TRANZE. – He was a boy who had been beaten”.

Interrogated at the “Georgia Gestapo Trial”, the former secretary H. de Tranze explained the reasons for his mistreatment as follows:

“THE PRESIDENT. – [...] Was he savagely tortured and beaten? Was he savagely brutalized?

HELENE DE TRANZE [who had been in the next office]. – He was beaten [...]. I heard the questions they were asking him. *Joël refused to answer.*

THE PRESIDENT. – And *when he refused to answer*, what did you hear?

HELENE DE TRANZE. – He was beaten” [PGG, dossier 6, p. 48-9].

Another interesting case: the Resistance members of the Lelong chateau

Let us now mention the case of a château owned by a Mlle Lelong, in which French auxiliaries of the German police apprehended an entire Resistance group. Among them was a certain M. Vernazobres, arrested while speaking for the *maquis* [“they gave us the impression that they knew perfectly well that we were there for the purpose of joining the *maquis*” (PAFG, hearing of 1 March 1947, p. 54)]. He later declared:

“M. VERNAZOBRES. – He tried to make us say that we were really in the *maquis*, or that we were going to join the *maquis*. He interrogated us on this more than anything else, that’s what interested him most.

THE PRESIDENT. – And he hit you because you wouldn’t answer.

M. VERNAZOBRES. – Exactly” [*Ibid.*, p. 56].

M. Vernazobres was then taken to Rue des Saussaies:

“There were two people in uniform there, two Germans, who interrogated me when my turn came before going into another room. Obviously, they asked me all sorts of questions to try to find out if we were in the *maquis*, what we were doing, they tried to make us confess and, later, seeing that he wasn’t getting anywhere, they told me: ‘Old boy,

you're going to do like your friends, you're going to go over to the other side, to the other interrogation'.

"There were two civilians, two Germans, one of them took his jacket off and started hitting me with a whip [...] asking me to tell him the exact day of our arrival and what we intended to do, what we were doing, and what we were going to do. Obviously, I told him we were there on holiday, we were going camping, in the end, just any story, but he kept after us, me and my cousin [.]. We fell down, we got up, etc." [*Ibid.*, p. 57].

Proof that Gestapo agents did not hit people for fun, but to make them talk. Before proceeding with an interrogation, they warned the person that it would be better to talk. Mlle Olga Ramette was arrested or assisting the departure of young people for the *maquis*. In her cell was another arrested Resistance member, M. Faucon:

"Mlle RAMETTE. – At a given moment, I saw someone from the Gestapo come and tell M. Faucon: 'You have to admit what you know. If you don't talk, you'll find out what it will cost you. I have one piece of advice to give you, talk' " [PGG, dossier 12, p. 18].

Similar advice was given to Mlle Lelong. Once arrested with her companions from the Resistance, this young person was locked up in a room with her friend Paul Porestin. She later testified as follows:

"Mlle LELONG. – [Beller told me] in a gentle tone: 'If you talk, I promise you will not be beaten, but if you don't talk, he will be beaten in front of you and then he'll be shot'. Obviously, I had nothing to say. Then, we were insulted in the grossest terms: "Slut", "trash", everything you can imagine, and very badly beaten with fists, kicks to the stomach, slaps.

"THE PRESIDENT. – You personally were beaten, with kicks in the stomach, by Beller.

Mlle LELONG. – By Beller. And then he turned to my comrade Paul Morestin and told him the same things: 'I really don't like hitting you, and I promise I will stop if you tell the truth'. This lasted two hours. And seeing that Paul Morestin had nothing to say, any more than I did, he hit him very hard, knocking him down, with fists and kicks to the face, in a really atrocious way" [PAFG, hearing of 1 March 1947, deposition of Jacqueline Lelong, p. 4].

The nature of the Resistance required the use of violence

I admire the courage of those persons who, through an action which they believed to be right, kept silent under blows. But at the same time, I refuse to blame those who dished out those same blows. The reason is

simple: at Nuremberg, the prosecution itself did not dispute the fact that the Resistance members could be sentenced to death and executed as *francs-tireurs* [snipers, illegal combatants]. What they criticized the Germans for was for “torturing” them before – sometimes – shooting them. In his opening address before the Tribunal, the French prosecutor declared:

“To be sure, the members of the Resistance rarely complied with the conditions laid down by the Hague Conventions, which would qualify them to be considered as regular combat forces; they could be sentenced to death as francs-tireurs and executed. But they were assassinated without trial in most cases, often after having been terribly tortured” [IMT V, 405].

The message was therefore as follows: “You can execute them, but you mustn’t torture them”. But this is forgetting that, faced with the Resistance, the Germans were confronted with what tacticians call “asymmetrical warfare”; that is, a war in which the weapons used on the two sides are of a radically different nature: a well-equipped, well-disciplined army, therefore enjoying great striking power, opposed to small groups compensating for their poor weaponry with extreme mobility, fighting in the shade (no uniforms, underground and, above all, taking the initiative in action). Under the Occupation, the need for secrecy was such that Article 3 of Circular Letter no. 2 published by the Resistance declared:

“Any person requesting admission into the *maquis* de la Résistance [...] will maintain the most absolute secrecy as to the situation of the hiding places, the identity of the leaders and his or her comrades. He knows that any violation of this prohibition will be punished by death” [source: P. Henriot, *Et s’ils débarquaient?* (Editions du Centre d’études de l’Agence Inter-France, 1943), p. 268].

It follows that, for the regular army, the only possible response consists of gathering sufficient information in order to: a) prevent surprise attacks; b) dismantle the secret networks. To accomplish this aim requires infiltration, and, when the chance arises to arrest a member of these clandestine organizations, to get the maximum amount of information out of him or her (names of accomplices and leaders, meeting places, weapons cache locations, forthcoming plans of action...). In this case, if “normal interrogation” proves unsuccessful, it will be necessary to use more “severe” methods of interrogation.

And when the combat is transformed into a desperate struggle for survival, when a person fighting the Resistance is also, at the same time, surrounded on all sides, attacked simultaneously on two (and even three fronts) and threatened indeed promised with total destruction

and degradation in the event of military defeat, then “third degree” methods of interrogation may rapidly degenerate into torture sessions if the person under questioning refuses to talk. Putting it crudely, those are the rules of the game... If this is not what you want, you must not reject those rules by triggering an illegal war, a life and death struggle.

It should be recalled that on 20 July 1944, in answer to D. Eisenhower who, in a unilateral declaration, had described the Resistance members as regular soldiers, the German commander-in-chief for the West warned:

“If the Allied Supreme Command wishes this barbarous kind of warfare, so be it. But it should be borne in mind that in this case, the combat will be carried on with the same means on both sides” [source: Otto Abetz, *Histoire d'un politique franco-allemande, 1930-1950. Mémoires d'un Ambassadeur* (ed. Stock, 1953), p. 312.]

It is therefore absolutely dishonest to attribute the violence suffered by Resistance members to “Nazi sadism”. Most of the time, German agents did not act out of sadism; they acted to extract information required for the supreme struggle.

Conclusion

Sixty years afterwards, the official history provides a completely false picture of the Gestapo. Manipulating the Nuremberg judgment, it presents it as an assembly of criminals sowing terror starting in 1933 in Germany, then in the occupied counties starting in 1939-40.

The Gestapo, we are told, took charge of suppressing all opposition, even if only potential. To carry out this mission, it maintained a network of informers, arrested people arbitrarily, tortured them, sent to concentration camps, shot them, etc. Its victims numbered in the tens of thousands.

As usual, whenever the question of Hitler's Germany is involved, the image created results from a skillful illumination of the scene. Only one part of the stage is lit up, while the rest of the stage is plunged into darkness, which makes it possible to conceal any disturbing facts. Concerning the creation of the Gestapo, they conceal the real condition of Germany in January 1933: the terrible economic crisis, the bankruptcy of parliamentary government, the paralysis of the institutions, the real danger of Bolshevism. Thus, people are condemned never to understand why, once in power, the National Socialists swept away the Weimar Republic, restricted individual liberties and put together a secret police which was to defend the new regime – which was still quite weak – against the revolutionary danger.

At the time, only energetic action could save Germany from death by economic asphyxia, and, consequently the danger of Bolshevism. Hitler did not hesitate to take such action. The immense majority of the German people understood why and followed him, too happy to find a future worthy of the name. For this reason, far from constituting an instrument of terror, the Gestapo was a perfectly ordinary political police force, with relatively modest means, such as such a police force had already existed under the Weimar Republic and such as exists in practically all countries. In 1939, moreover, only 0.05% of the German population was interned for political reasons.

The fact that, until the war, the Gestapo acted like a perfectly ordinary police force was so obvious that, at Nuremberg, the judges declared it a “criminal association” starting in 1939 only. For sixty years, however, historians have been concealing this basic fact.

Does this limitation mean that the IMT judgment was justified? I don't think so. Since, for the period from 1940 to 1945, the judges also

based their judgments on an image created using a scene which was only partially illuminated. In particular, they neglected the fact that starting on 3 September 1939, Germany was fighting a life and death struggle, and, starting in 1942, this struggle became a desperate struggle between the three greatest world powers. At this time, the Reich was encircled everywhere, subject to a pitiless blockade and under attack on two fronts. Caught up in the whirlwind of fire, could it permit citizens of the occupied countries to rise up and carry on an illegal war behind the front lines? Obviously not. This illegal war was a systematic one: faced with a regular occupation army, small, lightly armed groups arose, with one in great strength. To combat them, it was necessary to obtain the necessary information at any cost: names of the leaders, locations of secret meeting places, planned coming actions, hidden arms locations, etc. This is why the interrogations of arrested Resistance members very quickly became violent if they refused to talk.

Since 1945, the conquerors have attributed these tortures to “Nazi barbarism”; they depict them as a logical consequence of “Nazism”, which is said to have negated all morality. They are wrong; these acts of violence were due to the nature of the illegal war undertaken against the occupant. When the principal weapon is the absence of information which the enemy possesses about you, it is a matter of course that the enemy will gather the information required. And if the struggle becomes a desperate struggle for life and death, it will become necessary to beat and torture people to obtain the information required. It is inevitable, and the fault comes back in the first place to those who start a war of extermination.

Let us stress nevertheless that the Allied victors very often exaggerate when they denounce the “tortures” of which the Gestapo is said to have been guilty. Without doubt there were horrible cases; but contrary to what is claimed, in the immense majority of cases, the occupant and his agents did not go anywhere near as far as they could. Of course, they beat people, they water boarded them, they hung them by their hands or feet, they whipped people etc., but only in matters considered serious and when the individual under arrest refused to speak. They didn’t torture everybody, they didn’t even need to. Let us stress that they moreover spared women, wives and children as much as possible. Major Loranger’s allegations concerning the systematic undressing of women and the abortions caused by beatings are baseless.

Finally, it should be noted that contrary to a tenacious legend, the German police services did not beat people arbitrarily, far from it. The postwar trials are highly revealing in this regard: of the 57 cases linked

to the struggle against the Resistance for which the defendants were tried, 53, at least, concerned prisoners who were incontestably guilty. This proportion alone is sufficient to refute any allegation of arbitrariness.

The Gestapo was therefore an ordinary political police force responsible, first of all, for preventing and repressing actions hostile to the State. Later, in the occupied territories, it had the mission of combating an illegal war. The excesses which it may have committed – and which it did commit – are not the consequence of “Nazi sadism”, but, rather of the context in which it was compelled to act, the context of a struggle of life and death. The fault is not then Hitler’s, but those who, to destroy his regime, unleashed a war of extermination in 1939. These were the true “barbarians”.

OTHER ARTICLES

The Truth About Oradour-sur-Glane (Oradour: A Counter-Investigation)

[Subtitles to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MSfDKCKUs2c>]

The death of women and children is always a tragedy. Oradour-sur-Glane, of course, is no exception.

Everyone is saddened at the thought of young lives cut brutally short... innocent victims of a conflict which they did not understand.

For the immense majority of today's public, there is no dispute about what happened: on the morning of 10 June 1944, Oradour was a peaceful, happy little village.

But that same evening, after the passage of a Waffen-SS company, Oradour was in ruins, with hundreds of bodies lying among smoking ruins. To most people, this is enough for us to be able to identify the criminals: the "Nazi hordes". This may seem a reasonable deduction.

But if we examine the tragedy step by step, we find ourselves faced with a riddle, only the first and last stages of which are known with certainty.

Everything else we know, or think we know, was determined by after-the-fact investigation, perhaps distorted, perhaps entirely mistaken. There is not enough clarity about what actually happened. This is why we believe in the need for a counter-inquiry.

If, for any reason, you *want* to believe the theory which has been commonly accepted since 1944; if you believe that the Waffen SS were solely responsible for the tragedy and that their guilt is not subject to question, then stop watching right now. This is not for you.

But if you believe it is possible to doubt; if you think the sole guilt of the Waffen SS can be questioned, then you are invited to a counter-inquiry on the tragedy of Oradour. To that end, we are going to adopt a traditional method of inquiry, rather as depicted in a detective drama like "Inspector Columbo". Here we are at the scene of the crime; teams of technicians have already conducted an initial investigation, interrogating the first witnesses. This is the information which will serve as the basis for our inquiry.

In particular, we will study the physical evidence, without regard for the political context (in this case, the Occupation), or the identity of the presumed culprits (here, the Waffen SS), so as to understand what could have happened.

The facts as presented

The standard version of the facts is as follows:

“In the early afternoon, the peaceful village of Oradour is suddenly surrounded by troops from the Waffen SS. Everyone at work in the fields is herded into the centre of town.

“The whole population is then corralled in the town square (known as the ‘Fair Ground’) on the pretext of examining their identity documents. The men are separated from the women and children, who are taken to the church.

“The men are divided into six groups and taken to the biggest garages or barns in Oradour, where German machine gunners are waiting.

“In just a few seconds, at 4:00 P.M., the men are suddenly shot to death, without ever understanding why. Some of the victims are finished off with pistol shots to the head. The bodies are sprinkled with inflammable liquid and the buildings in which they were killed are set on fire, along with the surrounding houses. Five men, just five, barely escape with their lives from the Laudy barn.

“At 5 P.M., it is the turn of the women and children (400 people) are crammed together in the little church. In the midst of the crowd, in the middle of the building, the Germans place a chest, from which a fuse protrudes. The fuse is then lit by the Germans. The chest is intended to asphyxiate the victims. Instead, it explodes, shattering the stained glass windows. The attempted asphyxiation proves a failure, the Germans begin firing on the women and children.” (Bullet holes are still visible in the interior walls of the church today). One woman, Madame Rouffanche, succeeds in escaping through a stained glass window, followed by another woman and her baby. The baby’s cries alert the Germans, and all three are machine gunned. Madame Rouffanche alone, though wounded, survives by hiding in a row of green peas in the presbytery garden.”

It should be added that, according to information obtained during the initial inquiry, the Waffen SS are also said to have burnt the women and children to death inside the church, causing a fire, which spread throughout the building.

This stamp – issued in October 1945 – depicts the official version of the event.

The counter-inquiry

The objective of our inquiry is to confirm or disprove this version of the facts. To this end, we will use photos taken at the time. First, we will:

1) study the condition of the bodies when they were found, and, secondly,

2) draw up an inventory of the premises after the tragedy.

This information should permit us to formulate some preliminary hypotheses concerning the actual course of event on this tragic 10 June. Then – and only then – will we concern ourselves with the various eyewitness testimonies.

The first thing to do, therefore, is to open our eyes and look around.

The physical evidence

The condition of the bodies

Let's begin by examining the bodies of the men. There are not very many photographs in the public domain and we do not know exactly where they were taken. But let's count them.

This body is burnt beyond recognition. It totally unrecognizable.

Same remark for these three bodies. Note, as well, in the foreground, the missing extremity (a foot). The visible face has neither features, nor hair, nor lips, hence the visibility of the teeth.

This last body confirms what we just said. The face is unrecognizable, the flesh has been totally burnt away, a foot is missing... All these bodies were obviously destroyed by fire.

These are the remains of a crew member of a Hercules C-130, an Army transport plane which crashed in Iraq. The body was exposed to very violent combustion for a very long period of time and was discovered in the debris, in its entirety, although one extremity is missing, totally destroyed by fire. The clothes have disappeared and the flesh is entirely burnt away.

