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Hannah Diamond and Simon Kitson, eds., *Vichy, Resistance, Liberation: New Perspectives on Wartime France*, (Oxford and New York: Berg 2005). 207 pp.  
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Review by Vesna Drapac, University of Adelaide.

This volume of essays celebrates the contribution of H. R. Kedward to French historical scholarship. It brings together the work of many of Kedward's former students as well as individuals who have been influenced by him. Each chapter tells a story which can stand alone but which is also part of an extended discussion—sustained from beginning to end—on a series of related themes. The book conveys the atmosphere and evokes the urgency of the crisis French people faced as they contemplated and lived through a second world war.

Hannah Diamond and Simon Kitson place Kedward's career in the context of Vichy historiography. He emerged as a leading historian of resistance and showed it to be nuanced and multilayered. Kedward's interest in the French countryside and its people was expressed in a historical sensibility that led to the groundbreaking and still unsurpassed *Resistance in Vichy France: A Study of Ideas and Motivation in the Southern Zone* (1978). As a teacher and mentor Kedward created and sustained a vibrant research culture that produced many talented historians, Diamond and Kitson among them.

The second chapter, an interview conducted by Martin Evans, builds on the first to reveal an historian in the making. It is rare that we get such glimpses into the lives of even eminent academics like Kedward. The questions Evans posed allowed for the personal and professional to merge in Kedward's responses. Why did he become an historian and why did he become the historian that he is? The snatches of scenes from his childhood, school days and university life and the stories of the influence of teachers and peers, as well as the details of his political engagement at the local level, give us some clues. Kedward's deep interest in the people making up his histories marks his work much as it marked the work of another historian who greatly admired him, Richard Cobb. Kedward's use of oral history and his ability to blend the cultural, social and political into his writings on the "dark years" had an impact on subsequent scholarship, as is evident from the wide-ranging topics covered in this collection.

The book's two sections, "Collective Trajectories" and "Individual Trajectories" fit together well. Communities, variously defined, with shared (often evolving) identities enduring and negotiating the challenges that came with war and defeat in different ways, provide the focus for Part I. In Part II, it is through the close study of individuals that we come to understand the dilemmas confronting people in the course of their professional and private lives.

We learn that one's behaviour was not always predictable on the basis of pre-war affiliations or interests. Siân Reynolds shows that women who had been ardent advocates of pacifism did not of necessity accommodate defeat. It is true that their wartime choices were often determined by and reflected the range of options and experiences available to them before 1940, and a number of them did not resist in the classic sense. Nonetheless they enlisted strategies to withstand the inroads of the National Revolution and the corrosive influence of collaborationism. Resistance and collaboration were never simple opposites and historians

like Kedward have long recognized that fact. The idea that people who mitigated the consequences of collaboration somehow condoned it, still adhered to by some, is a narrow and unsustainable view as Reynolds's case studies show. We can see that the wartime choice of some women to work for the Secours National was not only natural given their humanitarian impulse, but also commendable. It was a good choice and while not all good choices led to resistance, they often created the circumstances in which resistance became possible and then successful.

The circumstances of the war made the ordinary in some people's lives extraordinary. As the multi-authored chapter "Quite simply Colonel. . .!" *Gender and the Second World War* confirms, women often found themselves in a position to do as much as or more than men in the name of national defence. This was either because they could undertake subversive actions under the cover of their normal activities which did not attract the negative attention of the authorities, or because of the new opportunities afforded by the fact that in total war gendered stereotypes are not entirely fitting. In total war men and women are called upon to make sacrifices for the nation, to defend it and to kill for it if need be. This brief chapter confirms that there is still much to be gained from interpretations of the war grounded in an understanding of gendered identities. If stereotypes were not overturned, the range of experiences of many women was greater than in peace; and if Lucie Aubrac's was an exceptional life in some regards, in others it was emblematic of the multiple roles assumed by women at that time. Aubrac was a mother, a wife, a resister. That was only part of her story and it was not necessarily one to which all men were receptive. If in the wake of liberation came a number of new rights for women, there was a degree of discomfort, too, with the new equality from the point of view of some men. For example, the violent reaction to women who had "slept with the enemy", the authors argue, was evidence of the fact that the next battle between the sexes would be over the control of women's bodies.

