The French Who Fought for Hitler

Thousands of Frenchmen volunteered to provide military help to the Nazis during World War II, fighting in such places as Belorussia, Galicia, Pomerania, and Berlin. Utilizing these soldiers’ memoirs, The French Who Fought for Hitler examines how these volunteers describe their exploits on the battlefield, their relations to civilian populations in occupied territories, and their sexual prowess. It also discusses how the volunteers account for their controversial decisions to enlist, to fight to the end, and finally to testify. Coining the concepts of “outcast memory” and “unlikeable vanquished,” Philippe Carrard characterizes the type of bitter, unrepentant memory at work in the volunteers’ recollections and situates it on the map of France’s collective memory. In the process, he contributes to the ongoing conversation about memory, asking whether all testimonies are fit to be given and preserved, and how we should deal with life narratives that uphold positions now viewed as unacceptable.

Educated in Switzerland, Philippe Carrard has taught at the University of Pennsylvania, the University of California at Santa Barbara, the University of California at Irvine, and the University of Vermont, and is currently a Visiting Scholar in the Comparative Literature Program at Dartmouth College. Over the past twenty years, his research has mainly concerned factual discourse – the discourse that claims to represent actual events and situations. In this area, he has published Poetics of the New History: French Historical Discourse from Braudel to Chartier (1992), as well as numerous articles and book chapters that analyze conventions of writing in nonfiction.
The French Who Fought for Hitler

*Memories from the Outcasts*

PHILIPPE CARRARD
FOR IRENE
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A Note about Documentation and Translations

The system of documentation I am using is Parenthetical Documentation by Date of Publication and List of Works Cited. When an author is represented on that List by a single book, the documentation provided in parenthesis does not include the date of publication, only the page number(s). Most of the memoirs in my corpus and several of the scholarly studies to which I refer are in French and have not been translated into English. I have included, in brackets, a translation with the first mention of every title, when it did not involve obvious English cognates. When English translations exist, I have supplied in parenthesis the information “published in English as ….” I am using the same conventions when I cite the titles of German memoirs and scholarly studies. All translations of excerpts from the memoirs in my corpus, as well as from French and German scholarly studies, are mine, unless otherwise indicated.