Here is another crew member of the same air plane. The facial features and hair have completely disappeared, rendering identification difficult or impossible. The flames have devoured the lips, hence the visibility of the teeth.

The bodies you see now are those of prisoners who died in the gigantic prison fire in Honduras in February 2012. Unable to escape from the building, they were trapped in the burning building for a very long time, hence the characteristics typical of death by fire.

The striking similarity between the victims of death by fire and the bodies of the men killed at Oradour leave very little room for doubt. The official theory is correct when it says that the bodies of the male villagers were exposed to fire for a long period of time.

Having said this, now let's examine the bodies of the women and children taken found in the church.

What is immediately striking is that their shoes are intact. These are not shoes which have been exposed to very violent combustion for several hours.

This same photo, circled in red, shows that a great many other shoes and/or other extremities also remain intact, that is, without any trace of having been exposed to fire. What is more, these are not entire bodies, but rather, fragments of bodies.

Same remark for this photo. The shoes and legs, circled in yellow, are completely intact. Stockings, circled in red, are still clearly visible on both legs. Finally, circled in green, we see the fragment of the body of a little girl whose dress is intact.

Now look at this poor little boy. His clothes are intact, his hair is still there, and so is his ear.

Here's the same body from another angle. His shorts are perfectly intact, but the flesh on his legs is carbonised and his shoes have been superficially burned. Death seems to have been caused by the fact that his head was blown partially off. No ordinary fire could do that. Whatever the cause, it must have been very violent, and very quick at the same time. And that's not all:

The short pants and sandals of this other little boy are also intact.

This poor little boy has been literally cut in half.

This little girl was also cut in two. But her shoes are still there, including the laces (yellow arrow). There, again, how can we believe that an ordinary fire could ever do that? Note as well that the shoes are intact (yellow arrow) and so is the hand of the body lying immediately adjacent (green arrow).

As to these other victims, they were found in the state of human fragments.

This little baby is no exception.

Their arms and legs have been torn off, pulverized.

These poor fragments were transported in carts and buried in common graves. It is obvious that the women and children didn't die of

the same causes as the men. Therefore, let us look at a selection of other bodies killed in various other ways.

This is a soldier killed by an explosion during the First World War. His legs have been blown off, but his uniform is intact and his face is perfectly intact and can easily be identified.

This is the body of a man whose head was blown off during a bombing attack in Pakistan. Note that the clothing is intact and that the flesh – which can easily be seen, in the region of the abdomen – is still intact.

This other body is that of an Iraqi insurgent killed by the accidental explosion of his own bomb in 2006. Once again, with the exception of the left leg, all the extremities have been blown off, but his clothing, and all flesh and body parts not directly destroyed by the explosion, is still there.

The body of this woman – killed in the explosion of a German artillery shell during the First World War – shows the manner in which explosions can cause horrible mutilations but no burns. Here, the body has literally been cut in half, but the hair is still there.

Finally, to help us understand the photos of the victims at Oradour, is this victim of a double bombing attack in Karashi (Pakistan) on 5 February 2010. The sandals are intact.

The bodies which we've just seen were badly mutilated, even torn to pieces, of course, but their clothing is still there, the facial features (if the head can be found) are recognizable and intact; so is the hair. Therefore, the conclusion is obvious: the bodies of the women and children in the church were killed by one or more powerful explosions. These are not the victims of people killed in a violent fire where they were trapped in the flames for several hours.

To get a clearer idea, let's visit the church and examine the ruins.

The ruins of the church

This is the church of Oradour before the tragedy.

Here is the church afterwards. What is immediately striking is that the roof has completely disappeared. This seems to indicate a generalized conflagration – a fire like this one, that destroyed an American church, blowing off the roof and roof cladding. But let's not jump to conclusions.

This is the collegiate church of Nivelles after a bombardment in May 1940. It was hit by several bombs and the building was shaken by explosions, which blew off the main roofs. The resemblance with the church at Oradour is undeniable.

This is the church of Saint-Gildas des Bois, in Loire-Atlantique. On 12 August 1944, a bomb fell almost vertically down the steeple, after which the steeple was shaken by an explosion inside the building.

Compare this photo of the church at Oradour taken from a similar angle. The resemblance between these two steeples is so striking that it is easy to imagine that the interior of the church at Oradour was also shaken by an explosion.

This hypothesis is supported, moreover, by one fact. Look at this side of the steeple taken after the tragedy. I've drawn circles around the apertures. There is no trace of soot on them.

Same comment with regards to the other side.

Same comment here, too. The distinctive trace of black smoke originated from the fire in the little lean-to shop next to the steeple. The fire caused the roughcast to collapse where it was exposed to the flames. It also caused this trace of black soot.

I will finish with the only known photograph of the fourth side of the steeple after the tragedy. The two openings are indicated by red arrows. There is no trace of soot here, either. The two brown arrows show the trace of the roof of the nave.

Note once again the absence of soot, indicating, perhaps, that the roof was blown off by several explosions.

The openings in the steeple show no trace of soot.

Now, if the Germans – as claimed by Mme Rouffanche – had really set fire to the church by placing combustible materials (chairs, sticks, etc.) on top of the bodies of the women and children, the fire would have reached the steeple by spreading upwards.

And if we claim – with Stone Poitevin – that the Germans climbed up into the steeple and placed their mysterious “incendiary pellets” in the steeple, the spiral staircase would have taken them no further than the base of the steeple. This is why they would have had to place their incendiary pellets there, at the bottom, in which case the fire would have started there, before spreading towards the roof.

The smoke, therefore, would have exited the only openings available for quite some time – the openings pierced during the construction of the steeple. So there should be some soot, as was the case, for example, at Chevry, in Ain, where the church burnt on 7 May 2012.

This is confirmed by this other view of the steeple. Since the roof did not collapse at all, the smoke was forced to exit via the openings, leaving extensive traces of soot on the walls.

The film you're about to see shows the church at Vaaler, Norway, after it was destroyed by arson. The fire started at ground level before spreading upwards.

Look at the steeple. The interior was destroyed by fire, but the roof hasn't caved in at all. This means that the smoke had to exit via whatever openings were available.

It is even more obvious on these photos, since the fire has spread much further. It would take a very long time, many minutes, for the roof to collapse, after which the flames and smoke could then exit vertically.

Of course, different parts of Oradour were subjected to fires of greater or lesser intensity, as attested to by the trail of black soot indicated on the photo by the red arrow. But it is undeniable that these were not the principal causes of the destruction of the building.

The appearance of the steeple shows that one or more explosions shook the church on 10 June 1944. This hypothesis is also supported by another fact.

The ridge tile cross

At the very top of the steeple (circled in blue), you will see what is called a ridge tile cross. Above it, indicated by a green arrow, was a thin brass hollow sphere; below it, indicated by a red arrow, is lower, larger one, also hollow, and also of thin brass.

This cross is still visible inside the ruins of the church. The green arrow indicates the location of the upper sphere (which has disappeared) while the red arrow indicates the lower one. Let's move closer.

Here, indicated by green arrows, are the four metal bars used to fasten the cross to the top of the steeple. The sphere, which was hollow, is in very poor condition. But it is still there; it is only dented. Despite the thinness of its constituent material, it did not melt. This is very important, since, look at the inside of the church.

In this case, the fire reached the roof and burnt the base of the ridge tile cross for a very, very long time. In this case, the cross was of stone.

But what would happen to a sphere of thin hollow brass? Subjected to extreme heat through the air and through thermal radiation, surely it would have melted.

This same thin sphere is perfectly visible today: cut in half and badly dented, of course, but it shows no signs of melting.

The ridge tile cross was not exposed to a blazing inferno for hours, that is obvious. So what happened?

Perhaps it was ejected from the building during the explosion of the steeple. According to this theory, it was broken in half and got dented when it hit the ground.

Thus, the condition of the ridge cross is consistent with the hypothesis of an explosion, but not a generalized conflagration.

The partially melted church bells

Now let's enter the church. The steeple was accessed by way of the square in front of the church. The first thing we see is the two melted church bells. In one of them, the hammer of the bell itself melted and hardened into the melted bronze of the bell itself, forming one solid mass.

But church bells do not melt when the steeple burns. This is a photo of the Victory Tower in the Parliament building at Ottawa, destroyed by fire on 3 February 1916. Despite the fire, the bell rang every hour, until midnight, while the whole area was ravaged by flames. The bell fell to earth just after midnight but it didn't melt.

Here it is, today, after restoration. Though rusted and in bad condition, the bell survived the fire.

This church was in Ohio, was totally destroyed by fire on 16 August 2012.

But the bell survived the fire in this case as well. Here it is, among the ruins.

The two bells you see here are from the church of The Holy Trinity, in Downton, Indiana. The church was almost entirely destroyed by fire in 1975. The bells are cracked, even broken in places, but not melted.

This is the church bell from the old Cathedral de Notre Dame de Bon Port, destroyed on 8 May 1902 during the eruption of the Mount Pelée, a volcano.

Despite the thick cloud of burning vapours and the ensuing fire, it was merely deformed somewhat, before falling to earth and being torn in half longitudinally.

This is the St Mary's Church at Lübeck, destroyed during an English aerial bombardment in late March 1942.

The church bells fell and broke in half when they hit the ground, but they didn't melt. Having said that, here is an article dedicated to the fire which destroyed the church at Brunehamel, Aisne, France, in 1996. In this case, we see a small church bell, only the upper part of which has disappeared as a result of melting.

Another interesting church bell is the bell from the old Plantation House Depaz on the island of Martinique, entirely destroyed during the eruption of Mount Pelée.

As at Brunehamel, the top of the bell has disappeared while the lower part is intact, so perfectly that you can read the inscriptions.

I explain this fact as follows: on the screen, to the left, is a cross-section of a church bell. The red indicates the thickness of the metal. We see that the greater proportion of the mass is located towards the bottom of the bell.

This is a church bell installed in a steeple. The large piece of wood holding the bell in place is called a “sheep”. What would happen if the steeple were destroyed by fire?

The church bell absorbs heat from all sides by thermal radiation, as a result of which the bronze will get hot. But since the bronze is much thinner towards the top of the bell, the top of the bell will be the first to lose its mechanical properties.

After a certain amount of time, the bell will fracture towards the middle of the bell, since the bottom of the bell is much heavier, causing the bottom part to fall to the ground. In some cases, the impact of the fall itself will cause the fragment to roll away from the fire; hence, the bottom part of the bell will be found intact, while the top part will have disappeared.

There is none of this at Oradour. There is almost nothing left of the two church bells which originally existed in the steeple on 10 June 1944, except for the two fragments of the bottom edges, circled here in red and black.

As may be seen here, these two fragments correspond to a very small part of the bell, compared to the bell as a whole.

Some people will object that there were two church bells in the steeple at Oradour. The diagram on the screen (seen from above) shows that when the fire was raging at full strength, and the thermal radiation (symbolised by the orange arrows) reached the church bells, there was nevertheless a small area (marked in blue) where this radiation was less intense. This could explain the continued existence of a small part of the base. The argument is pertinent to the problem, but is contradicted by three other facts:

The fragments of church bells which still remain are too big compared to the zone of lesser thermal intensity.

If we inspect the small, highly visible fragment, we will see that the edges are soft and rounded, an indication of melting.

Compare that with the edge of this church bell from the Plantation House Depaz in Martinique. This bell shows very marked angles, caused by metal fracture.

This is even clearer with the church bells from Lübeck. The angles are clearly marked and the surfaces are rough. Here, again, there is a fracture.

At Oradour, what we see is not a fracture, but a rather clear-cut border between the melted areas the areas remaining intact. What does this indicate? I'll explain.

The blue rectangle at the top of the screen represents a metal bar at ambient temperature. If you heat it, energy will be added to the bar. The temperature of the bar will rise at the point directly exposed to the source of heat, and this heat will be evacuated in two ways: by heat loss towards the exterior (left-hand arrow) and by conduction inside the component material of the bar (right-hand arrow). This conduction means that, after a while, the entire bar will be hot, although it has only been heated at one end. If the heating is not very violent, the bar will cool down without undergoing the slightest change as soon as the source of heat is withdrawn.

On the other hand, if the fire is more violent, not all the stored energy can be evacuated. The proportion evacuated by conduction will cause a rise in the temperature inside the bar. The remaining surplus heat will destroy the internal structure of the metal, which will begin to melt. When the source of heat is withdrawn, the bar will cool down, but clearly visible traces of melting will to some extent remain.

The total melting of one end of the bar without melting any of the rest of the bar would require a very, very powerful fire. The energy it would give off would be so great that a large part of the heat could not be evacuated, causing the rapid melting of the end of the bar. The rapidity of the phenomenon would mean that the heat would hardly have time to flow off along the bar by conduction. This would result in a rather clear dividing line between the area which has been destroyed (or has disappeared) and the area which has been preserved. The problem is that it is very difficult, or even impossible, to achieve such intense heat using nothing but wood for fuel (which would be the case inside a steeple).

Consequently, the manner in which the church bells at Oradour were destroyed may seem a mystery. What could have caused this clear dividing line between the parts of the bell which remain intact and the parts of the bell which have disappeared? The possible answer: an explosion.

In the context of our investigation, an explosion may be considered to resemble a fire which has gotten out of control. The energy is liberated immediately in the form of a shock wave (sudden increase in pressure).

Some of the energy released in this way will be absorbed by the metal, causing an almost instantaneous melting and a scattering of the molten metal. This will happen so quickly that no diffusion of heat by

conduction will occur, resulting in a very clear borderline between the part which has disappeared as a result of melting and the part remaining intact.

The condition of the church bells visible in the church at Oradour therefore confirm the theory of a violent explosion inside the steeple.

The vault of the steeple

Some people will object that if a violent explosion shook this part of the church, it would have damaged the vault as well.

But, they will then say, the vault is still perfectly visible, with its circular central opening in the dome. Of course, that is what they want to make you believe.

But look at the stones of the rib vault – circled in blue – and compare them with the ones circled in brown. You don't need to be a specialist to see that the second set of stones is modern – proof of subsequent reconstruction of at least part of the vault.

If you doubt my word, then just consult one of the first books ever published on the matter.

The author speaks of “fallen stone from the vault”. The fact that it lies on the doorstep of the church shows that it fell from the vault of the steeple.

Further along, moreover, he published a photograph which shows “stone from the vault of the collapsed steeple”. He couldn't have said it any more clearly.

The stones of the rib vaults are also visible in this other photo, as well as a fragment of church bell.

Since the vaults of the nave collapsed in November 1944, these stones can only have come from the steeple.

I might add that, in June 1945, the Government published a report issued by General Intelligence, dated 4 July 1944, on the tragedy of Oradour.

The editor clearly wrote: “the vault of the steeple which overhung the church has collapsed”.

The vault as it may be seen today is the result of a reconstruction, at least in part. Far from contradicting the theory of the explosion in the steeple, its condition on the evening of 10 June supports the contrary theory.

The nave and the choir

Now let's proceed. Here we are in the nave. At the end, the heart of the church, with its high altar.

Here we see one of the few rare photographs taken shortly after the tragedy, showing this part of the church. We see that the seats and pews used by the faithful while attending Mass have disappeared.

A photograph taken in October 1944, i.e., four months after the tragedy, shows the traces of soot below the three stained-glass windows located behind the high altar. Obvious evidence of fire. Having said that, let's go back inside.

The floor is strewn with wreckage, including many stones.

This more obvious in this other photograph. The stones on the ground are clearly visible.

Let us now consider the statue surrounded by a circle. This is the statue of the parish priest of Ars. The top of the statue has been pulverised but the bottom hasn't fallen off. What could have done that? Let's look at it from a different angle.

The projective responsible for the destruction has left quite a visible impact. The outline looks like it was made by a stone, not a bullet.

Here's what they tell you is the impact of a bullet in a stone of this church, built of Limousin granite. It is much smaller.

This must be considered proof that stones were violently projected through the church on the day of the tragedy.

Incidentally, in this brochure, published only a few months after the tragedy, we read:

“In what became of the church, large rubble stones from who knows where, litter the floor covered with ashes”. If the author was unable to discover their origins, it was because the rubble stones came from far away – too far away for a man who favored the hypothesis of arson. Having said that, let us examine the altar.

Here is the design of a traditional mass altar. I would like to draw your attention to the symmetrical nature of the object.

