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978-0-521-89944-4 - The Politics of Everyday Life in Vichy France: Foreigners, Undesirables, and Strangers

Shannon L. Fogg

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The Politics of Everyday Life in Vichy France

In this book, Fogg examines the effects of material distress on attitudes toward the Vichy government and on the treatment of outsiders in France during the Second World War. She contends that the period's severe material shortages and refugee situation fundamentally reshaped France's social structure. Material conditions also created alliances and divisions within the French population that undermined the Vichy regime's legitimacy. Fogg argues that shortages helped define the relationship between citizens and the state, created the very definition of who was an "insider" and an "outsider" in local communities, and shaped the manner in which native and refugee populations interacted.

Fogg's research reveals that French residents proved to be more pragmatic than ideological in their daily dealings with outsiders, with some surprising effects: Natives welcomed "quintessential" outsiders who provided an economic advantage to local communities, while French "insiders" faced discrimination.

Shannon L. Fogg received her Ph.D. from the University of Iowa in 2003. She has been an assistant professor at Missouri University of Science and Technology (formerly the University of Missouri-Rolla) since 2004. Her research has appeared in journals such as *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* and *French Historical Studies*.

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SHANNON L. FOGG

Missouri University of Science and Technology



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For Mom and Tess

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List of Abbreviations

ADC	Archives départementales de la Creuse (Departmental Archives of the Creuse)
ADHV	Archives départementales de la Haute-Vienne (Departmental Archives of the Haute-Vienne)
AN	Archives nationales, Paris (National Archives, Paris)
BDIC	Bibliothèque de documentation internationale contemporaine (Contemporary International Documentation Library)
CAHS	Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies
CDJC	Centre de documentation juive contemporaine (Center for Contemporary Jewish Documentation)
CGQJ	Commissariat général aux questions juives (Commissariat General for Jewish Affairs)
GTE	Groupement de travailleurs étrangers (Foreign Workers' Unit)
ORT	Organisation-reconstruction-travail (Professional Retraining and Reorientation Organization)
OSE	Oeuvre de secours aux enfants (Children's Relief Agency)
PCF	Parti Communiste Français (French Communist Party)
PQJ	Police aux questions juives (Police for Jewish Affairs)
RG	Renseignements généraux (General Bureau of Information)
SEC	Section d'enquête et de contrôle (Division of Investigations and Inspections)
SHGN	Service Historique de la Gendarmerie Nationale (Historical Service of the National Gendarmerie)
STO	Service du travail obligatoire (Compulsory Labor Service)

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UGIF	Union générale des israélites de France (General Union of Israelites in France)
USHMM	United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
YIVO	Archives of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research

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Preface

This book really began in 1993 when I spent a semester studying France and World War II as part of the Normandy Scholars Program at Texas A&M University. Studying French history, politics, literature, and film introduced me to a whole new world. A month spent studying at Le Mémorial de Caen and visiting war sites throughout Normandy cemented my love for the period and for France. I learned about the Vichy government and French collaboration with the Nazis for the first time that fall. But from the beginning, it was the daily lives of individuals who experienced the war in France that grabbed my attention. Several professors at Texas A&M encouraged me to pursue graduate studies and suggested that I contact Professor Sarah Farmer at the University of Iowa. This proved to be a suggestion that would shape the direction of my future research.

When it came time to choose a dissertation topic, I still felt passionate about studying the lives of ordinary French men and women. Professor Farmer supported my interest in examining the topic of resistance from the broader, more inclusive perspective H. R. Kedward suggests in his book *In Search of the Maquis*. Kedward notes that organized Resistance relied on the support of local residents (especially women) in ways that have yet to be fully researched.¹ He also points to the continuing debate over the role food shortages played in contributing to French resistance to the Vichy regime.² It seemed that studying the daily material concerns of the French

¹ H. R. Kedward, *In Search of the Maquis: Rural Resistance in Southern France, 1942–1944* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 88–90.

² *Ibid.*, p. 7.

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people would thus provide a new perspective on the resistance/collaboration debate.

