The Present in the Past: History and Memory in France Today

Soubise Building
French national archives, Paris
Pierrefitte has had four mayors since 1945; the three who served from 1945-2008 were all Communists.

>50% of population is of North African, African, or Turkish heritage (estimate).
Two French teenagers died fleeing the police in a Paris banlieue. Other youth in the same neighborhood (Clichy-sous-Bois) protested, set vehicles and municipal buildings (schools, post offices) on fire eventually spread to all French banlieues (nearly 3000 people jailed). "state of emergency" declared, giving police exceptional powers in the banlieues.

Nicolas Sarkozy
French president, 2007-2012
as Interior Minister in 2005, he called people in the banlieues "scum" who should be "cleaned with a blow torch"
“France does not have a single great history museum deserving of the name... The Museum of the History of France could be partly a federation of existing museums, that would work together and collaborate with great institutions abroad. But the Museum must have a Center, it must have a site in some symbolic place. ... This initiative will also help to re-enforce a sense of our identity, of our cultural identity.”
“The report on holidays provokes a debate: do we commemorate too much in France?”

1880  July 14 declared “National Holiday”
1920  “Festival of Joan of Arc” (second Sunday in May)
1922  Armistice Day (November 11)
1954  Deportation Day (honors all deported in WW2, last Sunday in April)
1981  Armistice/Victory in Europe Day (May 8)
2000  “Justes de France” (honors memory of victims of Vichy anti-semitism and racism and those who helped rescue or hide potential victims*; July 16)
2001  Abolition of slavery, 1848 (May 10**) 
2003  Memorial day for the dead of Algerian war (Dec. 5) and for the harkis (Sept. 25)
2005  Memorial day for the dead in Indochina (June 8)
2006  De Gaulle’s appel [radio speech] (June 18)

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Springtime in France, 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Easter Monday</td>
<td>April 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workers’ Day</td>
<td>May 1</td>
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<td>V-E Day</td>
<td>May 8</td>
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<td>Ascension</td>
<td>May 17</td>
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<td>Pentecost Monday</td>
<td>May 28</td>
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<td>National Holiday</td>
<td>July 14</td>
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since Ascension is always on a Thursday, this is a four-day weekend; the Monday is often also taken as a holiday

* according to Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem, there are 2,833 such French people
** had been celebrated April 27 in Mayotte; May 22 in Martinique; May 27 in Guadeloupe; June 10 in Guyana; December 20 in Réunion
The *Bicentenaire* (bicentennial of the French Revolution), 14 July 1989

glory —military parade in the morning

Doudou NDiaye Rose—drummer from Senegal who participated in Goude’s parade of the “Rights of Man”

spectacle: evening parade orchestrated by Jean-Paul Goude
Another *Bicentenaire*

Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, founder of the Society of St. Pius X denounced Vatican II and religious pluralism rejected French Revolution as “masonic and anti-Catholic” praised Vichy as a “Catholic” state supported Le Pen as “the only French politician who really opposes abortion”

“It is thanks to all these immigrants that your daughters, your wives, your children will be kidnapped and taken to places like Casablanca”

1987, The Barbie Trial

1913 born near Bonn, Germany
1935 joined the SS
1942 became head of Gestapo in Lyon
1947-1951 worked for U.S. Counter Intelligence
1951-1983 Bolivia; Argentina
1950s found guilty *in absentia* of Moulin’s murder
1983 extradited
1987 trial for “crimes against humanity”

1990: Gayssot Law (introduced by PCF deputy) makes Holocaust denial a crime
1998, The Maurice Papon trial

Maurice Papon, 1910-2007
1942-1944 Secretary General of the Gironde (Bordeaux)
1958 named director of Paris Police
1961 awarded Legion of Honor (personally awarded by Charles de Gaulle)
1965 named director of Sud Aviation (French firm involved in building Concorde)
Oct. 1997-April 1998 trial for “crimes against humanity” (longest trial in French history)
found guilty; fled to Switzerland before charged; eventually extradited
1999-2002 serves three years of ten-year sentence
2002 released on grounds of ill health
2007 controversy over being buried with Legion of Honor

Papon at his trial

Henry Rousso, The Vichy Syndrome (1987)
and Vichy, an Ever-Present Past (1994)