

FRENCH JEWRY UNDER THE OCCUPATION*

By JACOB KAPLAN

Acting Grand Rabbi of France

I

BEFORE THE DEFEAT OF 1940

DURING the years before World War II, French Jewry was in a favorable position. In France, land of the Rights of Man, Jews enjoyed equal rights and a good many individual Jews held eminent positions. A Jew, Léon Blum, head of the French Socialist Party, had served as Prime Minister, while other Jews had occupied cabinet posts. Yet the Jewish population of Metropolitan France was not high: about 350,000, some 200,000 of whom were not of French nationality.

Most of the Jews lived in Paris; in Alsace-Lorraine; in Eastern France: Nancy, Epinal, Dijon, and Besançon; or in the North: Lille, Rouen, Valenciennes, Lens, and Reims.

On the other hand, there were only six communities in Central and Southern France with a rabbi at their head: Marseilles, Bordeaux, Lyons, Nice, Bayonne and Toulouse. Others, of less importance, did not have a rabbi: Tours, Nantes, Nîmes, Avignon, Saint-Etienne, and Grenoble.

All these communities, except those in Alsace-Lorraine which was still governed by the provisions of the *Concordat*, were affiliated with a central organization, usually called by its traditional name: the Central Consistory of the Jews of France (*Consistoire Central des Israélites de France*), a name given it in 1808 by Napoleon, when he issued decrees

*Translated by Joseph M. Bernstein, editorial associate.

regulating the Jewish faith. But after the Law of the Separation of Church and State in 1905, the Central Consistory became the Union of Jewish Religious Associations in France and Algeria.

Jews maintained excellent relations with their non-Jewish countrymen. In the course of World War I, during which Frenchmen of all faiths fought side by side and poured out their blood in common for the defense of the Fatherland, the bonds of fellowship were strengthened and led to improved interfaith relations and heightened mutual understanding. It is not out of place to point out that in 1914, of a total Jewish population of less than 200,000—over 130,000 in Metropolitan France and over 60,000 in Algeria—about 32,000 Jews were mobilized. Of this number, 6,500 were killed, including 7 of the 31 rabbis who had been mobilized. Among the Jews not of French nationality, 12,000 volunteered and more than 2,000 fell on the battlefield. After the war, the war veterans organizations, which included ex-servicemen of all faiths, greatly contributed to strengthening the ties formed between Jews and non-Jews during the conflict.

But with the advent of Hitlerism, anti-Semitism, which after 1918 had hardly dared to raise its voice in France, began its campaign against the Jews. French anti-Semitism was the tool of Nazism, which used a strategy of disruption and division to make France ripe for conquest. Thus, after every aggressive *coup* the Nazis staged: the re-occupation of the Rhineland, the *Anschluss* with Austria, the Sudetenland campaign, there was always a number of French newspapers which opposed any forceful action against Germany and implied that any such act would be, not in the interests of France, but solely in the interests of the Jews. Many of these papers carried banner headlines with the words: "KICK OUT THE JEWS!"

As for the Government, on numerous occasions it paid tribute publicly to the patriotism of the Jews. In June 1935, during the World Congress of Jewish Ex-Servicemen which was held in Paris, several cabinet ministers, including the War Minister, paid eloquent homage to the patriotic attitude of the Jews in France. In June 1938, at Douaumont near Verdun, at the inauguration of a monument raised in mem-

ory of the Jews who had died for France, a cabinet minister spoke in fervent terms of the part played by the Jews in World War I.

When in September 1939 war again broke out, the French Jews responded eagerly to the call to arms. They were especially numerous in the most exposed units: the free corps, in which there was a higher proportion of Jews than of Frenchmen of other faiths. There were Jewish officers of all ranks, including eight generals. Jews not of French nationality hastened to enlist. Certain regiments in which they were particularly numerous were collectively cited. And the number of French and foreign Jews decorated in the war years 1939-1940 was relatively high.

II

THE GERMAN OCCUPATION

First Effects on French Jewry

The military defeat in June 1940 was an unexpected and terrible catastrophe for the country. But the Jews suffered the tragic consequences of the disaster more than any other group. Overnight, the situation of the French Jews was fundamentally transformed. Fleeing the invading armies, many Jews headed south. Of those who remained in their homes, many were expelled by the occupying authorities because they were in a zone forbidden to Jews. Such was the case, among others, of our co-religionists in Alsace-Lorraine. Their expulsion began with the start of the occupation. Then in November 1940, all those still left received a peremptory order to quit their homes and were given the right to take with them nothing but a suitcase and a small sum of money. They were piled into trucks which took them to the unoccupied zone, where they were dumped out at night on a deserted country road. The property of the Jews of Alsace-Lorraine was confiscated.