At Oradour, what is striking, first of all, is the widespread destruction. I am not speaking of bullet holes, but of missing parts of the church.

The wooden dais (represented in brown) ascended by the priest to say Mass. There is no trace of it. If it burned, there is no trace of black on the altar. We cannot, therefore, eliminate the hypothesis that it was destroyed by explosion. Another missing item: the left side of the tabernacle with its three arches, all in plaster. It has completely disappeared, as if blown away, pulverised. Once again, no fire could have done this. Let us go closer and consider the bullet holes.

The two impact scars framed in red could have been left by bullets. In fact, they actually resemble bullet holes in the relatively soft stone.

The central, deeper, bullet hole can be seen very clearly here, where the projectile physically struck the wall (in red here), and the periphery, which is damaged due to the impact (in yellow here).

On the other hand, the bullet holes framed in yellow rather suggest stones of different sizes which could have struck the altar. This is particularly visible on the upper level. We cannot make out a single, deeper, hole which a bullet would have left. As to the edge of the altar, the manner in which it is uniformly broken lengthwise may be surprising. We do not know what could have happened here.

Whatever the reason, if an exception be made for the exterior traces of soot above the stained-glass windows, this area hardly shows any trace of fire.

We were expecting, in particular, to find melted or partially melted religious objects (candelabra and crucifixes), which would have left small puddles of solidified molten metal.

But these objects are still quite visible in the “souvenir crypt” and there is not the slightest trace of molten metal on the altar. There are no signs of fire on the high altar.

The mystery of the sacristy

From the choir, let us enter the sacristy. To our knowledge, not one single photograph shows the interior of this part of the church, either before or after the tragedy.

The sacristy was built on two levels. Above is the sacristy properly speaking, illuminated by two windows. Below it, there is a sort of shed, which is said to have led to the outside through a door. The two levels would have to have been linked by a stairway.

Today, the floor, the stairway and the roof have disappeared.

If we believe this photo taken shortly after the tragedy, this part of the church was the focal point of a violent fire. But that’s all one can say.

The Chapel Sainte-Anne

Let us come back to the church to inspect the lateral chapels. Crossing the choir, we see the Chapel Sainte Anne.

Here we see a photo taken shortly after the tragedy.

This is the altar of St. Anne, framed in yellow. Let’s go closer.

The altar is badly damaged. The wall cladding has been removed; the interior brick is visible.

Here is the chapel as it would appear today. To the right of the stained glass window is a door which some people call the “door of martyrdom”.

The altar, to the left, is unrecognizable. Events of great violence have occurred here, that is obvious.

Let’s return to the first photograph. The area framed in red was the theatre of a fire. The white part of the wall has been licked by flames. Above, a characteristic black deposit. Could one say that the chapel was destroyed by fire? The hypothesis is pertinent, but now let’s look at a photograph taken from the outside.

This photo is not very well known. Here it is, just as I photographed it in the Archives de Haute-Vienne.

Here it is as shown in the book by Franck Delage, *Oradour. Ville Martyre*. We see the stained glass window and, on the left, this time, the frame of the “door of martyrdom”.

The original photograph, of course, shows a bit of black on the lower part of the door frame. But there is nothing, absolutely nothing, around the stained glass window. Not the slightest trace of smoke or soot.

The same is true of the inside. The walls leading to the nave (framed in yellow) look perfectly clean. The hypothesis of a violent fire to explain the condition of this chapel is therefore far from certain.

The chapel of Saint-Joseph

Having said that, let us pass by and let’s enter the chapel dedicated to Saint Joseph.

Here is something surprising: this same church – which is, after all, supposed to have been destroyed by a generalized conflagration according to the official version of events – contains a wooden altar, showing no signs of having been damaged by fire.

In his book, Stone Poitevin, who visited the church shortly after the tragedy, declares, without further explanation, that this chapel “was spared by the conflagration”. Hmm...

The Chapel of the Virgin

Let us cross the nave and enter the chapel dedicated to the Virgin. Now here’s another surprise, and a big one at that.

The confessional – of flimsy wooden construction, some parts of which are only a few millimeters thick – has survived intact.

Let us add to the fact that at the other end of the chapel, we can see that the altar of the Virgin, in plaster, is also entirely intact.

Stone Poitevin states that, in this chapel, “the draperies, the ornaments, have suffered little”. One must conclude that this corner of the church was also spared by the fire.

In his report, the Military Intelligence officer provides a general summary of the preservation of the chapel of the Virgin writing: “The left-hand part of the church has partially escaped the flames”. Let’s bear these words in mind as we conclude our physical inspection of the church.

Initial conclusions

We can sum it up this way: the red shows the areas which were the focal point of more or less powerful fires. The blue shows the areas which were spared by the flames, as well as by any other form of destruction. As regards the nave, the photos do not permit us to draw any conclusion. As for the steeple, we are inclined to favor the theory of an explosion. The initial conclusion is as follows:

The theory of the generalized conflagration, as presented since 1944, is incorrect. Of course, it is undeniable that several more or less powerful fires did occur in some areas, but these fires cannot have destroyed the building or caused the deaths of the women and children, whose bodies were obviously not burned. The women and children were obviously blown to bits by several explosions. Therefore, what happened on 10 June 1944 in the church at Oradour? Our initial hypothesis is as follows.

Several explosions shook the church at Oradour. These explosions occurred under the loft of the church and inside the steeple. No doubt there was a chain reaction in which the shock wave caused by the initial explosion caused the subsequent explosions. This hypothesis explains:

- the astonishing condition of the ridge tile cross, particularly, the condition of thin brass sphere at the base;
- the absence of soot on the level of the openings in the steeple;
- the very particular condition of the church bells, with their clear-cut borderline between the parts remaining intact and the parts which have melted; and
- the disappearance of the roof, which was blown off by the shock wave.

Interesting comparisons

The collapse of the vaults of the nave, in November 1944. Shaken by the explosions which occurred in the lofts, the weakened structures finally collapsed a few months later.

It is also interesting to compare the church at Oradour with other churches which were destroyed by bombardment – like this one, and many others. In all these cases, the bombs pierced the roof and exploded on top of the vaults, causing them to collapse.

The resemblance with what remains of the church at Oradour is striking, leading to the possible conclusion that the cause of destruction was the same in all cases. Having said that, let us return to our explosion.

The theory of the explosion and its consequences

The explosion of a shaped charge sends a powerful shock wave both upwards and downwards, i.e., as well, on the level of the vault with its circular opening.

This explains the partial or total destruction of the vault of the steeple, since some of the stones were located directly beneath.

The overheated gases caused by the explosion would have been projected downwards into the nave of the church within a fraction of a second. Large numbers of stones torn away from the vault would have been projected at great velocity in all directions. This phenomenon would have been of short duration. This explains:

- the astonishing state of preservation of the chapels of the Virgin and Saint Joseph;
- the destruction of the top of the statue of the parish priest of Ars by a stone, without damaging or destabilising the bottom part of the statue; and
- the impacts on the high altar and more particularly the pulverization of the part at the upper left.

But above all, this theory explains the condition of the bodies of the women and children which we saw in this photo. The shock wave, the projected objects and the burning gases would explain these mutilations.

This gross explosion therefore seems to constitute the cause of the tragedy. Having formulated this conclusion, let us go on to examine the eyewitness testimonies.

The testimonies

Tardy revelations and confirmations

Nine years later after the tragedy, during the Waffen SS trial in 1953, we were able to learn from a witness to whom we will return later, Mme Rouffanche, that, at one moment, “a flame entered the church”. This supports the theory of the explosion in the steeple, followed by the exceedingly powerful projection of burning gases into the nave of the church.

During the same trial, Mme Rouffanche revealed another event which had hitherto been concealed from us: a sudden explosion inside the sacristy is said to have caused the collapse of the ceiling and knocked the women and children off their feet. If this is true, then the bodies found in this area wouldn't have been burned either.

This is confirmed by police commissioner Hubert Massiera, who inspected the area shortly after the tragedy. The bodies found in the shed, he says, were not burnt.

Here, therefore, is the new diagram of the church, with an added correction for the sacristy. The theory of the generalized conflagration now seems less probable. Having said that, let's have a look at the other witnesses who arrived on the scene shortly after the tragedy.

Concerning the church, Stone Poitevin writes: “Heads were torn off the bodies, arms, legs lay all over the place, scattered around.” “A stiff hand grasps an iron ornament fastened to the high altar.” “A decapitated body is extended like a cross.”

The bishop of Limoges recalls: “We entered the church [...]; here and there were pieces of heads, legs, arms, of body trunks, a foot in a shoe”.

Commissioner of Police André Petit confirms this: “There was horror everywhere. Not a single body was intact. Some of them had been cut in two.”

These testimonies amply confirm our physical observations resulting from the photographs. But there is more.

A French railway engineer, Jean Pallier, who visited Oradour the day after the tragedy, wrote:

“It does not seem that the women and children suffered the same fate as the men, who were machine-gunned, then burned, since bodies were found in the church of people whom death had surprised in quite normal attitudes.”

An isolated testimony? No.

The men who commanded the Red Cross teams responsible for clearing away the rubble stated as follows in their report:

“Inside the partially destroyed church [...] were the remains of women and children surprised by death and burnt on the spot”.

These observations accord with the theory of a sudden explosion, which would have caused the projection of a cloud of burning gases into the nave. The women and children who happened to be inside were taken totally by surprise and many died instantly.

Having said that, let us come to Witness no. 1.

Witness no. 1: Marguerite Rouffanche

Her first known statements

According to the official theory, only one woman succeeded in escaping from the massacre in the church. This was Marguerite Rouffanche, born on 19 December 1897, 46 years old at the time of the tragedy.

Here are her *first* known statements, as they appeared in the report drawn up by Commissioner Massiera of Military Intelligence.

Massiera interviewed her shortly after the tragedy, while she was still in the hospital. Here is what she said:

“For more than an hour, we remained locked inside [in the church] without any knowledge of the fate that awaited us.

“Then, two young soldiers aged 20 to 25 years old entered the church and placed a large chest with fuses protruding on all sides, in the middle of the church; they set fire to it and thick black smoke immediately spread. Women and children began to fall down on the floor, particularly in the right nave.

“To avoid asphyxiation, I went towards the doorway of the sacristy which was located to the left of the high altar, where I rattled the door handle and beat on the door, which finally opened. I entered the sacristy with about thirty other persons. I sat on the steps of the stairway. My daughter, who was sitting by my side, was killed by a bullet from the outside, which hit her in the throat.

“I repeatedly heard the sound of machine guns shooting in the church.

“I then saw the Germans throwing chairs and kindling wood on top of the bodies lying around on the floor in the right nave, near the exit door, and setting fire to them.

“A few moments afterwards, the Germans went towards the sacristy and machine-gunned us at point blank range.

“I closed my eyes and didn’t move, to try to convince them I was dead, and I wasn’t hit by the bullets. As soon as the soldiers were gone, I went to the choir of the church; there, I saw a step ladder standing behind the high altar, and using the step ladder, I was able to reach the central window of the apse, the grillwork of which had been partially removed, and I jumped to the ground from a height of about three meters without injury.

“A young mother who was still inside the church saw me and cried to me to grab her baby; she threw it through the window which I had just exited, but I couldn’t reach him; then she herself threw it out onto the ground.

“The sound of our voices drew the attention of the German soldiers, who shot at us; I had gone ahead of the young woman and I ran away, passing behind the presbytery into a garden planted with green peas, located downhill from the church, where I was hit by several bullets. Without crying out, I allowed myself to fall to the ground where I remained until about 5:00 P.M. the next day, when it was possible for me to call for help.”

Mme Rouffanche never mentioned any explosion in her testimony. It is obvious that her account contradicts our theory. But how believable is it?

An impossible leap

Let’s begin by taking a look at Mme Rouffanche’s alleged jump from the window, performed to escape from the church.

Marked on a red X on this diagram, the stained glass window through which the only survivor of the massacre is said to have escaped. Note the height.

It is even more noticeable on this photograph. Although Mme Rouffanche is in the foreground, she seems enlarged, the extent of her jump is immediately apparent, particularly in view of the fact that she was 46 years old at the time of the tragedy.

We took a few measurements on the spot. Not only did our sole survivor fall from a height of 4 meters, but she must have collided with a strongly sloping surface during her descent. Now look at this short sequence:

JUMP FROM A HEIGHT OF 4 METERS: This man, aged about thirty, is about to jump from a height of approximately 4 meters. To cushion his fall, he bends his legs.

If he had landed on a sloping plane, he would have felt irresistibly propelled off balance forward.

This is explained very easily when one takes account of the forces in play at the moment of impact.

The net result of these forces (equivalent to one single force symbolized by an orange arrow) propels the person forwards and off balance.

Consequently, if this 46-year old woman, who doesn't look particularly athletic, had jumped through the stained glass window and had landed without injury, she would have fallen forward and hurtled down the inclined plane before falling 2.5 meters further down into the street where the Waffen SS were posted.

Now, Mme Rouffanche claims that, despite the shots fired by these SS men, who hit her with several bullets, she was able to flee and conceal herself in the garden of the presbytery among the rows of green peas.

The story is, therefore, that her fall came to an end at the level of the small parapet. Here is the sketch attached to her report by Commissioner Massiera. Mme Rouffanche's trajectory is underlined in yellow. We see clearly that our sole survivor did not fall into the street, and that therefore her fall was interrupted on the sloping plane, or, at the last moment, on the parapet? How? On 6 August 1990, I asked Robert Hébras this same question.

Here are my original notes, some of the only ones which escaped the confiscations ordered by the French authorities in 2001.

In my presence, Robert Hébras claimed that there were bramble bushes, blackberry bushes, more than a meter high beneath the stained glass window. The sole survivor of the massacre in the church is thus said to have fallen into this clump of blackberry bushes, which is said to have broken her fall. Injured, she is said to have fainted, and is said only to have regained consciousness towards evening. The problem is that this explanation contradicts the testimony of the witness herself, Mme Rouffanche. Are they going to claim that Commissioner Massiera didn't transcribe her words correctly?

I will answer by mentioning the "official" testimony of the sole escapee from the church (to which I will return), dated 30 November 1944. We read: "Since the stained glass window was broken, I jumped through the available opening. I jumped more than three meters, after which I fled to the garden of the presbytery. Raising my eyes, I saw that I had been followed in my flight by a woman, who, from the height of the window, was holding her baby out to me. She let it fall near me. The Germans, alerted by the child's cries, machine-gunned us. My companion and the baby were killed. I myself was wounded in reaching a garden nearby." Therefore, Mme Rouffanche never pretended to have

fallen into any blackberry bush where she allegedly fainted. Robert Hébras's allegations in his attempt to explain how she stopped her fall were therefore just lies. But that's not all.

Now listen to the speech given by official guides at Oradour-sur-Glane to tourists visiting the church in 2006:

This time, there is no longer any question of a blackberry bush 1 meter high, but rather, of a very thick and large bush more than 4 meters high, since it masked the view of the central stained glass window.

Now, not only did Mme Rouffanche never mention any such bush, but all one need do is examine the thin layer of earth on the inclined plane to understand that no large bush could ever have taken root there.

By the way, here is a photo of the church taken before the tragedy. There is no sign of any big, thick bramble bush masking one's view of the stained glass window.

In his book, Stone Poitevin published a photo taken shortly after the tragedy. Here, again, there are no signs of any bush.

These pitiful attempts to save the testimony of Marguerite Rouffanche by alleging the existence of a blackberry bush, and then a large and very thick bush of some other kind, are simply confessions: confessions that the tale of the sole escapee is just pure fiction.

As a result, the guardians of "Memory" have only one possibility: to cover up her impossible leap. I wish to remind the viewer that, in her official testimony Mme Rouffanche states that she had "jumped more than three meters".

Well, in their work published in 2001, the first director of the Oradour Memory Centre, [Jean-Jacques Fouché] published an older version of the testimony, but a very similar version nonetheless. But he takes great care to delete the only passage in which the sole survivor mentions the height of her jump. We are talking about a very short phrase ("I jumped over 3 meters"). The omission served no purpose except to conceal the height of her fall from the reader and to keep people from asking any questions about this incredible athletic feat said to have been performed by a woman of 46 years of age. Here again, all this text-juggling amounts to an admission, a confession. The guardians of "Memory" are admitting that they are unable to shore up the fairy tale of the sole survivor from the church.

