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Simon Kitson. *Police and Politics in Marseille, 1936-1945*. Leiden: Brill, 2014. xviii + 307 pp. \$149.00. U.S. (cl). ISBN: 1385-7827.

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The product of many years of research and reflection—more than twenty-two, Kitson tells us in his acknowledgements—this book makes a major contribution to the study of Vichy France and the police. It is a credit to Brill that they have published a work that up to now has only been available as a difficult-to-find dissertation. A case study of an exceptional place by any measure, a large, cosmopolitan port city, Kitson's Marseille nevertheless has a great deal to say about problems of collaboration and resistance that applied throughout France, and indeed occupied Europe as a whole. More than any other institution, police forces mark the boundary between state and society. Dealing adequately with the police means asking about the nature, extent, and duration of support for a succession of governments in a singularly tumultuous period. Kitson does so with sure-handed balance and a truly impressive mastery of the archival sources. His engagement with the secondary literature, while impressive, is incomplete in terms of recent work. Nonetheless, *Police and Politics in Marseille* provides a rich social history of the institution, seeing the world through the eyes of inspectors, *commissaires*, and *gardiens de paix*.

The book unravels an apparent paradox. How is it that the French police provided massive, essential assistance to the Nazis in their effort to exterminate Jews and yet proved much less loyal to the collaborationist Vichy regime than most historians, even specialists, have realized? To answer this question, Kitson builds on two generations of scholarship that have documented the extent of Vichy France's collaboration with the Nazis. While the outlines of this story have been well-known for some time thanks to the work of Donna Ryan and others, [1] Kitson looks closely at the mechanics of police participation. What motivated officers? How much of their participation came from ideological affinity and how much was coerced from above, by Vichy and the German occupation authorities?

Police officers, like most of French society, initially welcomed the new regime. For all that the rank-and-file officers and their unions tended to sympathize with the Socialist Party, they had spent years monitoring foreign immigrants and fighting Communism, and they expected Vichy to back up its support for law and order with material resources, both in terms of equipment and pay. Those resources had been sorely lacking for years. Paid a pittance, officers were outgunned by the criminals they were supposed to control. After Henri Tasso's Popular Front failed to deliver and Simon Sabiani lost influence among officers as he drifted to the far right—by the time of the Popular Front, Sabiani had joined forces with Jacques Doriot in the Parti Populaire Français—many officers looked hopefully to a new regime that promised to make law and order a key priority. Vichy, that is, appeared to offer solutions on several fronts, all the more so given the war hero Pétain's prestige among former soldiers, which included a great many police officers. Germany's initial military success reinforced these trends.

Kitson reminds readers that most of what Vichy asked the police to do in 1940 differed little from what Édouard Daladier had required of them in the prior two years, and turnover on the force was minimal. Regime change did not immediately mean rupture, at least not in most areas. The campaigns against Communists and foreigners predated the armistice even if the motives differed in fundamental ways. What immediately struck officers, however, was not the motivation, but the scale of the operations. Kitson rightly points out that the initiative of ordinary officers mattered hugely, especially the *gardiens de la paix*, ordinary beat cops, who made up the vast majority of the force and tended to go out on their shifts alone. While pressure from superiors played a part, most policing demanded the initiative or at least follow-through from the rank and file. For Vichy's first two years, ordinary officers eagerly did their part.

Anti-Semitic policy was a special case. For all that the Third Republic had singled out foreigners, it had never targeted Jews. From 1940, Pétain's government applied considerable pressure on subordinates to enforce new laws targeting Jews. Pétain's chief of staff (*directeur du cabinet*) gloated when the Bouches-du-Rhône rounded up 147 Jews and put them under a compulsory residence order (*assignation à résidence*) in 1941. In Marseille, the police hierarchy needed no prompting. The local *intendant de police* de Rodellec du Porzic, quickly earned the trust of Theodore Dannecker of the Nazi Jewish Affairs Bureau. All branches of the police took part in anti-Jewish measures, from the vice squad to counter-espionage services. For the round-ups, both the police and the gendarmerie (part of the military) arrested Jews, guarded internment camps and accompanied trains transporting Jews to the northern zone; from there, they were transported eastwards to death camps. Because anti-Semitic policy was a priority both for Vichy and the Germans, precise instructions from above that were subject to scrutiny limited officers' room for maneuver; disobedience was rare. While there is evidence of foot-dragging and resistance, especially after the major waves of deportations in 1942-1943 shifted opinion, superiors ensured compliance by sending officers out in pairs who did not know one another--from different branches, often from different towns. They had to make quick judgments under enormous pressure about risking their futures and their families, constantly running the risk of denunciation by unknown partners. In the biggest operations, especially in 1943, the police hierarchy brought in reinforcements from around the country, between 7,000 and 9,000 men, in addition to 5,000 members of the German Order Police and an SS police regiment. Fully in line with a strong consensus in the field, Kitson stresses "[t]he responsibility of Vichy in these deportations was manifold.... Moreover, all those transferred for deportation on the morning of 24 January [1943] had been arrested during the French-initiated operations and without exception they were arrested by the French Police" (p. 155).