As a result of these population shifts, the geographical distribution of French Jewry was considerably modified. At

the very outbreak of the war, certain communities in Alsace-Lorraine situated on the firing line were officially evacuated to the rear, together with their religious and philanthropic institutions. This was true of the Jews of Strasbourg and surrounding towns, who found refuge in the Dordogne and Haute-Vienne where they formed the communities of Périgueux and Limoges; while our co-religionists of Sarreguemines and Forbach were installed in the Charente and Charente-Maritime. Some of the Jews of Metz found refuge in Poitiers (Vienne).

The influx of Jews into the southern zone, to which must be added tens of thousands of fleeing Belgian and Dutch Jews, was directed in part toward existing communities which now took on added importance, and in part toward cities where there was no existing Jewish community. It became necessary to provide for the religious organization of these new population-clusters of Jews.

That was the first task of the Grand Rabbi of France, Isaiah Schwartz, who had taken up his residence in Vichy. In accordance with a decision of the Central Consistory, he had followed the Government in order to make contact with the communities in the country and to be in a position to fulfill his duties. At the General Assembly of the Rabbinate, which took place at the beginning of September 1940, rabbis were named to look after the Jews who had been evacuated to regions where there was no organized religious life, and to constitute them into communities. Most of the available rabbis were military chaplains who had retreated with the armies and who were thus in Unoccupied France. New rabbinical districts were created, some immediately, others as the need became apparent. They included the following: Agen, Annecy, Béziers, Brive, Cannes, Chateauroux, Clermont-Ferrand, Grenoble, La Châtre, Le Puy; Montauban, Montpellier, Pau, Perpignan.

As for Occupied France, the only communities left were those of Paris, Nancy, Bordeaux, Bayonne, and the new communities formed at the outset of the war by the Jews of Lorraine evacuated to the Charente, Charente-Inférieure, and Vienne. There were about 120,000 Jews in Paris and its suburbs. The official census of 1940 gave 105,000 Jews, but this figure must be increased by more than ten percent,

to include those who had not been accounted for in the census. The Jewish population in Occupied France progressively diminished, because of both deportations and secret departures for Unoccupied France. In 1944, there were no more than 30,000 professing Jews in Greater Paris, but it is estimated that about the same number lived in hiding and no longer revealed themselves as Jews.

Jewry in Metropolitan France was cut in two. There were no means of official communication between the two zones. After August 20, 1940, Jews were forbidden to cross the line of demarcation. On that date, a poster was hung up in all railway stations on the demarcation line, stating that Jews and Negroes were forbidden to go into the Occupied zone.

French Jewry now faced new social as well as religious problems. To take all the necessary steps toward solving them, a Central Commission of Jewish Welfare Work was formed at Vichy, attached to the office of the Grand Rabbi of France.

The Central Consistory, evacuated to Unoccupied France, also underwent reorganization. Since its President, Baron Edouard de Rothschild, had left France for the United States, M. Jacques Helbronner, former high official of the *Conseil d'Etat* and vice-president of the Central Consistory, assumed the presidency. The Consistory set up its headquarters at Lyons. Baron Robert de Rothschild, President of the Paris Consistory, also left for the United States.

Anti-Jewish Measures

Right after the Armistice, an anti-Semitic campaign was launched throughout the country in the press and on the radio. Jews were accused of having been responsible for the disastrous war which had led France to ruin. All these incitements indicated that measures against our co-religionists were imminent; and in fact, these soon went into effect.

Some of these measures emanated from the occupying authorities, others from the Vichy Government. Those of the German authorities applied only to Jews in Occupied France; those of the Vichy Government concerned Jews

indiscriminately in both zones. Thus the juridical status of the Jews was not the same throughout Metropolitan France. In the occupied zone, two kinds of laws co-existed; on the one hand, German decrees issued by the head of the German Military Administration in France; and on the other hand, the decrees of Vichy. Since both types of decrees had the force of law, the Vichy statutes were only applied insofar as they were not contrary to the German ordinances.