Testimony that explains nothing

Let us go on from there and forget the impossible jump. Let's examine the preceding part of the same testimony, when it is a question of events having occurred inside the church.

Her account attempts to explain the destruction of the chapel Sainte-Anne, which Mme Rouffanche calls the “right nave”. It moreover confirms that these violent events occurred in the sacristy, which was also destroyed. It was the SS, she tells us, who machine-gunned the people and then burned the bodies. That’s the totality of her testimony.

Let us consider the huge bonfire which, according to Mme Rouffanche, the Germans are supposed to have started in the chapel Sainte-Anne. Any fire will either burn out where it started, or it will spread. If it burned out where it started, how do we explain the widespread destruction, all the way from the basement of the sacristy to the roofs of the building?

Now, let us suppose *logically* that the fire spread throughout the nave (thanks to the wooden chairs and pews) and from the nave to the choir, sacristy, steeple and lofts. This would produce the generalized conflagration required by the official version of events. But how, then, do we explain the perfect condition of the chapels dedicated to Saint-Joseph and the Holy Virgin? In 2006, the authorities of Oradour – who are familiar with revisionist arguments, answered this way – via the tour guide:

“Now, you may anyway notice that in the other wing, in front of you, there is still a piece of wooden furniture. This piece of furniture was not been added after the events. It was there at the time of the attack. Now, it didn’t burn, simply because we found very few victims down there. Therefore, there were *too many flames* [sic] [!] [?], and what is more, the oxygen entering the church through the windows was completely used up by the raging conflagration at this particular spot. Whereas, over there, there was an extremely hot atmosphere. [...] a small boy hid in the confessional, where he was found dead, completely dried out.”

The explanation is therefore as follows:; the reason why the wooden furnishings in the chapel of the Virgin – most particularly, the confessional – didn’t burn is because the fire couldn’t get started due to lack of oxygen. The only thing to worry about was extremely hot combustion gases.

Now, in a fire, the calorific energy (that is, the heat) is transmitted [away], not just by hot air (convection), but also by means of electromagnetic waves (thermal radiation).

And when a fire burns very violently, thermal radiation becomes the principal mode of transport for the heat involved. The radiating energy is proportional to the temperature cubed. This fact is of capital importance for the following reason:

Let us consider an object located not far from the focal point of a fire. At first, since the fire is very small, we can safely say that the weak thermal radiation will not affect the object.

But later on, the fire increases in intensity. The radiation increases and strikes the object, which gradually heats up until it reaches its ignition point.

Once this point has been reached, the object catches fire in turn, without having been touched by the flames.

In his article, Gilles Leduc reports that, by radiation, a burning house can set fire to another located 300 meters away and separated from it by a river.

As a result, even if we suppose that the flames are directly carried away through the stained glass windows of the façade and by the steeple (chimney effect), therefore they did not reach the chapels dedicated to Saint-Joseph and the Holy Virgin.

The mere intensity of the thermal radiation alone – symbolized here by the orange arrows – would have sufficed to bring the various wooden objects to their ignition point. As for claiming that there wouldn't have been enough oxygen because of the fire itself, that is an obvious absurdity. Oxygen isn't like a taxi driver in a hurry who fails to see a potential client waving to him from the sidewalk. The laws of physics don't work that way. And what is more, we mustn't forget the oxygen at floor level; that alone would have been enough to cause ignition.

Let's go even further. Let's forget all about thermal radiation. Let's assume that the fire actually did pass through the circular hole in the vault of the steeple, and then to the interior of the steeple itself, while failing to burn the two lateral chapels. All this fails to explain:

- the partial melting of the church bells;
 - the condition of the thin brass sphere under the ridge tile cross;
- or, above all
- the condition of the bodies of the women and children.

Mme Rouffanche's testimony – which never mentioned any explosion – does not, therefore, explain the conditions inside the church. Whichever hypothesis you choose (localized fire or general conflagration), you are stuck. The silence of the sole escapee is all the more astonishing since other survivors did mention an explosion.

Mme Rouffanche changes her story

Let's look at one of the first books ever published on the case. There we find the account of one of the survivors, Robert Hébras.

With numerous other men, he was locked up in the Laudy barn guarded by a few SS men. He says:

“I then heard a violent detonation originating from the market town. It sounded like a bomb.”

Now let’s look at the relevant Military Intelligence report.

The following is the account of Jacques Garraud and Robert Besson, who were concealed on the afternoon of the tragedy:

“Towards 4:00 P.M., we heard cries coming from the direction of the church, followed immediately by a loud detonation, which appeared to come from a grenade or an explosion”. In turn, another survivor, who was also concealed, declared:

“A terrible noise came from the direction of the church, which was a few tens of meters away from us. Detonation followed detonation, followed by an intense clamor and terrifying cries.”

Another survivor, Aimé Renaud, confirms this account: “The only moaning or groaning I heard,” he says, “was when the church blew up. I was 40 meters from the church at the time.” The President of the Tribunal responsible for trying the former Waffen SS men interrupted and asked him: “What did you hear? An explosion, did you say?” The witness confirmed this: “A big explosion, smoke coming from the church, a shriek from all the women and children inside.”

Under interrogation by the government Commissioner a few minutes later, Renaud added that he heard “several explosions”. Nothing could be clearer: the church was the focal point of several powerful violent explosions. This was the reason for the horrible tragedy that befell the women and children in the church.

And yet, despite the above, Mme Rouffanche declared, that same month, June 1944, that there was no explosion in the church? What about the mysterious “chest” set up by the Waffen SS? Yes, she repeated that, too. Questioned by Stone Poitevin, our sole survivor from the church states:

“It was a chest of the volume and height of a night table. Nobody wanted to approach it, but it didn’t explode.” The problem here, as we have seen, is that her account fails to explain either the types of damage to the interior of the church or the condition of the bodies of the women and children killed there. What’s more, other witnesses mentioned explosions, too.

Then, the inevitable happened:

On 16 October 1944, Mme Rouffanche changed her story.

The “chest”, which she thereafter referred to as a “box”, was now, allegedly, the focal point of a “small detonation” before it began to

discharge smoke. But even this was too timid. Then, two weeks later, Mme Rouffanche was called upon to repeat her story.

And this time, the chest became the focal point of a “*huge explosion*”. This is a 180-degree turn, in 5 months. But no matter:

This was the testimony fated to become the “official eyewitness testimony” of the “sole survivor” of the massacre in the church, and was therefore widely disseminated in abundant works of literature (at least until 2001).

The general public was never informed of the serious contradictions in the testimony of their “sole survivor”.

In reality, Mme Rouffanche simply changed her story based on an account dated 15 June 1944 and published a few weeks after the tragedy in the underground newspaper *Témoignage Chrétien* before being published in the form of a brochure shortly after the Liberation. Here we read:

“An hour after it was placed there, the chest placed in the church exploded, and started to burn all over the place.” So here we have it: the explosion and, as a secondary matter, the fire, which is naturally blamed on the Waffen SS. There’s just one problem with all this:

The Waffen SS were not responsible for the explosion

Why, then, immediately after the tragedy, did Mme Rouffanche (or, more exactly, those who told her what to say) cover up the explosion which destroyed the church? The answer is obvious: if they covered it up, it’s because it couldn’t be blamed on the Waffen SS. It must have been caused by something else: something so inconvenient that it absolutely had to be covered up. Just for a minute, to verify this allegation, let’s accept the theory of the chest which blew up, causing the fire.

According to Mme Rouffanche, the chest was supposedly placed “in the nave, near the choir”.

The “chest” was therefore located at the top of the church.

It exploded, quickly causing a fire.

The fire burns more and more intensely and begins to radiate intense heat causing a generalized conflagration in the nave and lateral chapels.

The authors of the text, therefore, weren’t entirely lacking in common sense when they claimed that, once set alight, the building began to “burn all over the place”.

But here, once again, it contradicts the physical observations made inside the church. The chapels dedicated to the Holy Virgin and Saint-Joseph were spared by the blaze.

Let us add that, even if this same fire originating with the chest had been able to spread to the steeple, this would explain neither the partial melting of the church bells nor the preservation of the thin sphere on the ridge tile cross, nor the absence of soot on the level of the openings, nor the disappearance of the roofs. In short, the mysterious “chest” explains nothing at all, regardless of whether or not it exploded.

During our analysis, we concluded that several explosions had shaken the church at loft level. Two known witnesses confirm what we say about the multiplicity of explosions:

Monsieur Renaud, who heard “several explosions”, and, in particular, Madame Lang, who clearly stated: “Detonation followed detonation, followed by an immense clamor and terrifying shrieks”.

Since the mysterious “chest” could not be responsible for all this, the most reasonable theory is that of powerful explosions occurring very rapidly, one after the other, under the lofts, due to a chain reaction. Once again, if it had been possible to blame the Waffen SS for these explosions, the official version of the story would never have concealed these explosions from the general public; it would never have been necessary to blame them on the Waffen SS by describing a mysterious “chest” which came from no one knows where, containing no one knows what.

What caused these explosions in the lofts of the church if the Waffen SS were not responsible for them? The obvious answer is: explosive materials stored in the lofts. Considering the historical period, everything leads us to believe that these explosive materials consisted of munitions.

The tragedy at Oradour-sur-Glane on 10 June 1944 was therefore the result of the explosion of a clandestine arms cache concealed in the lofts of the church by the local Resistance.

Objection no. 1:

The massacre began at 4:00 P.M. in the barns

You forget, people will reply, that the massacre began with the shootings of the men locked up in the barns, therefore, before the tragedy in the church.

This is the argument used by the survivor Robert Hébras. Indefatigable defender of the official theory, he recently told the daily newspaper *Le Monde*:

“The church burnt after 5:00 P.M., while the massacre of the men and the fires in the market town began at 3:00 P.M.”. OK.

A mysterious “detonation”

But let’s look at this “detonation” which is said to have signaled the beginning of the massacre; that is, which is supposed to have given the order to the Waffen SS to shoot the men. Everything depends on this question. If it turns out that it really took place at the church, then the revisionists are right, that is, that everything began with the unexpected explosions in the church.

In his book, published in 2001 and republished in 2012, the first director of the Oradour Memory Centre, Jean-Jacques Fouché, writes, on p. 15, that the signal for the massacre of the men consisted of a “revolver shot”. Which is somewhat surprising in view of the obvious fact that people do not use the word “detonation” to refer to pistol shots.

I add that, in his book, published in October 1944, Robert Hébras clearly declared as follows concerning the “signal”:

“I then heard a violent detonation originating from the market town. You would have thought it was a bomb explosion. Then the SS opened fire on us”. On 22 January 1953, during the trial of the Waffen SS involved, survivors Darthout, Roby and Broussaudier were very explicit:

- Clément Broussaudier spoke of a “big detonation”;
- Yvon Roby spoke of a “powerful detonation” and
- Marcel Darthout spoke of a “loud noise” resembling a “grenade explosion”.

This means that Jean-Jacques Fouché was lying through his teeth when he spoke of a “revolver shot”. The tragedy began when a huge detonation was heard in the market town. But where did it come from? Several witnesses have answered that question. Mme Lang, first of all, who, once again, recalled:

“A terrifying noise was heard in the direction of the church, which was a few tens of meters away from us. Detonation followed detonation, followed by an immense clamor and terrifying shrieks. Machine guns were rattling away.”

It is very clear: the church was the focal point of violent explosions and the machine guns of the Waffen SS began firing shortly afterwards. Since the machine guns were posted at locations where the men were being held prisoner, we must logically deduce that the Waffen SS started shooting when the church suddenly exploded.

Let us quote former Waffen SS man Henri Weber. Interrogated on 19 April 1948, he stated:

“When we were in combat position, behind the church, in the fields, we heard, an hour later, approximately, the sound of a powerful explosion, followed by horrible shrieks of pain from the women and children. Then a few minutes later, a single gun shot, after the gun shot, light machine guns starting firing broken, jerky bursts of fire in the village”. “In the village” means in the barns, garages and wine storehouses where the men were being kept prisoner.

Let us also mention the survivor Maurice Beaubreuil. On that tragic 10 June, he had concealed himself with his older brother, Martial, at their aunt’s house, who lived in the square in front of the church, where she ran a grocery store. During our interview, in August 1991, he revealed that a “very powerful explosion from the location of the church” had set off shooting in the village, particularly in the barns.

At the time, I wasn’t aware that his older brother, Martial, had made a similar declaration.

That declaration was made in the book by Jean-Jacques Fouché, on page 155. Here we learn that during the preliminary investigation for the Waffen SS trial, Martial Beaubreuil had declared:

“I clearly heard [...] an explosion from the church, followed by a heavy burst of machine gun fire from all parts of the market town”.

All these testimonies confirm that the tragedy began when the church was shaken by one or more powerful explosions, causing the deaths of the women and children inside. It was only afterwards that the Waffen SS began shooting at the men.

The lie of a survivor

In an attempt to save the official theory, the survivor Robert Hébras was prepared to stop at nothing, not even the grossest lie. I’ll explain:

In his testimony, which has now become part of the “official” version of events, Marguerite Rouffanche declares: “Towards 4:00 P.M., soldiers, about 20 years of age, placed a sort of large chest in the nave, near the choir, from which fuses protruded, running across the floor. When these fuses were lit, the fire was communicated to the device, producing a sudden, powerful explosion [...]”.

Since the chronological plaque opposite the entry to the village declares that the “signal” for the massacre was a “detonation” at 4:00 P.M., we must logically conclude that everything began with the tragedy in the church.

That is why, in his brochure, the survivor Robert Hébras is guilty of dishonesty.

On page 25, he inserted the following passage into an interview with Mme Rouffanche: “Between 4 and 5 P.M., these people experienced a terrifying ordeal, since the noise of the shots, the explosions and the fire could no doubt be heard. Just imagine how they felt?” This short passage leads the unsophisticated reader to suppose that the SS placed the chest at about 4:00 P.M. and that they waited an hour before lighting the fuses.

But that is incorrect. The testimony of Mme Rouffanche leaves no doubt in this regard: everything happened at about 4:00 P.M.

The addition to Robert Hébras’s account is all the more dishonest since, in July 1947, Mme Rouffanche made one essential statement. She stated:

“During the time that I remained inside the church, I neither saw nor heard any explosion”. This statement is of capital importance. In fact, according to the official story, the “massacre” in the church is said to have taken place after the shootings in the barns. As a result, Mme Rouffanche, while she was waiting, is said to have heard everything, particularly the “detonation”, which the SS are supposed to have given as a signal to start shooting. The fact that she heard nothing confirms the following:

- the explosion mentioned by the survivors took place inside the church (which was being used as a clandestine arms cache by the Resistance); and
- the Waffen SS men shot the men in the barns after the explosion.

Objection no 2:

“But there was no Resistance and no arms cache at Oradour”

It will be said that our theory is contradicted by the alleged fact that there was no Resistance, no weapons, and no arms cache at Oradour. This is what they have been saying since 1944.

Let us stress that, in 2001, in their Bulletin, the Friends of the Museum of the Resistance of the Department of Haute-Vienne recalled the existence, not far from Oradour, of six companies of Francs-Tireurs et Partisans (FTP).

The map on the screen shows the locations of these 6 companies of Resistance members. The closest one was about 7 km away. If we consider that Saint-Junien and Peyrilhac were townships with strong Resistance groups, we realise that Oradour was completely surrounded

by these groups. The question which now arises is as follows: Was Oradour simply an oasis of calm in the midst of Resistance agitation?

Resistance members in the village

What first aroused my suspicion was the plaque affixed by physicians acting for various Resistance groups to the memory of the physicians of Oradour. Of course, this doesn't necessarily mean that Messieurs Desourteaux belonged to the Resistance, but, since Paul was also Mayor of Oradour, a mayor appointed or confirmed in his functions by the Pétain government, it is hard for me to see why the Resistance would render homage to a "Collaborator". Unless this "collaborator" was, in fact, playing a double game by supporting the Resistance. I therefore conducted a little inquiry among the survivors of this horrible tragedy whom I met in the summer of 1991. I learned quite a lot. In particular, I learned that, at Oradour:

Paul Doutré was a reserve member of the Resistance (therefore, without a mission, but a person who could be contacted at any moment);

Léonard Dupic was a member of the Secret Army, a right-wing Resistance group;

Mathieu Borie belonged to the FTP, a Communist Resistance group;

Aimé Renaud had been a driver for a senior Resistance member from Lyon. Having returned to Oradour with a fake identity card saying he was a farmer, he remained in contact with local Resistance members, particularly Mathieu Borie;

Maurice Beaubreuil, a deserter from the Compulsory Labor Service, had taken refuge with his aunt (Mme Mercier) at Oradour. His assignment was to remain in contact with Limoges. Every day, he ate in the company of Mathieu Borie. The same Mathieu Borie had fabricated a hiding place at his aunt's house, Mme Mercier.