While Kitson's dissertation anticipated and often informed much of the best work on the police since the 1990s, the book would have benefited from a more thorough consideration of recent research. Jean-Marc Berlière's work on police collaboration, which transformed our understanding of the field, is cited but not fully engaged.[2] Denis Peschanski's 2002 thesis on the camps and Laurent Joly's massive 2006 thesis on the Commissariat général aux questions juives are conspicuously absent.[3] The book would have gained from a more systematic examination of the question Ivan Ermakoff recently analyzed: Why exactly did Vichy struggle to achieve the targets it set for Jews to deport? How important were the social origins of officers compared to the milieu in which they operated? How did Marseille's police compare to other forces across the country, especially in the south, in officers' willingness to help or allow Jews to escape?[4] The book might also usefully have responded to the idea of the so-called "French paradox," the relatively high survival rate of Jews in France, especially French citizens,

compared to western European countries like the Netherlands, Belgium, or Norway—though not Italy or Denmark.[5]

Vichy's state anti-Semitism, *l'antisémitisme d'état*, differed fundamentally from Nazi Germany's. Recognizing that Vichy had its own, home-grown anti-Semitic tradition, Kitson rightly stresses the centrality of xenophobia in France and the distinction drawn between French and foreign Jews: "Unlike the French, the Nazis made no philosophical distinction between Jews who were their compatriots and those that were not.... Extermination was never the avowed intent of the Vichy regime even for foreign Jews" (p. 108). This is vital, especially the latter point about extermination. As Renée Poznanski has put it, anti-Semitism was not at the core of Vichy's efforts to rejuvenate and revivify the national community the way it was in Nazi Germany. Placing anti-Semitism at the heart of Vichy's concerns in 1940 amounts, she says, "to the revenge of historiography over history." [6]

Kitson nevertheless pushes the distinction between French and German anti-Semitism too far. There was an important racial dimension, for example, to Vichy's approach to nationality law, to denaturalization in particular. [7] In a work on police collaboration, it is striking to see the author claim that the French police did not arrest French Jews before 1943: "[F]or the government most French Jews remained citizens and it showed initial reticence to organize or encourage their expulsion. It was not until the beginning of 1943 that French Police arrested Jewish compatriots other than those who were children of immigrants or who had been naturalized French" (p. 108). That is true for the Unoccupied Zone but not for the country as a whole. [8] French police officers arrested French Jews starting in the second main raid, on August 20, 1941, in Paris, and continuing thereafter in the Occupied Zone. [9]

For a work that handles the complex, contradictory role of police officers so well, *Police and Politics in Marseille* is oddly indulgent towards the country's key decision-makers. "Laval's government," Kitson writes, suggesting a hapless passivity, "allowed itself to become an active accomplice in the Holocaust" (p. 108). He exaggerates Vichy's efforts to protect French Jews in the crucial year, 1942: "Sacrificing foreign Jews from the southern zone was meant to save French ones in the north where the Germans were threatening to carry out anti-Semitic operations" (p. 110). Vichyites often made this case after the war, [10] but there is no evidence that saving French Jews was a priority, certainly not as long as the Wehrmacht was winning. As Julian Jackson notes, it is "wrong to infer . . . that Laval sacrificed almost half the foreign Jews to save French ones. [11] Yes, holding on to French sovereignty was paramount for Laval and Bousquet. Nor were they anti-Semites in the mold of Louis Darquier de Pellepoix. But if anti-Semitism was not their primary motivation, both men saw Jews as expendable. They targeted foreign Jews to avoid resistance, [12] consolidate their power, and get rid of people already detained in French camps, people they considered "human waste." In May 1942, Bousquet was more concerned with emptying French camps of foreign and stateless Jews than he was in protecting the French Jews already interned in the Occupied Zone. [13] Faced with protests for removing deportation exemptions from foreign Jews who fought for France, Bousquet declared: "We take full responsibility; we are perfectly well aware of what we are doing. The future will show that we were right." With respect to Jews in general, he claimed: "France will be no worse off without them." [14] There was nothing naïve about Vichy's police chiefs.