A number of the authors make the observation that the greater blurring of the boundary between home front and war front made the French experience of the Second World War different from that of the Great War. But this fact also "democratised" people's capacity to contribute to the battle on many fronts. Further, as these essays show over and over, many variables determined how any given group or individual would live the war. No community was unvariegated, no identity (whether defined by class, politics, gender, geography or religion) fixed. Certain factors enabled some to endure better than others. Diamond's sketch of a nationally-mixed Provençal mining community from the 1930s to the 1940s reveals that here the experience of war was relatively uneventful and that survival was the key concern. Perhaps pre-war cohesion which had been achieved through many things including union activism gathering immigrant workers and the French-born under a common banner, made this calm response possible. In the late 1940s came fragmentation, and Diamond links this to changes resulting from the war, including, interestingly, differences in the profile post-1945 immigrant workers.

As one might expect, the Jewish refugees who found themselves in Nice—the mainland's "Casablanca"—in the hope of finding safe passage out of the country, had an altogether different experience of the war from the Provençal miners. Miranda Pollard, inspired by Kedward's use of local and oral sources, draws on "grammatical" testimonies, free of "ornament" and "literary devices" to recreate the Nice of 1939-43. The recollections—including that of Stanley Hoffmann—reveal what determined whether Jews could leave France legally, and if they could not whether they avoided deportation and, if they did, the extent to which they could exert some influence to ameliorate the suffering of other Jews. Background, education, money, access to lawyers and government officials, and connections in Nice, were just some of the factors that came into play. Help sometimes came unexpectedly, from French prison guards for example, and the stories, unembellished, evoke the incomprehension and confusion people felt at the time, reminding us of the dangers of reading this history backwards: "No one knew what to do." Pollard's interest is the Réseau

Marcel, founded and run by two young Jews from Paris dedicated to the rescue of Jewish children. This chapter describes the vulnerability and suffering of minors as well as the resilience and resourcefulness of young adults in face of cruelty and potentially overwhelming odds.

All verbal communication was more nuanced in wartime as the two evocative chapters by Jean-Marie Guillon and Martyn Cornick on rumour and radio, show. Guillon, like others, observes that the distinction between fronts was less obvious than in the Great War, and that therefore rumour performed a different function. Its significance lay less in its relative truthfulness than in what it revealed about the state of public opinion and people's hopes and aspirations. The Vichy regime, the Germans, the Allies and the resistance: each was the subject of rumours. If the government was critical of certain "rumour mills" then chances were that the stories would gain momentum. Can we speak of a resistance "limited to words" and could words constitute a "form of fighting however meagre"? Guillon argues that, to a point, we can and they did, though perhaps too apologetically given the nature of his evidence.

If we take the "fraternity of listeners"—huddled around their radios often with people from their apartment blocks—into account too, then we can observe the cumulative effect and power of carefully crafted BBC radio messages at this time of censorship and intensive propaganda. Those responsible for the BBC programming destined for French listeners were mindful of the need to maintain a moderate, "tell it as it is", approach. Their directive was not to "overdo" it. People's nerves were overwrought as it was and exaggerated claims or obvious misinformation would backfire and "do harm." The BBC's goal, in retrospect, may seem modest enough, but its immediate impact was great, as many at the time and subsequently confirmed. Furthermore, the "demonstrably simple fact of enduring and surviving the Battle of Britain was more potent than the most sophisticated propaganda: the message that Hitler could be resisted was being received and understood in France" (p. 107). The directors of the BBC's French programming gleaned information about the reception of their transmissions from interviews undertaken with French refugees on their arrival in London. In addition, producers learnt of the ingenious methods the French used to establish the optimum conditions for short wave listening and to avoid the Germans' attempts at jamming the BBC and other "unfriendly" broadcasters. The programmes were vital for people in France and vital for the profile of the London-based resistance because the information transmitted often gave reason for hope and the motivation to move (mentally) from endurance to refusal and, finally, resistance when and where appropriate and possible.

Hilary Footitt draws our attention to the advantages of examining an issue, in this case the liberation of the port of Cherbourg in a purely Allied-German confrontation, from different national perspectives, or as she says, by taking a "cross-cultural approach." Her chapter marks a departure from the general national and historiographical isolationism of French historians of this period. The resistance did not figure in Cherbourg's liberation narrative and the city was "occupied" by the Americans for fifteen months from July 1944. Thus liberation here was not a story of French triumph over adversity followed by the immediate reinstatement of local authority, but a messier tale illustrating an imbalance of power, an all but grudging acknowledgement of the foreign liberators, and little resentments on both sides, American and French, until finally the former departed. The popular image of the American soldier, pockets full of treats of all kinds with a swag of French children in tow, was not invented and possibly all the more irritating to some as a result.