Paul Doire, who worked in a bakery, supplied the local Resistance with bread.

Of course, these are just clues, not proof; with the exception of Paul Doire, it could be pretended that these people were just "reserve members" of the Resistance – stooges of no real importance. But other information must be taken into account.

M. Machefer and Mlle Jakubowicz

Among the survivors was one Martial Machefer, referred to by the authorities as a “well-known Communist and strike leader”. On 10 June, he took flight upon the arrival of the Waffen SS, after burning all the papers which could be used against him. All this before even knowing what was about to happen!

Machefer was therefore a man with a consciousness of guilt, in the possession of documents considered particularly compromising and who feared that the Germans would question him. If he was just a “reserve member” of the Resistance, he would certainly not have acted in this manner. But that is not all.

The body of Sarah Jakubowicz, a young girl of Polish origin whose family had taken refuge at Oradour for a time, was found in the ruins of Martial Machefer’s house.

Machefer’s brother was a member of the FTP. Was Sarah buried anonymously in a common grave with the other victims? No, her body was identified, and buried with great ceremony by the Union of Resistance and Mutual Assistance of the Jews of France, a communist-aligned organization.

Six hundred (even eight hundred) persons attended the funeral, during which “a catafalque was set up, surrounded by an honor guard [of FTP members] with weapons [...]. Wreathes [were] placed in the name of the military formations paying homage to the deceased”.

Let us add that Sarah Jakubowicz’s coffin was covered by the French flag. If she had really been just an anonymous young woman or an unimportant reserve member, she would never have been honored with such an elaborate ceremony.

The deeper one looks, the more the theory of the peaceful village, with no Resistance connections, crumbles to pieces. The comments of the survivors smash it to bits.

The story of Mathieu Borie

On 23 June 1994, *Paris Match*, the weekly news magazine, published a unique document: an account of the massacre at Oradour drawn up shortly after the fact by Mathieu Borie.

Why wasn’t it ever published before? We shall soon see. The survivor describes his attempted flight as follows:

“I climbed to the crossroads to take the cemetery road, but the Germans were there, in position. Too late to escape. Since I was in the Resistance, I thought I would go seek reinforcements. I was forced to

continue. But gun shots rang out on all sides. I thought: ‘A few of them don’t want to follow me and they’ve started fighting.’”

Where did Mathieu Borie expect to find reinforcements? No one ever asked him that question, which is quite a shame.

It should be noted that during the trial of the former Waffen SS men, in 1953, the witness was very careful not to reveal all these details; he contented himself with saying that the Germans made him go back the other way, that he saw them break a door down and fire a few shots, and that he arrived at the gathering place.

But above all, he concealed from the Tribunal his thought: “A few of them don’t want to follow me and they’ve started fighting”. Since that would have been equivalent to an admission the presence in the village of armed men, i.e., armed Resistance members, capable of engaging in combat with a troop of Waffen SS. This is why Mathieu Borie spoke of seeking “reinforcements” – i.e., *more men* – to assist his comrades who he believed, were already fighting.

This passage from the survivor’s account is so incriminating that it was carefully omitted by the two editors from the book when published in 1995.

The three asterisks replace the omitted text.

On the screen: a comparison between the original text and the text in *Paroles de miraculés* [Saved by a Miracle]. The omission is indisputable.

The text by Mathieu Borie is the coup de grâce to the theory that Oradour was neither in the Resistance, nor used as a cache for arms, ammunition and explosives. But I can already hear the response of my adversaries: “Munitions at Oradour? Where is your physical proof?”

The condition of the ruined houses

At first, I mentioned the condition of the houses at Oradour. Those you see on the screen have their walls stained by traces of black soot. This is typical of fire. The white traces under the black even indicate that the flames exited the houses and licked the walls at these locations.

Here are other houses at Oradour which were ravaged by flames. Here again, the black traces of smoke are clearly visible.

Now look at these three buildings. The house of Resistance member Martial Machefer, where the body of Sarah Jakubowicz was found, the Hotel Milord and the Mercier grocery store where Mathieu Borie had set up a cache. Two striking features: the total absence of black stains caused by smoke and soot, and, in particular, the intact vegetation (indicated in yellow). In the case of fire, it would have burned under the

effect of the radiation of heat. Everything indicates, therefore, that these houses were destroyed by explosions. Such as bottles of liquid gas which exploded after a fire started?

It is true that I saw at least one gas bottle in the ruins during my enquiry. But I saw no gas bottles that looked like they had blown up, nor have I ever heard of explosions at Oradour causing the explosion of bottles of liquid gas. The official version of events only mentions fires lit by the Waffen SS.

I might add that, in his report dated 4 January 1945, the German judge who investigated the tragedy and interrogated the Waffen SS wrote:

“Upon our approach, the company wiped up some rifle and machine gun fire. Once all resistance was broken, a considerable quantity of arms was seized during a search of the buildings. Up above, the village was set on fire. This was followed by detonations of secret munitions caches in almost all the houses. The detonations were so powerful that the commander in chief had to withdraw his men for their own safety.” The first part of this text confirms that the firing heard by Mathieu Borie did indeed originate with armed Resistance members. This is why he wanted to call for reinforcements as quickly as possible.

As to the second, it explains the condition of many of the houses in the ruined village. They contained munitions caches. Judge Okrent was not the only person to mention explosions in the houses.

In his book, Stone Poitevin reports the story of Louise Compain, who arrived in the vicinity of Oradour with several other people that evening and was arrested by the Waffen SS. Under questioning, they declared that all the inhabitants of the village were dead, and that Oradour was a centre for the Resistance. Faced with the insistence of impatient people, a German added: “We find arms and munitions. OK, then, we blow up everything, burn everything. Listen to the explosions!”

The fact that Mlle Compain said that she heard nothing does not change a great deal; the condition of some of the houses is entirely consistent with the theory of explosions.

The empty cartridges in the church

Let's keep going. Yes, let's forget about the houses that were the focal points of explosions.

In her various testimonies as well as in her official testimony of 30 November 1944, Marguerite Rouffanche always spoke of shooting having occurred in the church.

It is not surprising that the official theory accuses the Germans of wishing to “finish the job” by massacring the women and children who survived the asphyxiating flames discharged by the mysterious “chest”.

According to the report by the bishop of Limoges, “hundreds of spent cartridges” were found in the church.

Incidentally, Guy Pauchou and Stone Masfrand state that the following were found:

- ”quantities of shells”, calibre 9 mm, bearing the inscription: “WRA 9 mm” on the bottom;

- 3 spent cartridges bearing the inscription: “hrn St” followed by two sets of two figures.

- several spent cartridges marked: “aso Stf 8-44”;

- 1 spent cartridge marked: “Kam St 42-5”; and

- 3 without legible inscription.

Here is the only known photograph of the spent cartridges found in the church. According, therefore, to the information gathered, the immense majority of these shells bear the inscription “WRA 9 mm” and a dozen others bear different inscriptions. These shells are undoubtedly of German origin.

This is a spent cartridge from the Second World War bearing the marking: “hrn”. These three letters indicate the name of the arms manufacturer: “St”, indicating the nature of the butt (steel butt, reinforced butt, etc.); the first figure is the lot number, the second indicates the year of manufacture. “Hrn” indicates a factory in West Prussia; “kam” indicates a factory located in occupied Poland; while “aso” indicates a factory located in Schweinfurt, indisputably another German location.

On the other hand, “WRA” indicates the American company Winchester, located in New Haven, Connecticut.

On a police forum dedicated to target shooting, we read: “This ammunition was manufactured in the United States during the [Second World War] for the account of England. Intended solely for use in machine pistols such as the STEN [machine gun]. Parachuted [into France] for use by the FFI during the [Second World War], they must not be fired in the Lüger [P08] or [Walther] P38”. As these last two weapons were German (caliber 9 mm), we conclude that the Waffen SS did not use these cartridges, even if they succeeded in capturing them.

So then, what should we make of the hundreds of spent cartridges found on the floor of the church? The answer is obvious: they came from the illegal Resistance arms cache. Were they detonated as a result of the explosions? Were they fired (and if yes, by whom)? Without examining the butt, we are unable to tell. But one thing is certain: these

hundreds of spent cartridges are evidence — at the very least — of the presence of an illegal arms cache in the church at Oradour.

I will finish with this subject with the appearance, 52 years after the tragedy, of a very inconvenient witness for the theory of Oradour as entirely free of Resistance involvement. I am referring to Len Cotton.

Organized resistance at Oradour: The unwelcome witness

In 1946, a Resistance organization revealed that, during the war, Allied aviators compelled to parachute into enemy territory were cared for by underground escape networks.

One of these networks, founded by a young 22-year old Belgian, Andrée de Jongh, was called “Comet” or “Comet Escape Line”. The rescued aviators were smuggled into Spain, whence they were able to return to England.

In 1996, one of the friends from Limoges called my attention to a surprising article. It dealt with the case of a former British pilot, Len Cotton.

On 25 November 1942, during a mission, his plane was shot down over Bordeaux and crashed near Confolens. After which, we read: “Luckily, the Resistance networks intervened... English aviators were taken in charge by peasants and smuggled to Oradour-sur-Glane where they were concealed for three days in the market town. RAF members then reached Limoges, Toulouse, and Bilbao”. All this sounds very much like an escape organized by the Comet network.

If this story is really true – if the Resistance networks secretly smuggled downed pilots directly to Oradour-sur-Glane to entrust them to an escape network – then it will be very hard to believe there was no organized Resistance at Oradour.

Was Len Cotton mistaken? One statement made in the article convinced me that he was not.

Len Cotton vaguely recalled the name of a family in the area: Borie or Laborie. Now, by chance, Mathieu Borie was an active Resistance member at Oradour. I immediately wrote to Len Cotton.

A few weeks later, I received a fax dictated by Len Cotton to his friend Christian Laloz, here, on the right. The aviator gave me details on his stay at Oradour.

After being introduced to a priest, he remained two and a half days hidden in the sacristy of the church, waiting for contact to be made with André de Jongh. He was fed by one Madame Rouffanche’s daughters, nicknamed “Danielle”. At Limoges station, he met Andrée de Jongh.

This information permitted me to conclude that an organized Resistance network existed at Oradour, that it used the church with the willing complicity of the Rouffanche family, who were members of the network.

I therefore understood how an arms cache could have been organized under the lofts: the priest was in the Resistance. And above all, I understood why, after the tragedy, Marguerite Rouffanche agreed to provide false testimony to conceal the persons really responsible for the massacre; the reason was that her family were very actively involved in the Resistance. Shortly afterwards, I had a telephone conversation with Len Cotton, during which I took handwritten notes, which I still have.

On the screen: the next-to-the last note, taken on 10 September 1996. We read that Len Cotton is “surprised to know that French historians say that there was no Resistance at Oradour-sur-Glane; he says there was ‘great Resistance at Oradour-sur-Glane’ ”.

I mentioned Cotton’s story in my book, published in 1997. If the old man had simply been imagining things and had been mistaken, my adversaries would have exploited the situation for all it was worth, denouncing me for my incompetence. They did nothing of the kind.

In 2001, the first director of the Oradour Memory Centre, Jean-Jacques Fouché, published his book on the tragedy of 10 June 1944. As soon as I laid hands on the book, I examined the index of names to see what the author would say about Len Cotton.

I noted that the author, Jean-Jacques Fouché, never even mentioned him. Not once. A complete reading of the book confirmed this initial impression.

He attacks the revisionists several times, calling them “deniers”. But he is very careful never to mention Len Cotton.

Today, I consider their silence to constitute an admission: an admission that the story told by the old former-RAF member is the truth, and that, therefore, organized resistance did exist at Oradour.

Having said that, another question arises: what brought the Waffen SS to Oradour on that particular Saturday, 10 June 1944?

The reasons for the presence of the Waffen SS at Oradour

The Allied disembarkation in Normandy took place on 6 June. On that date, the Das Reich division was stationed in the south of France. The Der Führer regiment, which was part of the Das Reich division, was to play a part in the Oradour affair. Having received orders to move to the

theatre of operations, the Das Reich division arrived at Limoges at dawn on the 9th.

During the day, a fateful event occurred:

An officer in the division, Helmut Kämpfe, who commanded the 3rd Battalion of the Der Führer regiment, was captured by Resistance members led by Jean Canou.

The kidnapping took place at La Bussière, not far from Saint-Léonard-de-Noblat, east of Limoges. A general search was ordered but found nothing. To the Germans, it was necessary to take all necessary steps to find the missing officer. Two events were to guide the inquiry. On the evening of 9 June:

“The SD intelligence agency at Limoges informed the regiment that information supplied by the French liaison services indicated that a Resistance command post was located at Oradour-sur-Glane.”.

On the morning of 10 June, another officer in the Das Reich division, Gerlach, made his appearance at the command post. Completely exhausted and in his underclothing, he said that he had been kidnapped the evening before by the Resistance, in the company of his driver. The kidnapping had taken place in the Nieul region, where his men were stationed.

From there, he had been taken to a village at the entry of which he was able to make out a sign: “Oradour-sur-Glane”. After remaining there a few tens of minutes, which made him an object of curiosity among the inhabitants and local Resistance members, including women he had been taken further north, towards Bellac, more exactly, to a wood, used as a Resistance execution ground.

But Gerlach had succeeded in fleeing, while his driver was shot to death while attempting to escape with him, and had taken benefit of cover of darkness to reach Limoges.

Without surprise, on the French side, the story of the German officer, captured and taken to Oradour, where he was able to see Resistance members, was simply dismissed out of hand. In the official history, the authors cite the log book of the German general von Brodowski. On the date of 14 June, he had mentioned the kidnapping of Gerlach, near Nieul, and his escape. But he assured us that “there was no evidence to confirm” the “incident”. 48 years later, however, everything changed:

In the newspaper *Le Populaire du Centre*, the journalist mentioned the story of the German officer and stated: “Interrogated a few years later, in 1951 [...], Gerlach recalled his kidnapping and declared: ‘At the entry to a village, I saw a plaque reading *Oradour-sur-Glane*’. He certainly mentioned the Oradour-sur-Glane name plate on the evening

of 9 June 1944 at Lammerding, and perhaps this was why the SS, who had, at any rate, foreseen an operation in the sector of Saint-Junien (referred to as Saillat or Chaillac), decided to conduct reprisals against the little village, traversed by the Resistance while conducting a German prisoner". I shall make no comment on the newspaperman's statements on the "reprisals" which the Germans had decided to conduct. I content myself with stressing that, in 1983, it was no longer possible to conceal the fact that Gerlach had been kidnapped and taken to Oradour. Having said that, let us return to the Limoges headquarters on 10 June 1944.

In the morning, the head of the first Der Führer battalion, Otto Diekmann, arrived at the Limoges command post. There, he reported that:

"French nationals had appeared at his duty station and indicated that a high-ranking German officer was being held by the Resistance at Oradour, where there was a Resistance headquarters, and where Kämpfe was to have been executed during a public meeting, and then burnt. The civilian population, according to this information, were making common cause with the Resistance."

Persuaded that the captive officer mentioned by the two French nationals could only be Kämpfe, who was a friend of his: "Diekmann seemed over-excited and asked the Colonel [Stadler] for authorization to visit Oradour with a company from his battalion to rescue Kämpfe regardless of cost."

Interrogated in 1947, Colonel Stadler's adjutant recalled:

"The leader gave him authorization and ordered the following mission:

1. Annihilate the Resistance command post;
2. Search the village and find Kämpfe;
3. Take as many prisoners as possible, to be exchanged against Kämpfe if needs be."