Like most historians, Kitson sees the summer of 1942 as a key turning point. If the police were initially indifferent or hostile to foreign Jews, in all likelihood more hostile than the general population, the raids

of 1942 and especially early 1943 began to change their minds. Kitson writes with great sensitivity about the difficulty officers had in pulling back from a culture of obedience. He provides eye-witness accounts of officers expressing disgust about the theft of inmates' property and especially their shock at the first massive convoys. He quotes a Resistance report: "[I]t is not possible to describe the heart-rending scenes which 90 percent of police officers watched impotently" (p. 161). A policeman who later became an eminent historian, Jacques Delarue, remembered: "one felt oneself overcome with anger and shame at the same time, and then by the feeling of total impotence, one felt shame to see men led away like this and to let it happen" (p. 160). Yet, given the extent of hierarchical pressure, resistance to the measures was limited, protest virtually non-existent. By 1943, however, anti-Semitic measures, and, above all, Vichy's willingness to dragoon French workers and send them to Germany, the hated *Service du Travail Obligatoire* (STO), turned the tide. Starting in February 1943, most young French men were expected to leave for two years' labor in Germany. Not only did the police have to issue summonses, they were supposed to round up those who evaded the requirements.

By the middle of 1943, neither Vichy nor the Nazis trusted the French police. Regional Prefect Lemoine wrote to Laval about the Marseille police: "The attitude of the police is similar, at the grass roots level, to that of the population more generally. Results are only obtained by constant badgering from hierarchical superiors.... It seems appropriate therefore to consider a systematic plan for the transfer of the entire Marseille police force." (p. 167). Longstanding complaints about working conditions and wages came to the fore. While the emergence of the Milice in 1943 is quite well-known, Kitson provides new context from within the police that shows how and why the parallel service was able to take root [16]; he shows how a progressive siphoning off of officers into parallel formations demoralized the old core.

Vichy itself, moreover, did not hesitate to spy on Germans. Anticipating his own subsequent work on the subject, Kitson explores the energy French authorities devoted to counter-espionage.[16] Desperate to strengthen their bargaining power and hold onto whatever sovereignty they could, French police officials sought to minimize ordinary people's ability to interact with Germans. The Nazis, for their part, having begun clandestine rearmament immediately after World War I, assumed the French had done the same and hired thousands of people, mostly French people, to look for violations. The French made tracking those special agents a top priority, and arrests were commonplace. From 1940 to 1942, Vichy police and counter-intelligence officers arrested more than 1,500 Nazi agents, about 80 percent of them French nationals. Once arrested, Nazi agents received little sympathy from local police services. Shedding light on long overlooked forms of collaboration, Kitson also thoroughly debunks the idea that the French police were simply docile instruments of their collaborationist government, obedient until the very end.

Police and Politics in Marseille provides a thorough, satisfying account of a major police force during the Popular Front and especially the German occupation. In the best of the British empirical tradition, the book brings a formidable erudition to bear. Simon Kitson knows Marseille—and the police. If I have reservations about his treatment of Laval and Bousquet and wish the book had been more thoroughly brought up to date, the treatment of the various forces at play in Marseille is exemplary. Kitson shows us how and why the local police collaborated so thoroughly with the Nazi's genocidal project. He examines the mechanisms, the cultural traditions that predisposed officers to participate and the leverage superiors used to make sure that they did so. But he also shows us the limits of that collaboration, and, crucially, its evolution over time. The book refuses clichéd views of police officers as

villains or heroes. It paints a fine portrait of collaboration and occupation in shades of grey rooted in both time and place.

NOTES

[1] Donna F. Ryan, *The Holocaust and the Jews of Marseille: The Enforcement of Anti-Semitic Policies in Vichy France* (Champagne-Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1996); and Christian Oppetit, ed., *Marseille, Vichy et les nazis: Le temps des rafles, la déportation des juifs* (Marseille: Amicale des Déportés d'Auschwitz et des Camps de Haute-Silésie, Section Marseille-Provence, 1993).

[2] Kitson cites Jean-Marc Berlière's book, *Les policiers français sous l'Occupation d'après les archives inédites de l'épuration* (Paris: Plon, 2001) but not his "Mémoires en souffrance: Rafles et répression antisémite par la police parisienne (1942-1944)," in Berlière and René Levy, eds., *Le Témoin, le sociologue et l'historien: Quand les policiers se mettent à table* (Paris: Nouveau monde, 2010), pp. 87-117.