That the relationship between responses to the two world wars is a topic of promise is highlighted in John Horne's comparison of the 1918 and 1938 versions of Abel Gance's *J'Accuse*. The difference in the productions, Horne argues, underscores the significance of the process of "cultural demobilisation." He shows that the sacrifice of soldiers provided "the moral core of the [1918] film" at a time when one still might have believed in the redemptive power of war (in the case for the "bully" François, for example). In the 1938

version, described as an “anti-war film” that was “endorsed” by the leading veterans’ organisation, the enemy is war itself (p. 138). By the time of the release of the 1938 version hopes for peace and faith in the international structures that were meant to maintain it, had foundered. The film thus articulated Gance’s disillusionment and his complete horror of war. The final scene, showing the rising of the dead of actual war wounded whose “hideous disfigurement” had kept them out of the public eye, was in marked contrast to the more abstract ending of the first film in which reconciliation and hope arise out of the suffering and the ruins.

Both Reynolds and David Berry explore how the conceptualization of war itself as ‘the enemy’ and as the product of the failure of powerful elites to prevent it, affected different groups and individuals. Berry’s subject is anti-war activist and ‘outstanding figure on the French revolutionary left for over fifty years’, Daniel Guérin. On key points there was no ambivalence for Guérin. Germany, France and Britain were equally to blame for the war and he maintained any stance other than his own— including, or especially, that of the socialists—facilitated the rise and hegemony of fascism in Europe. Like Gance, Guérin had no experience of combat but when he did see the consequences of some fighting in 1943, he was shocked and distressed. The incident only confirmed his commitment to international peace and even when later in the war he noted an admirable ‘pre-revolutionary atmosphere’ complete with a degree of class consciousness in areas where FTP fighters were ‘in control’, he could see also their susceptibility to “chauvinistic deviations.” He wrote: “I would never ally myself with the chauvinists of my country in order to resist Hitler. Their means are not ours” (p. 147). One might admire his consistency and understand his retreat into the world of academic writing at this difficult time. It was, however, a luxury denied those trying to effect the liberation or to those whose circumstances required some compromise, not just for personal survival but for institutional continuity in opposition to nazification. Often a double standard applies in appraisals of the behaviour of those who did not resist depending on their political inclination, and Guérin seems to benefit from this tendency.

Whereas some historians have emphasized the ruptures occasioned by war and the choices it threw up, others have focused on the notion of continuities and the persistence of certain ideas which predated Vichy and which were nurtured by the regime. It could not be said that the career of the economist François Perroux, as described by Julian Jackson, would be either elevating or especially damning to one looking for moral lessons in the wartime behaviour of French academics. Perroux’s views on the wider function of economics—nurturing the whole person—grew out of the ‘third way’ social thinking of Catholic (among other) philosophers and theorists of the interwar period. For some, including Perroux, Vichy’s project for national renewal offered an opportunity for social experimentation. Theirs turned out to be an unrealistic and misguided trust in a defective and transient regime, as many of their contemporaries realized at the time. Perroux’s critique of the modern economist as one who treated people as “robots” had its supporters across the political spectrum. As it turned out, however, he seemed closer to Vichy’s fascism than its (perversion of) Catholicism. Perroux’s career was not ruined by his wartime opportunism, far from it, but nor did he go on to realize the potential suggested by his reputation before the war. And in a sense he provides the bridge between Guérin and Paulette Bernège, the subject of Jackie Clarke’s chapter.

Clarke argues that the example of Bernège reveals that Vichy was not as ideologically complex as some have averred and that the modernizing/traditionalist dichotomy, in particular, is more exaggerated than real. Bernège, the quintessential ‘home scientist’, sought to bring modern domestic economics and principles of rationalization of work practices, “Taylorism”, into the rural household. This was in order to preserve what she deemed a fundamental unit of the national economy and the French way of life, the family farm, from the inroads of the (alienating) industrialized techniques of the age of modern agriculture. Clarke explains that the tensions in domestic economics were not so much the

result of the clash between the forward thinking and the reactionary, but a product of modernity itself, articulating the (eternal and modern) quest for the unattainable: order.

Pronatalism, Karen Adler shows, was not just about producing more babies. It concerned peopling France with more babies of a particular kind. Eugenicist principles were always close to the surface in the discourse of “healthy” demographics. Pronatalists saw themselves as beyond ideology, the products of pure science and of modern medicine and widely accepted “public health” practices. One of the lessons of the range of racial imperatives in the war is that there is no “population policy” without ideology. As uncomfortable as it is to contemplate that fact, Adler shows that ignoring it is worse.

Moving from the particular to the general in reconstructing the world of wartime France is not always straightforward but it remains one of our primary challenges as we revisit this (at times) difficult terrain. Kedward achieved a balance in this regard and stimulated further incisive and subtle work that helps us make sense of the range of French responses to war and occupation.

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