This, then, according to the Germans, is the direct origin of the expedition to Oradour: it was not a question of burning the village and massacring the population in reprisal, but rather, of attempting to obtain the release, through negotiations or by force, of a high-ranking officer who was probably being held prisoner there. Acting according to customary procedure, the soldiers separated the men from the women and children. The latter group was locked inside the church for safekeeping.

The men were then taken in groups, to the barns, where it was easier to guard them, with just a few sentinels, while the Waffen SS proceeded to search the dwelling houses. During the searches –which

turned up large quantities of arms and ammunition – an enormous explosion shook the church, tearing the women and children in the nave to pieces. Caught in this infernal escalation, the Waffen SS men machine-gunned the men before running to the church.

This is why I maintain, today, that Oradour was a police operation which turned out badly. The error of the German headquarters was that they failed to search the church first.

I moreover wish to stress that, far from being congratulated by his superiors, Dickmann was warned that judicial proceedings would be taken against him. In 1949, Otto Weidinger recalled:

Stadler reproached Dickmann in the strongest possible terms and told him that he would be called upon to render an account of these events to the general commanding the division, which would lead to the opening of a judicial proceedings.

He told him: “Dickmann, that is going to cost you a lot”.

Late in the evening of 10 June, the headquarters of the division coming from Tulle arrived at Limoges. Stadler went immediately to see General Lammerding and rendered an account of the Oradour affair. General Lammerding decided that judicial proceedings would be opened as soon as circumstances permitted.

An inquiry was in fact opened, but Otto Dickmann’s death at the front interrupted the proceedings and the files were destroyed during a bombardment.

Appeal to the authorities

Now, one last question remains to be answered. Why did the munitions cache blow up, causing an immense tragedy? As long as no one speaks out, and as long as the archives remain inaccessible to free researchers (and they are to remain sealed until the year 2053), we will only be able to issue a few hypotheses, two in particular:

– The first, suggested to me during a conversation by Jean-Claude Pressac, involves the possibility of several children, who, locked inside the church, climbed into the steeple, found the munitions and started playing with them, triggering the initial explosion;

– the second involves the possibility of Resistance members concealed inside the church, who attempted to flee upon being discovered (for example, as the result of a denunciation), causing a gun fight, followed by the fatal explosion.

Personally, I favor the second hypothesis. Not to blame the Resistance, but for two reasons: 1) on the floor level, the most seriously damaged parts of the church are those near the secondary exits: the

chapel of Sainte-Anne and the Sacristy; 2) bullet holes, numerous enough to be mentioned by Commissioner Massiera, were found near the sacristy window, suggesting that shots were exchanged between assailants and defenders. I therefore wonder whether the Resistance members attempted to flee through these exits and ran into the Waffen SS.

It is, of course, possible to imagine other scenarios. But once again, light will be shed on the affair in the end, because the archives will be opened. This is why I launch an appeal to the authorities: I publicly demand authorization to consult the archives at Blanc, in the Indre, or elsewhere. If they are so sure that the official version is the true one, they will have nothing to fear.

The Sea Water Medical Experiments

Today, I shall address myself to all those young French men or women who have read, or been compelled to read, some of the standard history books, magazines, textbooks and films regularly published on the Second World War, the German concentration camps and the “Holocaust” of the Jews. It is my belief that nearly all such books are chock full of politically motivated exaggerations and lies. All this literature consists largely of propaganda – propaganda which is ultimately untrue, although it contains occasional grains of truth. They are intended to manipulate your mind by twisting the manner in which you think.

You might find it hard to believe me. What could be more natural? But I’m not asking you to take my word for it. I have no right to ask you just to take my word for it. I’ll show you what I mean; I won’t say anything which has not been proven by the documents which I am about to show you.

An Historian Without Any Critical Instinct

My first example is rather anecdotal, but it reveals a flagrant lack of critical instinct on the part of the author concerned. Emmanuel Thiébot is an historian. He works at the Caen Memorial, which is one of the biggest museums in France consecrated to the Second World War and its aftermath. He is also the author of numerous books and articles, one of which is entitled: *La Seconde Guerre mondiale* [The Second World War] (published by the Mémorial de Caen, 2003).

Page 50 shows this photo, with the following caption: “Photograph found on the body of a Japanese soldier showing an Allied aviator about to be decapitated by saber, published in *Voir* magazine in June 1945”.

The claim that the photograph was “found on the body of an enemy” should be treated with caution, since it is a very common method used by propagandists to disseminate fake photographs. By claiming that their photos were “found” on a “dead soldier”, they no longer need to prove where it came from. And in fact, a careful study of the so-called “executioner” should suffice to show that the whole photograph is a crude photomontage.

Compare the photo with one of a *real person* brandishing a saber:

The Japanese executioner's arms are much too small in comparison with his head;

While the shoulder span of the man in black is in conformity with that of a human skeleton, that of the Japanese executioner is much too small. This is a result of the fact that the two arms added to the photograph have been taken from another photograph taken from much further away, probably because the faker had no other photographs available to him.

As for the shirt worn by the Japanese "executioner", the absence of detail and shading (compare the head and boots) reveals that the "photo" is in fact a drawing.

Despite the evidence, Emmanuel Thiébot never hesitated to dish up this fake just as if it were an authentic document.

For an historian employed – *mirabile dictu* – by one of the largest museums in France consecrated to the Second World War, this lack of critical instinct is somewhat troubling.

Having said that, I will get to the heart of the matter: the German concentration camps and the so-called "Holocaust" of the Jews. According to the official hypothesis, the Germans divided the deportees into two categories:

1) Those whom the Germans intended to kill gradually, by making them work to the max until they died. This was "extermination through work".

2) Those whom the Germans intended to kill immediately, in the context of a deliberately planned mass killing programme (children, the elderly, pregnant Jewesses, gypsies, etc.).

Tendentious captions

Let's start by examining the first group of prisoners, the "extermination through work" victims.

The authors of these multitudinous tomes often seem to believe that their readers are stupid – for example, the photographs are often accompanied by captions consisting of unproven assertions, or assertions in plain contradiction with the subject matter of the photograph. The following are three examples (I'll show you some more in a moment).

Healthy inmates celebrate the liberation of Dachau

In his book entitled: *1945, de la guerre à la paix en douze événements* (published by Casterman-Mémorial, 1999), CNRS research director

Claude Quétel published this very well known photograph taken at the liberation of Dachau. It shows the deportees, most of them young, celebrating the arrival of their liberators in a delirium of joy. All of them are in good health, none of them are emaciated and they are all well dressed (albeit only in camp uniforms). Despite these obvious facts, the caption claims: “The deportees, whose camp has just been liberated, hardly possess the strength to express their joy. Many of these rare survivors, having barely escaped a slow death, would not even survive their own liberation [...]”. They really think their readers are fools!

You might say that, while some of the deportees were in good health, many others – who were far more numerous – were already dead or dying. I will answer that objection in a moment. For now, I merely wish to concern myself with the unjustified claims made in the captions to these photographs – that is, captions which in no way correspond to what the photographs obviously show, or which can be shown to be erroneous.

The “Extermination through Work” Allegation

Now let’s examine a book authored by Angela Gluck Wood and published in 2007 by the very official Foundation for a Visual History of the Survivors of the Shoah, an establishment created in 1994 by Steven Spielberg which has now, since 2006, become an Institute of the University of Los Angeles. The book is entitled: *Shoah*, published in French by Milan Jeunesse in 2008. Page 83 shows a photo of deportees in a workshop. The caption says: “**Forced labor.** The prisoners worked long hours at least six days a week, often under difficult, unhealthy and dangerous conditions: building sites, quarries, workshops and factories producing articles for the German government”.

The first part of the caption is correct:

According to a circular letter dated 22 January 1943, deportees assigned to workshops had to work eleven hours a day, Monday to Saturday. Those who worked outside worked shorter hours in winter, because of the shorter days. In cases of extreme urgency, the deportees could be made to work Sunday morning, but Sunday afternoon was always free.

But the second part of the caption is entirely without justification. The photo shows a well-lit, ventilated workshop (the upper windows are open), while the deportees are in good health. While one of them is working in the foreground, three others seem to be having a conversation, and another one, in the background, is calmly taking to a

civilian (possibly the shop foreman). The reality is therefore very far removed from the author's allegations.

Incidentally, I could also produce large numbers of deportees in good health, working in surroundings which are in no way insalubrious:

- this photo shows a BMW factory at the Allach camp;
- this one shows a Siemens factory at Auschwitz;
- this is an underground V2 factory at Dora;
- this is the quarry at Mauthausen; and
- this photo was taken at Ravensbrück camp.

The Sea Water Medical Experiments

Again, we are still on page 83, a very well known photograph shows a visibly nervous deportee who is about to have a blood sample taken (see the tourniquet on the forearm and the three test tubes in the operator's hand). The caption says: "In some camps, the inmates were used as guinea pigs [...]. The inmates, like this gypsy, who was forced to drink sea water to see whether it was potable, suffered martyrdom".

Comment number one: In 1942, in Germany, just like everywhere else, everyone knew that sea water is not potable except in very small doses. This impudent lie is intended to make us believe that, in the camps, the Germans carried out pseudo-scientific experiments, solely to satisfy their sadism. Now, in the present case, this allegation in no way represented the truth.

A Wartime Necessity

The longer the war lasted, the more people were lost at sea (either the crews of sunken ships or downed aviators). One of the most agonizing problems for them, while waiting to be rescued, was obtaining potable water. This is why teams of scientists were attempting to find a solution to this problem, particularly in the belligerent countries. In the USA, experiments were conducted on 17 volunteers in a US Navy hospital [See *The Lancet*, no. 6267, 9 October 1943, p. 441:

"Effects Following the Ingestion of Small Quantities of Sea Water. An Experimental Study".] One of the research methods consisted of attempting to find a simple process for rendering sea water potable.

German scientists in fact perfected two such methods in 1943:

– the Wofatit method, discovered by a Dr Schaefer, previously employed in collaboration with IG Farben. This method consisted of the desalinization of sea water using nitrate of silver (AgNO_3).

– the Berkatit method, discovered by an engineer named Berka. This consisted, not of desalinating the water, but, rather, of adding various sugars and vitamins so as to render the taste more agreeable, and to facilitate excretion of the ingested salt.

Theoretically, the Wofatit method was ideal, since the processed sea water was actually made potable. But with the blockade, and the resulting shortages and restrictions, it involved one extremely serious disadvantage: Germany had practically no silver.

German technicians estimated that the successful implementation of this method would require 2.5 to 3 tons of silver every month. What is more, the water had to be aspirated through a special filter to avoid the absorption of noxious chemical residues. “These facts,” they concluded, “make implementation of this process impossible in practice.”

The Berkatit method, by contrast, did not make the sea water potable. It merely facilitated its absorption (better taste) and permitted longer-term consumption (accelerated excretion of the salt) while awaiting rescue. Its great advantage: the sugars and vitamins which it required were easily available, permitting immediate, unrestricted production.

The Decision to Conduct Experiments

On 19 May 1944, a preliminary meeting was held at the Luftwaffe headquarters to compare the problems and advantages raised by the two methods.

It was announced that, according to the head of the Luftwaffe medical service, Dr. Schaefer, the initial symptoms would occur before the sixth day, and that death would occur before the twelfth day.

Nevertheless, an internal complaints specialist, Dr. Eppinger, along with an eminent pharmacologist, Dr. Heubner, stated that the Berkatit method could nonetheless be applied to human beings, at least for a certain period of time. This is why the decision was made to conduct experiments.

On 20 May 1944, a second meeting was held to draw up an experimental protocol intended to verify the effectiveness (and limits) of the Berkatit method. Since the water requirements of the human body are quite specific, the tests, to be conclusive, could only be conducted on human beings. It was decided that the test subjects should be divided into four groups, according to the quantity of water they were to receive: the first group would receive water processed with the Berkatit method, the second would receive potable water, the third

would receive no water at all, and the fourth would receive the amount of water contained in the survival rations.

For food, all subjects would receive survival rations. The experiment would last no longer than six days.

Another series of experiments was proposed, lasting twelve days in this case. The subjects would be given both sea water, i.e., Berkatit water, and survival rations. Since they would be risking their lives, it was decided that the human guinea pigs would be selected and made available to the experimenters by the Reichsführer SS (i.e., Heinrich Himmler).

Initially, consideration was given to testing both wounded aviators having completed their convalescence, and aviator cadets. But the proposal was rejected on the grounds that both groups were immediately required at the front.

Experimenting on young Germans of the same age as the pilots was also impossible, since, at the time they were all needed, either in the army, or in the civilian service.

The proposal was then made to test German soldiers sentenced to punishment by German military courts. But once again, the authorities refused.

Finally, in accordance with SS Gruppenführer Nebe, Heinrich Himmler decided that the experiments would be conducted at Dachau (where the Luftwaffe had long since installed laboratories), on gypsies who were in good health, but who had been declared unfit to work, as well as on three other prisoners.

Dr. Wilhelm Beiglböck

Dr. Wilhelm Beiglböck was ordered to conduct the tests on forty gypsies.

The protocol adopted was the following: the test subjects were divided into four groups. Initially, one group was given all the normal rations received by wartime aviators (sardines, cheese, butter, milk, etc., and, of course, potable water) for several days. Then, like aviators lost at sea, they all received survival rations, except for one group, which received nothing at all. As for water, they received that which had been planned, according to the group to which they belonged. Their urine was kept for examination, while blood samples were taken for analysis every day. For the first few days, everything went well. But later, the test subjects in the group who were supposed to have been “lost at sea” began to suffer from thirst – the terrible thirst that always accompanies a lack of potable water.

Starting at this time, some of the gypsies cheated, and succeeded in procuring potable water to drink by means of various subterfuges; test subjects wishing to cheat then drank the water and threw away their urine away, to conceal the fraud. But the experiments were continued to the end, regardless. After the war, Dr. Beiglböck was arrested.

He appeared at Nuremberg beside Karl Brandt and other defendants in the “Doctors’ Trial”.

The prosecution theory at Nuremberg

The prosecution produced several witnesses, as well as one American medical expert, Dr. Ivy.

Dr. Ivy disputed the scientific value of the experiments and stressed the deterioration in health of the test subjects during the tests.

One witness, Hollenreiner, described subjects suffering from delirium as a result of hunger and thirst.

According to the witness, Wilhelm Beiglböck was totally indifferent to the sufferings caused by his experiments and threatened to shoot anyone who protested.

For his part, Vorlicek (a male nurse) testified that at least one of the test subjects had suffered from violent cramps, and that, in the end, they were all very sick, and that three months later, he heard, from someone else, that one of the guinea pigs had died.

A witness named Tschofenig also mentioned one fatality, saying that he had read the file on the case.

Based on his allegations, the Prosecution concluded that Dr. W. Beiglböck had participated in experiments: “...over the course of which deaths, brutalities, cruelties, tortures, atrocities and other inhuman acts were committed”.

Another side of the story

It should be noted, however, that another witness for the Prosecution, Josef Laubinger, spoke of threats and punishments but only against test subjects who cheated or who rebelled. He described his experiences as follows:

“From the human point of view, he [Wilhelm Beiglböck] never hurt us, but he conducted the experiments under strict discipline, and punished those who refused or who caused any delay.”

Incidentally, far from being reduced to silence by the Prosecution, the Defense was able to launch an effective counter-attack. On 3 June 1947, Professor Franz Volhard, a well-known physician, appeared as a

witness and testified that the experiments had been performed in a very scientific manner, that he had no criticisms to make of the test protocol employed and that he saw no other way in which the tests could have been conducted.

In a letter dated 17 January 1947, the Professor stated that the experimental method followed by the defendant did not amount to “any crime against humanity at all”.

The Defense also produced several sworn statements depicting Dr. Wilhelm Beiglböck in an entirely different light from that painted by the Prosecution.

I would now like to call your attention to the questionnaire of Dr. Karl Theodore Lesse. Interrogated with regards to the experiments involving the use of sea water, he declared that that there had not been any deaths at all (question 3), *that the experiments were always stopped upon the appearance of symptoms of intolerance* (questions 27, and 40 and that none of the test subjects had suffered irreversible harm to their health (question 6).

In reply to the question: “What was his attitude [that of Dr. Beiglböck] towards the prisoners in general?”, the answer was, bluntly, “Very humane and good”.