Using material shortages as the prism through which to examine the infrastructure that supported Resistance requires an examination of everyday life from a local perspective. The rural Limousin region of central France became an obvious choice due to the region's agricultural production and the presence of active, guerrilla bands during the war. Research in France, however, quickly led me to realize that shortages and everyday life had political implications that went well beyond issues related to organized Resistance. Indeed, the social fabric's stability and Vichy's legitimacy rested, in large part, on daily issues surrounding provisioning.

Scholars have focused on how Vichy's political ideology shaped daily life, but they have not fully explored how daily life shaped politics. The general tendency toward strict political history throughout Europe led scholars such as Alf Lüdtke and Detlev J. K. Peukert to think about the relationship between politics and history differently by focusing on the everyday.³ The sources revealed that there was much to be learned about the history of France during World War II by examining the quotidian – the study of the everyday attempts to explain how abstract laws and ideologies take on meaning in daily practice. It puts the emphasis on individuals rather than on abstract processes or politics broadly defined. As Alice Kaplan and Kristin Ross explain, “The Political [...] is hidden in the everyday, exactly where it is most obvious: in the contradictions of lived experience, in the most banal and repetitive gestures of everyday life.”⁴ The banality of daily life has meant it has been neglected as a legitimate aspect of scholarship until recently.⁵ A range of newer works, however, reveals the exciting possibilities of studying the quotidian. This study follows in the footsteps of the growing number of books that examine the everyday in unusual times, such as Andrew Stuart Bergerson's *Ordinary Germans in Extraordinary Times*, Sheila Fitzpatrick's *Everyday Stalinism*, and Maureen Healy's *Vienna*

³ Alf Lüdtke, editor, *The History of Everyday Life: Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Ways of Life* translated by William Templer (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995) and Detlev J. K. Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany: Conformity, Opposition, and Racism in Everyday Life* translated by Richard Deveson (New Haven, Connecticut and London: Yale University Press, 1987).

⁴ Alice Kaplan and Kristin Ross, “Introduction” *Yale French Studies* 73 (1987): 3.

⁵ See Robert Gildea and the Team, “Introduction” in *Surviving Hitler and Mussolini: Daily Life in Occupied Europe* edited by Robert Gildea, Olivier Wieviorka and Anette Warring (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2006), 5–6 for reasons for this negligence. Gildea also provides background on the evolution of the history of everyday life as an academic field on pp. 6–9.

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and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire.⁶ The following pages use the politics of daily life not only to examine ordinary French residents' support for and rejection of the Vichy regime but also to challenge traditional ideas about xenophobia and antisemitism by exploring the daily construction of "outsider" status during the war.

Some of the best work on France and the Second World War is found in regional studies. The experience of war and occupation varied depending upon one's place of residence, making generalizations about life in France difficult and unwise. The daily experiences of people living in the unoccupied Limousin differed dramatically from those of housewives in occupied Paris, of coalminers in the German-administered northern department of the Pas-de-Calais, or of Michelin employees in Clermont-Ferrand living in Vichy's shadow.⁷ People's lives in the strategically important and German-occupied Loire Valley bore little resemblance to life in Nîmes, where wine and religion had dominated daily lives for centuries.⁸ Discussions of wartime scarcity in these works often appear in early chapters as the background for the discussion of topics such as resistance or public opinion. Only by focusing on a local level does the importance of pragmatic concerns become clear in other areas, such as social relations and the implementation of the "Final Solution" in France.

I owe thanks to many institutions and individuals for their support throughout the long course of this project. At the University of Iowa, a Stanley Fellowship for Graduate Research Abroad funded my first trip to the French archives and allowed me to find the materials that shaped my argument. A T. Anne Cleary Fellowship from the University of Iowa Graduate College and a Lafore Fellowship from the Department of History supported a year of research in Paris, Limoges, and Guéret. A Seashore

⁶ Andrew Stuart Bergerson, *Ordinary Germans in Extraordinary Times: The Nazi Revolution in Hildesheim* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2004); Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times, Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Maureen Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War and Everyday Life in World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

⁷ On Paris, see Dominique Veillon, *Vivre et survivre en France 1939–1947* (Paris: Editions Payot & Rivages, 1995). For the Pas-de-Calais, see Lynne Taylor, *Between Resistance and Collaboration: Popular Protest in Northern France, 1940–1945* (New York: St Martin's Press, 2000). For Clermont-Ferrand, see John F. Sweets, *Choices in Vichy France: The French under Nazi Occupation* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

⁸ Robert Gildea, *Marianne in Chains: In Search of the German Occupation 1940–1945* (London, Basingstoke and Oxford: Macmillan, 2002); Robert Zaretsky, *Nîmes at War: Religion, Politics, and Public Opinion in the Gard, 1938–1944* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995).