[3] Denis Peschanski, *La France des camps: L'internement, 1938-1946* (Paris: Gallimard, 2002); and Laurent Joly, *Vichy dans la 'Solution Finale': Histoire du Commissariat général aux Questions juives, 1941-1944* (Paris: Grasset, 2006).

[4] Ivan Ermakoff, "Police et arrestations," in Tal Bruttman, Ivan Ermakoff, Nicolas Mariot, and Claire Zalc, eds., *Pour une microhistoire de la Shoah* (Paris: Seuil, 2012), pp. 215-243.

[5] On the French paradox, Alain Michel, *Vichy et la Shoah: Enquête sur le paradoxe français* (Paris: CLD, 2012). See also Jacques Semelin, *Persécutions et entraides dans la France occupée: Comment 75% des juifs en France ont échappé à la mort* (Paris: Les Arènes/Seuil, 2013) and Robert O. Paxton's critique, "Jews: How Vichy Made it Worse," *The New York Review of Books*, March 6, 2014.

[6] Renée Poznanski, "Vichy et les Juifs: Des marges de l'histoire au cœur de son écriture," in Jean-Pierre Azéma and François Bédarida, eds., *Le régime de Vichy et les Français* (Paris: Fayard, 1992), pp. 57-67. My translation.

[7] Bernard Laguerre, "Les dénaturalisés de Vichy, 1940-1944," *Vingtième siècle: Revue d'histoire*, 20(October-December 1988): 3-15; and especially Patrick Weil, *Qu'est-ce qu'un français: Histoire de la nationalité depuis la Révolution* (Paris: Grasset, 2002), chap. 4.

[8] Renée Poznanski, *Être juif en France pendant la seconde guerre mondiale* (Paris: Hachette, 1994), pp. 542-543.

[9] Serge Klarsfeld, *Vichy-Auschwitz: Le rôle de Vichy dans la solution finale de la question juive en France*, 2 vols. (Paris: Fayard, 1983, 1985), 1:25-28.

[10] See in particular Bousquet's son's defense of his father in Guy Bousquet, *René Bousquet, préfet de la Marne septembre 1940-avril 1942* (Paris: Jean Picollec, 1998).

[11] Julian Jackson, *The Dark Years, 1940-1944* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 362. Emphasis in the original. See also Michael R. Marrus and Robert O. Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), p. 346; and Marc-Olivier Baruch, *Servir l'État français: L'administration en France de 1940 à 1944* (Paris: Fayard, 1997), pp. 345-348, on the question of Laval's anti-Semitism.

[12] In the third raid of 1941, on 12 December in Paris, German and French forces rounded up 743 Jewish notables, all men, almost all of them French, in response to a series of anti-German attacks. In its aftermath, Vichy authorities were besieged with complaints from the families and friends of the victims. On the raid, Klarsfeld, *Vichy-Auschwitz*, 1:32-34; on the protests and their influence on Bousquet's subsequent negotiation with German authorities, Joly, *Vichy dans la 'Solution Finale'*, p. 345.

[13] Bousquet knew full well that the first convoy sent to Auschwitz earlier that year carried more than five hundred French Jews. That September, when the Germans ordered the deportation of several hundred more French Jews to fill out a convoy about to depart--there were not enough foreign Jews waiting at Drancy--Bousquet raised no complaint. According to Klarsfeld, Bousquet was relieved that the Germans' order would increase the number of deportations and make it easier to satisfy the targets he had agreed to reach. So long as the Germans were discreet, Bousquet did not object to their deporting French Jews from camps in the Occupied Zone. See Klarsfeld, *Vichy-Auschwitz*, 1:55 and 1:178-179.

[14] Bousquet, quoted by Joseph Ratz, *La France que je cherchais: Les impressions d'un Russe engagé volontaire en France* (Limoges: A. Bontemps, 1945), pp. 176-177, in Joly, *Vichy dans la 'Solution Finale'*, p. 370. My translation. See Joly, pp. 366-375, for a much more critical view of Bousquet and Laval.

[15] Jean-Pierre Azéma, "La Milice," *Vingtième siècle: Revue d'histoire*, 28(October-December 1990): 83-105; and Jacques Delperrié de Bayac, *Histoire de la Milice, 1918-1945* (Paris: Fayard, 1969).

[16] Kitson, *The Hunt for Nazi Spies: Fighting Espionage in Vichy France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

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