31 October 2012

Collaboration and Resistance

Place Félix Eboué
Paris
Collaboration and Resistance: Introduction

Robert Brasillach, 1909-1945
literary editor of *Action française* in 1930s
editor of *Je suis partout*
executed as a collaborationist

“The young fascist, involved with his race and nation, proud of his vigorous body; his lucid spirit, disdaining the things of this world; the young fascist in his cam, amidst the comrades of peace who can become comrades of war; the young fascist who sings, who marches, who works, who dreams—is above all a joyous being.”
Brasillach, *The Seven Colors* (1939).

Jean Moulin, 1899-1943
government administrator; arrested by Germans in 1940, attempted to cut throat with piece of glass; released, returned to office (in occupied North), fired; went to London and met with De Gaulle; assigned task of “unifying” resistance within France parachuted into France; June 1943—caught by Gestapo; died on train to Germany
The Dark Years: France, 1940-1944

“I don’t want all those Frenchmen. But those Frenchmen who live along the border... four hundred years ago, they were Germans.”

Hitler, *Monologe* (Aug. 29, 1942)*

---

Vichy in the Tropics

French Equatorial Africa
today: Gabon, Chad, Congo, Central African Republic
Arguments for Vichy and the “National Revolution [or “Regeneration”]”

Defeat proves failure of republicanism
--more military men in Vichy government than in any since 1832

Paris is not France

Restore French traditions temporarily interrupted by revolution, such as:

corporate organization of work
regionalism
important role for Catholic Church

Varieties of “Collaboration”
Arguments for Collaboration

administrative: protect French sovereignty

diplomatic: 1940 was an armistice, not a peace treaty

social: minimize impact of armistice on daily life

“If we collaborate with Germany… if we work for her in our factories, if we give her certain facilities, we can save the French nation, reduce to the minimum our territorial losses in the colonies and on the mainland, and play an honorable—if not an important—role in the future of Europe. … It is in France’s interest to live and to remain a great power. … In the present state of the world, and taking account of our terrible defeat, I see no other way to protect our interests.”*

[Admiral] François Darlan—Pétain’s second in command as of winter 1941.

* Darlan, Lettres et notes (May 14, 1941) cited in Julian Jackson, France, The Dark Years

Varieties of “Collaboration”
Collaborationism in the North

Attempts to create French fascist party
  Marcel Déat  *Rassemblement National Populaire*
  Jacques Doriot  *Parti Populaire Français*

  total membership approx. 220,000
  (office workers; artisans; small-business owners)

Exhibitions and Events
  “Freemasonry [its links to Jews and the British]”
  “The Jew and France”
  “Bolshevism against Europe”

Pro-German Press
  *Je suis partout*—300,000 weekly copies (1944)
  *La Gerbe*—more literary, 100,000 copies
  *Nouvelle revue française*—Drieu la Rochelle
  pacifists
  celebration of wartime austerity
  “France was dead; Hitler was our future.”

Varieties of “Collaboration”
June 1940: Third Republic’s legislators vote themselves out of existence; Vichy State --Charles de Gaulle calls for continuing to fight

July 1940: British sink French fleet in Algeria (Mers-el-Kebir); 1300 French deaths
The Germans’ tactics, their tanks and airplanes—this is what made us retreat… But has the last word been said? Should hope disappear? No! Believe me, for I know what I am saying and I tell you France is not lost…. For France is not alone! France is not alone. She has a vast empire behind her. She can form an alliance with the British Empire, which controls the seas and continues the fight… This war does not hang on the battle of France, this war is a world war…

Charles de Gaulle, 18 June 1940
The Resistance *as* Collaboration (with the British)

"Frenchmen, it is with your own blood that they will turn your flag red" (1944)
STO (Compulsory Labor Service), 1943-1944

“Its Denent Leur Sang
Donate Your Work
In Order to Save Europe from Bolshevism.”

670,000 French workers “drafted” for German factories

May Day—Labor Day.
“I keep promises, even those made by others.”
July 1942 “Vel d’Hiver” round up of Jews in northern France
Nov. 1942 German occupation of Vichy
Feb. 1943 intro of STO
June 1943 Moulin arrested; killed
June 1944 Allied landings in Normandy
August 1944 Paris liberated
May 1945 coastal France fully liberated

75,721 Jews deported from France (24% of total population)
4000 (roughly) executed in France or died in French camps
approx. 1/3 French, 2/3 foreign
Monument to the Unknown Deported Worker
(Père Lachaise Cemetery, Paris) 1970

Memorial to the Martyrs of Deportation
(Ile de la cité, near Notre Dame) 1962

Paris Holocaust Museum (Marais) 2005
Collaboration

1944-1951 trials for collaboration
approx. 2500 death sentences
767 executions

1944-1945 épurations (purges)
10,000 people shot as “collabos”

1949
97% of Vichy civil servants and experts
still in their jobs

photo from US National Archives
Conseil National de la Résistance (CNR) Charter

United as to our goal and the means we will use to achieve the rapid liberation of our territory, the representatives of the movements, groups, parties, and political tendencies included in the CNR declare they will remain united after the Liberation, in order to ensure:

• democracy established by giving a voice back to the French people and restoring universal suffrage
• complete liberty of thought, faith, and expression
• liberty of the press and its independence from both the State and moneyed or foreign influences
• freedom of association, meeting, and protest

• the creation of true social and economic democracy, with the eviction of all economic and financial feudal overlords
• a rational organization of the economy, assuring that all private interests are second to the general good
• increased national production based on a state plan, after consulting representatives of all elements of the population
• the right to work and the right to leisure … and a complete plan of social security, guaranteeing that all citizens can support themselves, even when they cannot get work
• recompense for the bombed and pensions to the victims of fascist terror
• an extension of political, social, and economic rights to the native populations of the colonies
France in 1945
more than 50% of railway destroyed
economy had been redirected to German war effort for five years (meant most working
machinery had been moved to Germany)
imports 500% of exports
60% of workers returned from STO to discover marriage had collapsed
(divorce on grounds of mutual assent legalized in 1975)

Political Spectrum

LEFT
Communists       Socialists

CENTER
MRP (Popular Republican “Radicals” Movement)=Christian democrats

RIGHT
RPF (“Rally of the French People”)= De Gaulle