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Dissertation-Year Fellowship allowed me to dedicate my time to writing without the added pressures of teaching. The careful reading and constructive criticisms of my work in its various stages by Sarah Farmer, Sarah Hanley, and Lisa Heineman have been invaluable. I thank them for their unselfishness, their consistent encouragement, and their continued enthusiasm.

In France, archivists, librarians, and organizations all facilitated my research, and permission to see classified documents further enriched this work. My thanks to the directors, archivists, and librarians of the Archives Départementales de la Creuse and de la Haute-Vienne, the Archives Nationales, the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, and the Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine. At the Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants (OSE), I have to thank Jean-François Guthmann and Michèle Allali for permission to see the organization's records. Jean-Claude Kuperminc at the Bibliothèque de l'Alliance israélite universelle allowed me to view the OSE documents in the Alliance's library. At the Service Historique de la Gendarmerie Nationale, I owe thanks to Laurent Veyssièrè and his staff.

Without a Charles H. Revson Foundation Fellowship for Archival Research from the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies (CAHS) at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM), this book would not exist in its present form. As a visiting scholar, I found a rich archival collection, a group of scholars with whom I could share my work, and an environment that made researching and working on such a difficult topic easier. Subsequent research workshops hosted by the CAHS allowed me to work intensively with prominent scholars such as Renée Poznanski, John F. Sweets, and Nechama Tec – a wonderful opportunity for any graduate student. These workshops helped me to refine my ideas and think about my work from different perspectives. At the Museum, I owe special thanks to: Vadim Altskan, Suzanne Brown-Fleming, Martin Dean, Robert M. Ehrenreich, Michael Gelb, Severin Hochberg, Radu Ioanid, Aaron Kornblum, Wendy Lower, Ann Mann Millin, Joan Ringelheim, Claire Rosenson, Paul A. Shapiro, and Madeline Vadkerty. Peggy Frankston in Paris pointed me to invaluable archival collections. (However, the views expressed in this book, and the context in which images from the Photo Archives are used, do not necessarily reflect the views or policy of, nor imply approval or endorsement by, the USHMM.)

I can never fully express my gratitude to the men and women who spent part of their youths in the Limousin and who so openly shared their experiences, memories, and documents with me. I only hope that I have done justice to their stories.

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A Research Board Grant from the University of Missouri System and support from the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Missouri-Rolla (now Missouri S&T) made it possible for me to have a semester out of the classroom to finish the book's revisions. Thank you also to my colleagues in the Department of History and Political Science.

I would also like to thank the editors of *French Historical Studies* and *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* for allowing the republication of material in this book. Earlier versions of Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 have appeared in these journals respectively as “‘They Are Undesirables’: Local and National Responses to Gypsies during World War II” and “Refugees and Indifference: The Effects of Shortages on Attitudes towards Jews in France’s Limousin Region during World War II.”

Many friends have provided intellectual and emotional support throughout the years of researching, writing, and revising: Michelle Bellomy, Jennifer Blackmon, Stacy Denison, Kate Drowne, Karen Egonis, Michele Ford, Allison Gillett, Nat Godley, Kim Henthorn, Mike Innis-Jimenez, Simon Kitson, Joelle Neulander, Kathy Northcut, Becky Pulju, Dana Quartana, Michelle Rhoades, Jesse Spohnholz, Nick Villanueva, and Rebecca Wittmann. The Lancaster-Muckenfuss family graciously welcomed me into their lives and helped make the research possible.