I would also like to mention the testimony of Walther Massion, who assisted Dr Beiglböck in conducting the experiments. In support of the testimony of K. Lesse, he declared that the experiments lasted only 4 to 6 days, that there were no deaths, that none of the “human guinea pigs” ever went insane or hysterical, that any test subject who showed signs of an intolerance reaction received medical care and that not one of the test subjects suffered any long-term ill effects. In support of the testimony of Josef Laubinger, Walther Massion stressed that:

“Dr. Beiglböck treated his prisoners as humanely as his patients. He was only rude to them when they obtained potable water to drink in violation of his orders. I know absolutely for certain that not one of the ‘guinea pigs’ was ever handed over to the S.S. for punishment for violating the test procedures”.

With laudable honesty, the anti-Nazi François Bayle recalls that, after the war, several former inmates imprisoned at Dachau testified spontaneously in favor of the defendant:

Ernst Mettbach: “Dr. Beiglböck treated us very well”;

Raymond Papei: “In general, I can tell you that Dr. Beiglböck was very concerned with our welfare and was very humane towards all my comrades [...]. I know for a fact that none of my comrades was ever struck, and that none of them died. [...]. It is true that Dr. Beiglböck was very angry when he discovered that some of us had obtained

potable water and drank it, but no one was punished for that or for any other reason, and no one was arrested. [...] I would like to add that Dr. Beiglboeck gave us his address, and told us to come see him after the war. [...] even today, I would like to shake his hand and thank him for everything he did for us during those difficult times”;

Français Jean Sénès testified as follows: “Personally, I have nothing against Dr. Beiglböck. To my knowledge, he never committed any reprehensible acts against me or my comrades. To me, he was a professor, not a jailer” (*Ibid.*, p. 622).

With regards to the experiments in question, he wrote: “All the gypsies, when they arrived at the station, were informed of the nature of the experiments; they received rich, abundant food for a few days, and when the experiments started, they were given a medical examination to see if they were capable of getting through the tests; they were all the object of medical follow-up by Dr. Beiglböck throughout the entire period of the tests; I can state that no one died during this whole time, and that, when the experiments were all over, all the test subjects were given abundant food, everyone was in good health and were perfectly fit when they left the station [...].

“I can assure you that, on the advice of an ophthalmologist who was also a prisoner and examined our eyes, Dr. Beiglböck terminated the experiments ahead of schedule, thus avoiding any suffering and, in particular, any long-term effects or lesions. [...] Dr. Beiglböck did not desire these experiments and was not responsible for them. He never acted inhumanely or immorally in this situation” [*Ibid.*, p. 623.].

Obviously, the experiments were carried out strictly, but without cruelty. This should not surprise us: for the Germans, it wasn't a question of torturing the gypsies, but of obtaining very important findings for the war effort. Of course, the gypsy in the photograph looks very nervous. But why wouldn't he be while undergoing a blood test involving relatively large quantities of blood (3 test tubes full)? This is hardly proof of “the sufferings of martyrdom”.

I can also produce another photo showing another test subject who is much more relaxed.

A judgment unique in history

Not surprisingly, the Nuremberg judges upheld the contentions of the Prosecution. In their judgment, they wrote:

“In our view, the test subjects were treated with brutality. Many of them had to endure great suffering and pain, although the documents do not permit us to prove that any deaths resulted from the experiments

among the test subjects. It appears from the documents that these experiments were criminal by their very nature, and that non-Germans were ordered to serve as test subjects without their consent. To the extent that the crimes committed by Beiglböck were not war crimes, they were crimes against humanity.”

W. Beiglböck was sentenced to 15 years in prison (*Ibid.*, p. 300), which was relatively merciful, since, of his 15 co-defendants, 7 were sentenced to death, 5 to life imprisonment, 2 to 20 years and 1 to 10 years. W. Beiglböck’s sentence was later reduced to 10 years.

This was all the more hypocritical since, at the time, the American authorities were also conducting experiments on human guinea pigs without their consent. The article shown here is an extract from the weekly magazine *VSD*, dated 25 March 1993. Here, we learn that, during the war, young US army recruits were subjected to experiments intended to test the effectiveness of flak jackets and other body armor.

In the weeks that followed, the general public was treated to horrifying revelations relating to the medical experiments conducted on human guinea pigs organized in the 1950s, not only by the USSR, but by the USA as well: radioactive meals served to young mentally handicapped patients, radioactive pills administered to babies, the irradiation of prisoners’ testicles, radioactive clouds released near inhabited areas. All this surpassed anything the Germans ever did, 100 times over, perhaps 1000 times.

We have since learned that, in 1946-1948, that is, at the same time that American tribunals were sentencing German doctors for conducting medical experiments on human guinea pigs, doctors working for the Americans in Guatemala were secretly infecting hundreds of persons with syphilis, just to test the effectiveness of penicillin. 83 of these “human guinea pigs” died as a result.

If you read English, I recommend that you listen to this documentary, which will give you an idea of American practices which would have been considered deserving of the death penalty at Nuremberg ten times over.

This concludes the first stage of our journey to the land of the propaganda lies, crammed down our throats today.

During the second stage of our journey, we will examine the reality behind the fake photographs that we have been shown over and over again since 1945.

The Origins of the Emaciated Corpses Photographed in 1945: What Really Happened?

An American film entitled “Nazi Concentration Camps” was shown On 29 November 1945, during the Nuremberg trial for the first time.

Perhaps when you see these photographs, you’ll say, “OK, so what’s left of your claim that the Germans took good care of their inmates”?

Of course, the photographs are shocking, but they must be viewed in context.

“I can read them in one way only, and that is that, whatever Hitler wanted or did not want, he most assuredly did not a want the mutual bombing to go on. He had not wanted it ever to begin. He wanted it, having begun, to be called off.” (*Bombing Vindicated*, p. 47).

The Explanation Offered by Oswald Pohl’s Defense Attorney

For context, there were the terrible Allied bombings which destroyed the whole country, starting in 1943. The strategy followed by the British and Americans was simple: it consisted of destroying, not just German productive potential, but German communications and transports, to paralyze the country economically. Not to mention the cities razed to the ground to demoralize the population and add to the disorder and general disorganization.

On 14 May 1947, defense council for the former inspector of concentration camps, Oswald Pohl, explained this very clearly:

“As proof, the Prosecution showed several films intended to show general conditions after the collapse of Germany in 1945. There is hardly any need to insist on the fact that these conditions could not be considered as typical of the general conditions in the camps before and during the war. The massive air raids by the Allied air forces on the German domestic front and, more particularly, on communications, caused the collapse of all communications systems and German economic life as such, which seriously affected living conditions in Germany, including inside the camps. The conditions in the camps had to become inevitably more intolerable since a growing number of

camps were being evacuated to escape the advance of the Allied armies; the result was that many of the prisoner of war camps which were still open were crammed, to the point where it became impossible to feed the prisoners sufficiently and provide them with the minimal hygiene.”

Proof

Buchenwald camp, of course, was no exception. An Internet site affiliated with the Jewish Heritage Museum, entitled “A Living Memorial of the Holocaust”, states that the number of prisoners increased from 37,319 in December 1943 to 63,084 in December 1944, reaching 80,436 by late March 1945.

A ferociously anti-Nazi book by Jean Pélissier, *Camps de la Mort* [Death Camps], published in October 1945, describes the deterioration in camp living conditions starting in 1944:

“Professor Richet [...] was able to state that the food supply in 1944 was based on bread (which consisted of 50 to 60% potato starch), margarine, rutabaga soup, sometimes potatoes, barley or wheat, with a paltry and occasional supplement of margarine or sausage. The average calorie count of this meager pittance was 1,750, or barely two thirds of daily requirements. This quantitative insufficiency resulted, in turn, in qualitative insufficiency: near-total absence of iron, calcium, vitamins A, D and E. This dietary imbalance, aggravated by very long working hours, resulted in a process of slow starvation, which rapidly reached famine proportions in early 1945. Starting in February, in effect, food supplies were no longer sufficient to cover more than one third of physiological requirements, with approximately 1,050 calories. Result: development of infectious diseases, particularly tuberculosis, always associated with malnutrition (40% of the inmates examined in the autopsy room were tubercular).

“In Professor Richet’s words, the inmates had become ‘creatures who no longer seemed human: without fat, or musculature, or viscera’. Their psychological condition was often in accord with their physiological condition: they then lapsed into a process of profound intellectual decay. Professor Richet saw some of his companions, distinguished persons, go to the latrines eating their soup, and pick up pieces of food which they had dropped and which were contaminated by dirt and fecal matter. Many others, under the physical and psychic effect of this complex of hunger, stole or murdered people. Others kept the bodies of dead comrades near them and appeared at roll call propping the bodies up in hopes of claiming their ration. The

overcrowding, in turn, was a terrible cause of insufficiency. One third of the inmates couldn't even lie down, by night or by day. They were never alone; they never had any peace and quiet. This constant intermixing increased the mortality: from scarlet fever, erysipelas (15% of these cases being fatal, with 1,526 cases per year out of 33,000 inmates), especially from pneumonia. There were also numerous cases of deaths from typhus and dysentery: 7,000 patients in the first four months of 1945, 3,500 of whom died."

If the Germans had really wanted the inmates to die of hunger, the conditions of the first months of 1945 would have existed in 1944 or even earlier. The fact is that Professor Richet's observations prove the contrary. In 1944, food, while not abundant, of course, was "just sufficient", in the words of a former deportee to the camp, René Marnot, who then went on to say: "beginning in December [1944], the food rations fell disastrously". Therefore, the situation began to deteriorate dramatically in the last few months of 1944. Why?

This diagram confirms the statements made by Oswald Pohl's defense attorney. After over a year of preparation, the Allied strategy of mass bombings was finally perfected in 1943, resulting in a tremendous increase in the tonnage of bombs dropped on the Reich in 1944 (+360%).

Among the principal objectives were the industrial centres and means of communications. Despite the five "railway fire brigades" set up to repair the railways – each with 1,000 workers – the destruction of the railways made it far more difficult to supply the camps.

At Nuremberg, A German judge who inspected the camps, Konrad Morgen, explained: "Towards the end of the war, there was a general disorganization of communications; supplies could no longer be delivered in the necessary quantities, the factories of chemical and pharmaceutical products were being systematically bombarded. There was a shortage of all medications. At the same time, due to the evacuations from the East, the camps were terribly overcrowded." But perhaps you think German statements should not be trusted.

I will reply by citing two documents from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). A telegram sent by the ICRC to the American Secretary of State, Mr. Stettinius on 11 May 1945, reads as follows:

"POWS and civilian internees were able to receive emergency packages supplied by country of origin thanks to incessant ICRC efforts. These efforts were successful, despite difficulties of transport resulting from the war, on both sea and on land, in channeling supplies to the camps until mid-1944. Approximately three hundred tons of

food, clothing and medications. This action was seriously compromised starting in October 1944 by the mass destruction of railway communications followed by mass bombings and the destruction of road transport, despite incessant requests for transport from the ICRC to the Allied Powers since early 1944.”

In a general report written later, the ICRC confirmed these remarks and recalled:

“Finally, the destruction of communications in Germany due to the intensification of the mass bombings, paralyzed assistance actions beginning at the beginning of 1944.

“Thus, in February 1945, the situation was so serious that the International Committee feared that it would have to cease all activity in favor of civilian inmates in the camps. The German railway network had, in fact, been largely destroyed, and the trucks made available to the International Committee [...] were only sufficient for assistance to POWs”.

Such was the origin of the terrible situation in the camps during the last few months of the war.

These conditions were not the result of any deliberate policy on the part of the Germans: it was the result of the chaotic situation caused by the destruction of the Reich by Allied bombings.

Victors’ Propaganda

But for the victors – who wanted to justify their war of destruction followed by their policy of destroying National Socialism – it was absolutely imperative to make people believe the contrary. It was absolutely imperative for the peoples of the world to view the horrors of the German concentration camp system in 1945 as the necessary and inevitable result of National Socialism.

This is why the Allied propaganda of 1945 always pretended that the situation of the last months had, in reality, prevailed constantly and consistently throughout all the camps, from the very outset. All they had to do was display a few photographs taken at the liberation of the camps, and then cite the mortality statistics for the *last few months of the war*.

Jean Pélissier’s book, cited above, states:

“Professor Richet was able to state that the Germans deliberately wished to kill all the old people, the weak, the sick, all those who could not work. A figure summarizes all this: between 1 January and 8 April 1945, there were an average of 40,000 inmates at Buchenwald... It has been demonstrated with certainty that during the same period of time, there were 13,000 deaths: 2,000 in January, 5,400 in February, 5,623 in

March. To compare, let us recall that, in Paris, in 1937-1938, only 33 to 34,000 persons died out of 2 and a half million inhabitants.”

Not only was Professor Richet comparing apples with oranges (the situation in Paris in peace time had nothing to do with the situation at Buchenwald when the country was being ravaged by war), but he was careful never to mention that these deaths took place in the last *four months*, that is, the very worst months of the war.

At Nuremberg, the French prosecutor produced an “Indictment of Germans Guilty of War Crimes in Violation of International Conventions on Soldiers and Civilians” (doc. F-274).

In the chapter entitled: “Life in the Camp”, we read: “In the [Buchenwald] hospital statistics from 1 January 1943 to 15 April 1945, we counted 22,761 deaths”.

If the authors had been honest, they would have produced the diagram shown opposite, prepared based on camp statistics. In that case, it would have been clear that, starting in 1943, living conditions in Buchenwald had deteriorated drastically, implying a sudden increase in the mortality rate. As for the cause of the deterioration, the diagram showing the tonnage of bombs dropped on the Reich would have permitted people to identify the cause rather easily.

In the same document, the authors stressed: “From 1 January to 15 April 1945, 11,500 inmates are said to have died at Dachau from lack of medical care, particularly in block 30, which was reserved for the sick and invalids” (*Ibid.*). The dishonesty of this example is even more obvious, since a diagram of the mortality rate at Dachau shows that 1945 was far from representative of the other years of the camp’s existence. In 1945, the mortality rate almost tripled compared to 1944, four times higher than in 1942.

This is how the Allied propaganda of 1945 was able to make the world believe that German concentration camps were really “death camps” from the outset. Sixty years later, the propaganda is still the same. This famous photo taken at Buchenwald is reproduced in a great many books for the young. Here we have the book by Franck Segrétain entitled *La Seconde Guerre Mondiale* [The Second World War], and here, in the work by Angela Gluck Wood, entitled *Shoah*. At no time do the captions reveal that this was the situation during the last few weeks of the war, when Germany was already totally destroyed.

The Case of Bergen-Belsen

Another example may be found in the work jointly edited by Annette Wiewiorka and Michel Pierre, entitled: *La Seconde Guerre Mondiale* [The Second World War] (published by Casterman, 1999).

Page 92, a photo shows a British pastor before a mass grave filled with bodies. The caption says: “In April 1945, at Bergen-Belsen, the British dug mass graves to bury the thousands of bodies”.

In 1945, the photos taken by the British during the liberation of the camp were circulated all over the world. Here are the photos that were shown at Nuremberg.

Even today, photographs of Bergen-Belsen are considered a symbol of “Nazi barbarity”. In a supplement entitled “Goodbye to the 20th Century”, *Paris-Match* published “photos which we have no right to forget.”.

To illustrate the “absolute shame” of the Holocaust, the author of the chapter chose a close-up of a mass grave at Bergen-Belsen. The caption says: “Bergen-Belsen, near Hanover. On 15 April 1945, when the British 11th Armored Division took over the camp, the SS had not even sealed the mass graves, where bodies lay piled up by the hundreds”. In conformity with 1945 propaganda, the caption was intended to induce the reader to believe that the bodies shown were those of people massacred in a systematic extermination program concocted by the Nazis.

At the same time, certain other photos taken during the liberation of the camps or shortly afterwards have not enjoyed large-scale circulation.

Not only do these photos show adult inmates in good health, but they show children, some of them quite obviously chubby-cheeked. Dozens of other photos like this one can be found at the Imperial War Museum in London.

One particularly interesting photograph to be found at the Imperial War Museum is this one, which has never been published in German books on the concentration camp system.