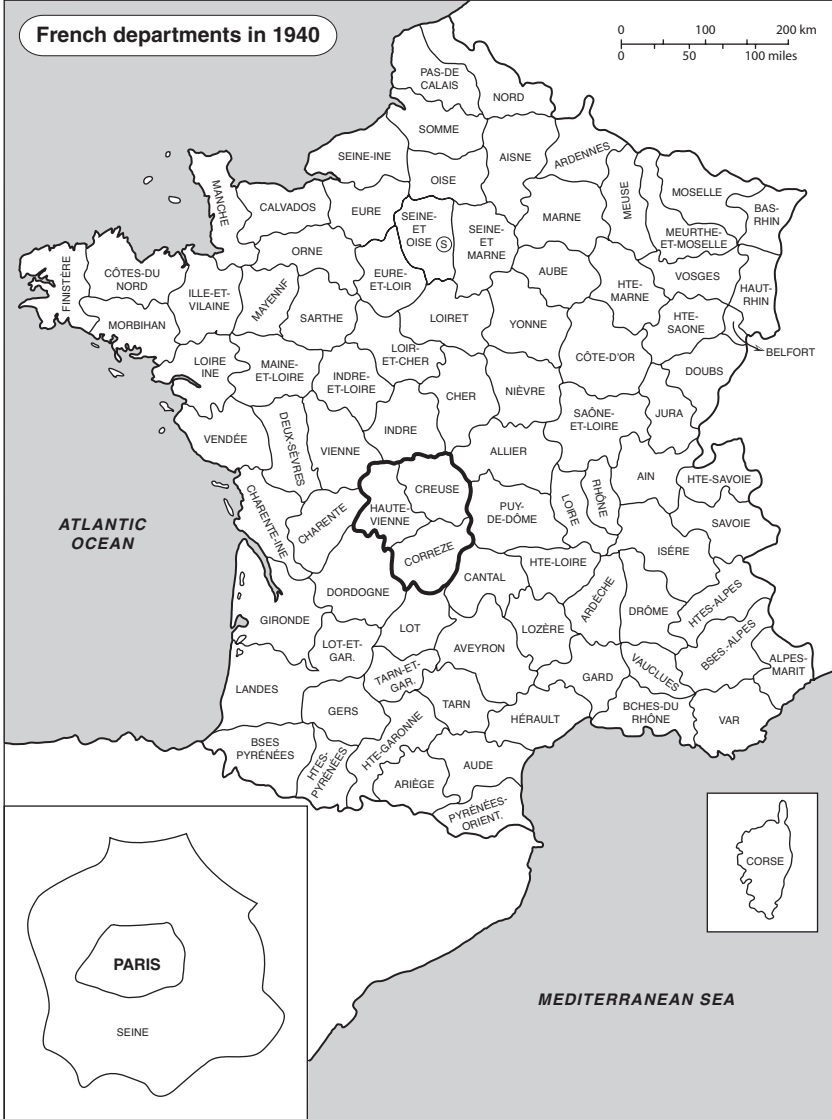
Most importantly, I have to thank my family. My parents taught me to love books and learning when I was young and have been a constant source of strength, love, and support. Heather and Chris bring lots of laughter and perspective to my life. Stéphane’s love, energy, patience, understanding, and belief in me have sustained me throughout this project. Tess, through her arrival, and Mom, through her departure, have reminded me of what is most important in life. Thank you all for being the best part of my daily life.