Numbered BU-7993, the caption says: “Father Vincent Fay, military pastor at the 9th General Hospital, baptizing a baby, Henji Dorochova, who was born at Belsen. The baby is being carried by his mother, Raissa, from Voroshilovgrad, in the Ukraine. During the British rescue operation, the new mothers were asked if they wished to have their babies baptized, and if so, according to which religion.” I consider this proof that babies were born and survived in this camp, which is obviously incompatible with the claim that it was an “extermination camp”. But why are these photos so different from the others?

Why were there people in perfectly good health right next to whole piles of emaciated bodies?

What were living children doing there, right next to dead children?

A site never suspected of “denial” raises a corner of the veil. On Bergen-Belsen, we read: “It was only over the course of the end phase, when the inmate convoys arrived at Bergen-Belsen from the evacuated camps in the fall of 1944, that the camp very rapidly became the scene of a vast tragedy. The barracks, the hygienic installations, the infirmary care, were insufficient, and the poor conditions got worse from day to day. Between January 1945 and 15 April 1945, the date of the liberation of the camp by British soldiers, between 80,000 and 90,000 persons were transferred to Bergen-Belsen in one hundred convoys. The victims of disease, particularly typhus, famine and exhaustion, rose by the tens of thousands. When the British reached the camp on 15 April, the soldiers were overwhelmed by an infernal vision: perhaps 10,000 bodies still lay there, unburied, where they had died. The barely living could hardly be distinguished them from the dead.”

Although relatively honest, this text might lead one to believe that the Germans simply shipped the inmates to Bergen-Belsen and were content to let them die there (no doubt hoping to dispose of the bodies before the arrival of the Allies).

One author even says so, without beating around the bush. In a book entitled *Auschwitz. Les nazis et la solution finale* [Auschwitz: The Nazis and the Final Solution].

Laurence Rees writes that “the Germans made almost no effort to house or feed this massive flow of humanity”. But the truth is quite different.

Since 1 December 1944, the camp was commanded by Josef Kramer. It was Kramer who received the British from the 11th Armoured Division in order to explain the situation to them and guide them around the camp in April 1945. Taken prisoner, he was brought to trial with the members of his team.

Among the defendants was the famous Irma Grese, a very young woman guard (aged 22).

As a timid young girl, Grese had originally wished to become a nurse. When she failed her exams, she accepted a job as guard at Ravensbrück (which resulted in her getting kicked out of her parents’ house).

Later, she was assigned to Auschwitz, in Josef Kramer’s team, then at Bergen-Belsen, where she was sentenced to death and hanged.

Grese was long considered the incarnation of the “cruel beauty” of the Nazis.

During trial, Major Winwood, who defended Josef Kramer, brought up the logistical problems caused by the Allied bombings and the efforts of his client to palliate these problems, often without success.

He first explained that in December 1944, the camp was already overcrowded: it had 15,257 inmates for only 2,000 triple bunk beds. As a result, Josef Kramer ordered 3,000 triple bunk beds; but although his order had been taken into account, no delivery was made because of the lack of transport.

On 1 March 1945, he sent the concentration camp administration a complaint in the form of a letter in which he wrote: “Recently, triple bunk beds or bunks were allocated to the camp several times by the Amt B.III, but always from regions which were no longer in contact with us.”

At his trial, he confirmed his remarks, declaring: “I was supposed to receive 3,000 triple bunk beds from Czechoslovakia, but they never arrived because the trains were no longer moving”. As for bedding, the situation was a disaster.

Nevertheless, with regards to hygiene and food, relatively speaking things were not too bad: “the sanitary installations were sufficient, there were toilets in each barracks” (p. 154); “the food situation was relatively good, since there were only 15,000 prisoners” (p. 160).

The problem was that Josef Kramer received an order to accept all convoys that arrived at the camp, which was already full. And not only did the convoys arrive en masse (since many of the camps were being evacuated in the face of hostile offensives) but the chaos of the last few months also meant that most of them turned up unexpectedly, almost unannounced. So the situation rapidly got worse.

At his trial, Josef Kramer explained:

“From the biggest concentration camps, I received a telegram one or two days in advance [to tell me there was a convoy], but for the great majority of the transports, the only notice I had was when someone at Belsen railway station telephoned me to say that I should wait to receive a transport within half an hour. It was only at the station that I learned where the transport was coming from, how many persons were on board and whether they were men or women. Sometimes, the station master couldn’t even tell me how many persons there were.

“When I said he should have known, he said: ‘Well, we were fleeing [the enemy advance] and suddenly we found 10, 12 or 15 carriages at the station. We pushed as many people as we could inside, started the train, and that’s how we got here’. I wanted to give you this example so that you might know the conditions that prevailed during the months of January, February and March. The prisoners also arrived both by train and on foot”.

Then, although sleeping conditions were not very good as it was, most of the new arrivals arrived at the camp with no personal effects.

Josef Kramer recalled: “In most of the transports, people arrived with the clothing they had on. All those who left Auschwitz had a change of clothing and two blankets, but because of the great distances that they had to walk, they threw them away along the roads. The 100 or 200 blankets I had were absolutely insufficient for the thousands of prisoners that I received”. But a much more serious problem soon arose: resupply.

Still at his trial, Josef Kramer explained: “Later [i.e., after December 1944], when the new transports arrived, the food resupply problem got even worse. The food came from Celle and Hamburg, and I was supposed to furnish the vehicles myself. A company at Hamburg, with a small subsidiary at Bergen, supplied some of the food.

“The bread came from [...] Bergen, but although we had increased camp staff, the authorities told me I could only have 10,000 round loaves of bread per week. During the winter months, it was hardly possible to get potatoes and vegetables, and although I was able to obtain bread from Celle and Hanover, the air raids destroyed some of the bakeries, roads and railways. Due to the intensification of the air raids, it was the first time that bread could no longer reach the camp. I entered into contact with a bakery at Saltau and obtained about a thousand round loaves per week, but with the increasing numbers of inmates, supplies were extremely short. Because the camp population was between 30,000 and 40,000 persons, I attempted to obtain food supplies at Hamburg and sent all the vehicles I had, both day and night. Because of the cold weather, food supplies were getting more difficult to obtain; my administrative team was told that the big cities and towns had to come first”.

In February, the food situation deteriorated even further because of the sudden lack of fats.

Once again, this was because of the bombings.

During the trial of the camp personnel, a former SS man, Herta Ehlert, explained:

“I went to the kitchen and spoke to the director and superintendent; they told me that they had not received any fats from the reserve. I went to see Unterscharführer Müller, who was stock superintendent; he told me all the wagons had been destroyed during an air raid and he couldn't do anything about it.” Far from giving up, however, Josef Kramer gave orders to alleviate the shortage.

H. Ehlert continued:

“At this time, I met Kramer; I talked to him about the problem, I told him the mortality rate was increasing and that the prisoners could not be kept alive on just watery soup. He had commandoes of prisoners

pick potatoes up off the ground. These were mashed and then mixed into the soup, so that the prisoners had the impression that they'd gotten something in their stomachs".

But the consequences of the air raids were often irreparable. This was the case for the clothing and medical supplies which Josef Kramer had ordered.

Called to testify at the Belsen Trial, Rosina Kramer, his wife, recalled:

One evening, just after an air raid alert, [my husband] was pacing around, and he said:

"Now the railway car or lorry that I had been waiting for, for three months; I have just heard that it has been blown up at Hanover during an air raid; I no longer have the slightest bit of bandages or clothing".

Josef Kramer was deprived of everything: beds, blankets, clothing, first aid medical equipment, fats.

The worst thing was a serious event that took place during the month of February 1945: the appearance of typhus and eruptive fever. The former commander recalled:

"The transports arriving from Natzweiler work camp brought eruptive fever and those coming from eastern Germany brought typhus. When Dr. Horstmann brought me the case of eruptive fever, I ordered the closure of the camp before alerting Berlin. In reply, they told me the camp had to be reopened, that I was supposed to accept all future transports and that 2,500 women from Ravensbrück were going to arrive".

Without waiting, Josef Kramer expressed his dissatisfaction and his concerns for the future.

In a letter dated 1 March, addressed to the concentration camps administration, he described the terrible conditions prevailing at Bergen-Belsen. He recalled that, due to the lack of available stocks and transport within the region, winter reserves at Bergen-Belsen had been expected to guarantee subsistence until 20 February. A policy of great economy had permitted the camp to keep going a bit longer; there still reserves of turnips for six days and reserves of potatoes for eight, but no more. As for the bread, there wasn't any, nor had there been any for four days, due to the disruption of communications with Hanover. He therefore demanded that a solution be found in the next few days.

Josef Kramer also demanded emergency boilers for the kitchens. "All the camp boilers were working day and night. We should face great difficulties if one of these boilers quit working". Moreover, he issued a serious warning concerning sanitary conditions in the camp.

Within a month, he said, the mortality rate had more than quadrupled, rising from 60-70 deaths per day at the beginning of February to 250-300 at the beginning of March. He added:

“The hot air disinfection device is working around the clock, but it is not working properly now and it sometimes breaks down for several days. When SS Stabsarztführer Lolling visited the camp, he promised me a ‘short wave disinfection machine’. To use it, I need a more powerful transformer, which, according to the information I received [...], was available in Berlin. Despite my urgent need for the device, it is currently impossible for me to get it in Berlin”.

Finally, he demanded “above all, beds, blankets, kitchen equipment – all for 20,000 inmates”.

This letter of 1 March is of great importance, because it shows that the camp commandant was struggling in vain, despite the general conditions at the time, to improve conditions for the inmates. If Bergen-Belsen had been intended as a “death factory” commanded by a “sadist”, Kramer would never have written this letter. On the contrary, he would have been quite happy with the situation.

Eighteen days later, on the orders of his superiors, Rudolf Höss came to inspect Bergen-Belsen in order to render an account of the situation. Josef Kramer recalled: “He saw the whole camp and told me that what he had seen that day, he had never seen anywhere else”.

Here again, if Bergen-Belsen had really been a “death factory”, Höss would have been satisfied; he would even have congratulated the commandant for his success in organizing such an efficient extermination centre. But that wasn't what happened, quite the contrary.

Josef Kramer continued: “We went back to the office and had a conversation to try to find out what we could do to alleviate the situation. My proposals were to stop [the arrival] of all the new convoys [...]. We discussed the utilization of materials intended for the erection of new barracks. The idea was to build 40 barracks and house 100 inmates in each of them. The Obergruppenführer decided to send a telegram on the spot [...]”. This is really the proof that the authorities were concerned about the situation and wished to take urgent measures.

But the situation got even worse. During the Belsen trial, the person responsible for the supplying the kitchens and food warehouses at Belsen between 12 and 28 March 1945, Hermann Müller, explained: “Starting on 23 March, the bread supply became very irregular because of the air raids”.

Cross-examined by the Prosecution, he stated: “We had enough bread until mid-March, but then the supply problem got even worse,

and, starting on 22 or 23 March, we got practically no more bread". This was all the more disastrous because the camp population was increasing constantly:

"Until 13 April, explained Josef Kramer, transports [of deportees] arrived day and night"... 28,000 persons arrived" (*Ibid.*, p. 168). 15,000 of them were lodged in improvised barracks in camp no. 2. Asked what he did to feed these deportees from camp no. 2, he replied: "I couldn't give them anything because the available stocks were intended to last a certain period of time, and they were intended for the prisoners of our own camp" (*Ibid.*). Some people might think that, with the camp's five trucks, Josef Kramer could have managed to obtain supplies locally. But this was impossible because the Allies were attacking and destroying everything that moved.

An official of the ICRC wrote in his report: "The last days were marked by constant attacks by airplanes against small towns and roads [...]. Hundreds of burnt-out cars, bodies of horses and human beings, most of them German refugees, lay along both sides of the road". [See *Documents sur...*, p. 128].

Let us also quote Grand-Amiral Dönitz who, in his memoirs, recalls the following, describing the 28th of April 1945:

"Columns of refugees obstructed the roads from Plön, with military vehicles overloaded with wounded, soldiers and civilians. The Anglo-American bombers machine-gunned them, causing deaths and inflicting wounds. Upon their appearance, the peasants left their fields to take shelter". Then the inevitable, final disaster: the trucks from Bergen-Belsen camp were destroyed during an air raid.

At his trial, Josef Kramer explained: "Obtaining food [in early April 1945] was almost impossible because the front had broken down, and, even worse, transport was very difficult. My own trucks were blown to bits during a dive bomber attack before the arrival of the Allies, and the only thing I had left was a single truck". Nothing could be done for camp no. 2 and its thousands of prisoners. The situation was apocalyptic, even in the main camp.

Water was so short that, during the last week, they were using emergency cisterns, but only for the kitchen: there was no question of washing, despite the large numbers of typhus victims.

It is hardly surprising that one SS officer working at Bergen-Belsen later declared:

"When I came back to the camp for the third time, at the end, I didn't feel well, because of the horrible smell". For food, there was just a bit of soup.

One defendant, Karl Francioh, who worked in the camp kitchens at the women's camp in April 1945, recalled:

“Over the course of my period of activity, [the prisoners received] one liter of coffee in the morning, but not always; for lunch, a liter of soup; and for dinner, the same thing. Sometimes, there was bread twice a week, sometimes nothing, and in the end, there was no more bread at all”.

The situation was such that the kitchen had to be guarded by several men [“several [guards] stood round the kitchen”, deposition of K. Francioh (*Ibid.*, p. 296)] to prevent the theft of what little remained. In the men's camp, it was even worse.

Interrogated as to whether or not there was enough food during the last few days of the camp's existence, a former deportee, Josef Trzos, remarked: “No. In our block, we only got 300 liters of soup for 800 people”.

This is further confirmed by another former deportee, Antoni Aurdzieg, who stated: “At Belsen, there was no bread, and we received a half-liter of soup per day” (*Ibid.*, p. 469). Here, again, the situation was such that exceptional measures had to be taken:

Thus, during the distribution of food in a block for sick peoples, *each window* and *each door* had to be guarded to prevent the intrusion of other starving inmates attempting to steal the meager pittance intended for the very ill.

In a final convulsion of horror, even the morgue had to be guarded, because of a case of cannibalism. A deportee had broken into the building at night and stolen certain “body parts”. Faced with this situation, which had gotten totally out of control, Josef Kramer was utterly helpless.

In reality, Josef Kramer was neither a sadist, nor a criminal, not even a man who regarded the death of inmates with indifference; he was the command of an overcrowded camp dominated by apocalyptic conditions, with almost no beds, blankets, clothing, medical supplies, pharmaceuticals or food. Completely powerless, he remained at his post until the very end, in accordance with orders received, and finally surrendered his camp to the British.

When, after having visited the areas and having seen the filth, the bodies, etc., a British soldier, Derrick Sington, wisecracked:

“You've made a fine hell here”, to which Kramer replied: “It became one in the last few days”.

But this truth was of no interest to the victor. When the British found that these scenes of horror could be skillfully exploited by British

war propaganda, Kramer was apprehended, put in chains, and forced to pose in the midst of a pile of dead bodies.

This is how a simple commandant, over his head and powerless, whose name would normally have been quickly forgotten, became “The Man with a Heart of Stone”, the “worst torturer in history”.

A booklet published in Belgium in May 1945 states:

“The worst torturer in history, Joseph Kramer, was able, to his credit, to his credit, of 400 VICTIMS PER DAY [...]. This man with a heart of stone was capable of burning the living and the dead, all together, sending women from the vicinity to dance around the bonfires while shrieking hysterically”. A few weeks beforehand, however, French news radio bulletin had broadcast the following report:

“The principal cause of the situation in the camps in 1945 was there: a Germany totally dislocated by the terrible Allied bombardments. Not only did the victors refuse to acknowledge this, but, with diabolical cynicism, they took advantage of photographs of the liberated camps, particularly, at Bergen-Belsen.”

In a British report, the commentator spoke of “the shriveled and tortured bodies of men and women who had been practically murdered”. When the Belsen Trial was held, the press merely relayed the propaganda of the victors.

For more than sixty years, there has been no change in the propaganda. They show horrible photos completely out of context, i.e., artificially disconnecting the history of the Third Reich, i.e., the bombings and the war, from the history of the camps. Not a word about the terrible results of Allied bombing.

As to what the defendants might have been able to defend themselves, to explain what happened, the court historians are utterly indifferent. The only thing about the trials that interests them is the indictments and sentences.

Sentences which very often closed the mouths of men who might be able to defend themselves given a chance. Today, all history needs to be rewritten.