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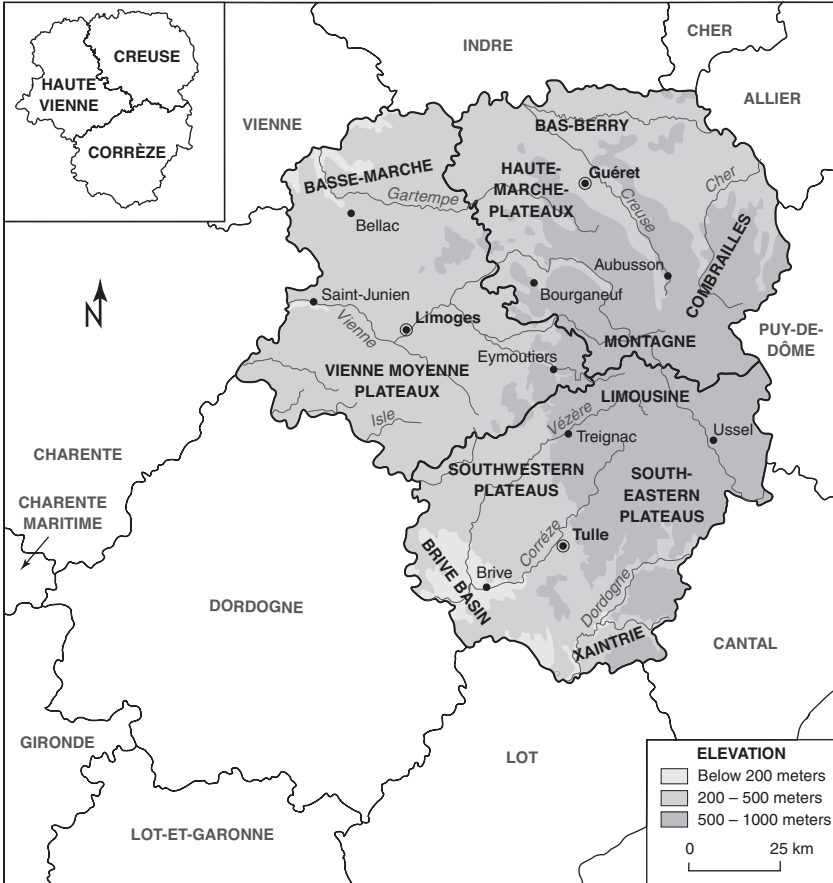
MAP I. France (1940-44).

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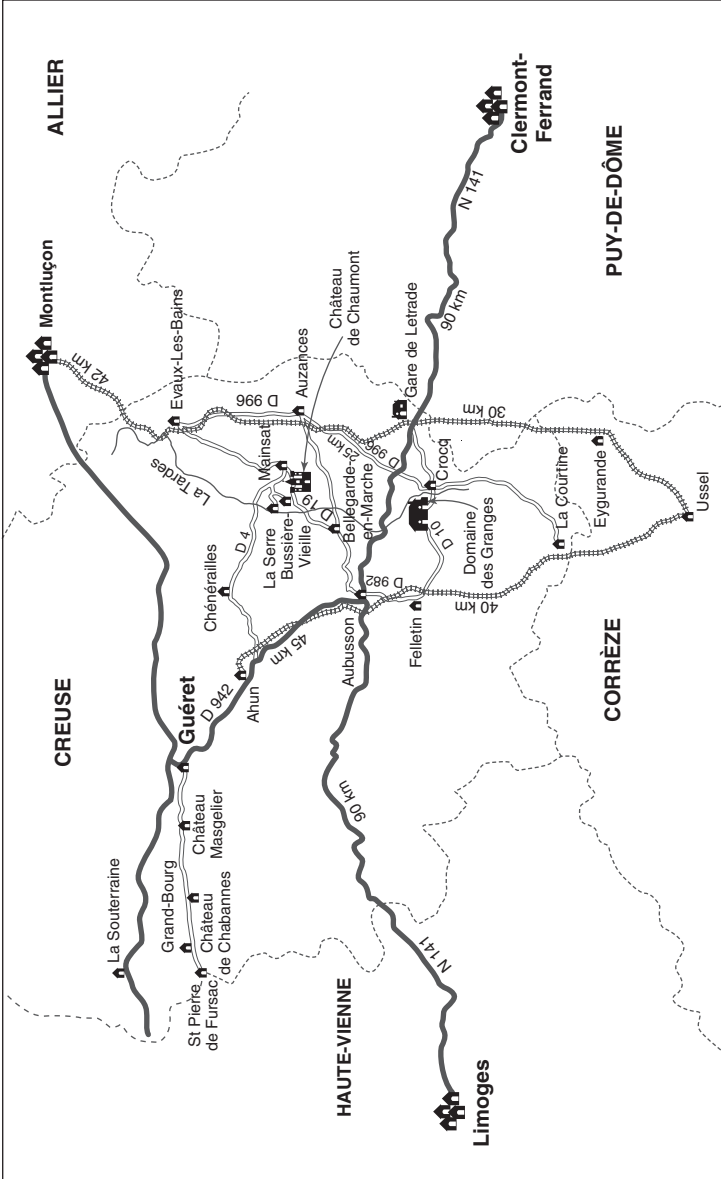
MAP 2. French departments in 1940.

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MAP 3. Limousin region.

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MAP 4. Jewish children's homes in the Creuse.