There were, moreover, measures peculiar to the Occupied zone which were never in force in Unoccupied France, even after the total occupation of the country by the Germans in November 1942. These included: forbidding Jews to have radio sets; forbidding them to change their residence and to be out-of-doors from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m.; forcing them to carry a yellow star with the word "Jew" in black letters, placed on the left side just above the heart and visible in public at all times, and which all Jews above the age of six were forced to wear. This ordinance was dated May 29, 1942, but at the beginning of July 1940, the Germans had already forced the Jews of Commercy (Meuse) to carry a square of yellow cloth sewed on their backs. Other decrees forbade Jews to visit theaters, enter restaurants, public gardens, cafés, museums, etc., and to buy in stores except at certain specified hours: in food stores from 11 to 12 a.m., in all other stores from 3 to 4 p.m.

The first anti-Jewish measure was taken by the Germans in the occupied zone. This was the ordinance of September 27, 1940, the anniversary of the day in 1791 on which the Constituent Assembly of the French Revolution had proclaimed the Emancipation of the Jews. This ordinance defined the status of Jews, forbidding our co-religionists who had fled Occupied France, to return there. It ordered a census of the Jews taken before October 20, 1940, and forced all Jewish businesses to hang a special sign on their windows.

Other measures soon followed, some taken by the German authorities, some by the Vichy Government. In general, apart from the nuisance measures mentioned above and which only applied to the occupied zone, they corresponded. And on certain points, the anti-Jewish legislation of Vichy was more severe than that of the occupying authorities.

The principal anti-Jewish legislative measures applied to all France were the following:

1. The law of October 3, 1940, modified by the law of June 2, 1941, which was a Statute of the Jews. This law, after defining the status of Jews, forbade those recognized as such to assume or exercise public functions or offices from the head of state down to all positions filled by the government in enterprises of a general interest, including the judiciary, the teaching profession, and the military. Certain public functions were available to them only if they were ex-servicemen or decorated for heroism in battle, or if they were descendants, widows or orphans of soldiers who had died for France. In the liberal professions, a *numerus clausus* was announced, and ultimately set at two percent. Jews were entirely banned from such other professions as banking, real estate, press, theater, and radio. Jews who had rendered exceptional services to the French State or whose family had been established in France for at least five generations and had rendered exceptional services to the State, could be exempted from this ban—but exceptions were very rare, amounting only to about a dozen.

2. The law of June 21, 1941, fixing at three percent of the non-Jewish students the number of Jewish students allowed to enroll in all schools and institutions of higher learning.

3. The law of March 20, 1941, modified by the law of May 19, 1941, concerning the creation of a General Commissariat for Jewish Affairs, which had the task of proposing to the government all legislative rules and decrees as well as all other measures necessary to implement the decisions made by the government with respect to the status of the Jews, their civil and political capacity, or their juridical right to exercise functions or professions. The Commissariat was further charged with supervising the liquidation of Jewish property in cases where this was prescribed by law while taking account of the needs of the nation's economy, and was further charged with taking all police measures with regard to the Jews dictated by public interest.

4. The law of July 22, 1941 declared that with a view to eliminating all Jewish influence from the nation's economy,

the General Commissar for Jewish Affairs could name a temporary manager over every industrial, commercial, real estate, or handicrafts enterprise, said administrator to have property rights and the right to lease all property and the right to sell all goods contained on the property. Exceptions were made in the case of houses or apartments serving as the personal domicile of the parties in question, as well as of the furnishings contained on said property or apartment.

The amount of money realized from the various sales made by the temporary administrator was to be deposited in a special fund. After deducting expenses, ten percent of these sums were placed at the disposal of the General Commissariat, which withdrew the amounts necessary to pay the costs of temporary administration, to wind up the affairs of businesses with a deficit or those which did not make enough profit to allow for such payment. The surplus constituted a fund to be used for helping needy Jews.

5. The law of June 2, 1941, concerning a census of the Jews and indicating the amount of their property.

6. The law of November 29, 1941, setting up a General Union of the Jews of France (U.G.I.F.), said Union to assure representation of the Jews with the public authorities, particularly in questions of relief and social welfare. All Jews domiciled in France were forced to join this Union. All existing Jewish societies were dissolved and their property turned over to the Union. An exception was made for religious associations that had been legally set up. Money for the Union was assured: 1. by the sums which the General Commissariat for Jewish Affairs would withdraw for the Union from the Jewish Solidarity Fund created by the law of July 22, 1941; 2. by resources coming from the property of the dissolved Jewish societies; 3. by dues paid by the Jews. The General Union of the Jews of France was to be administered by a board of 18 members chosen from Jews of French nationality—nine in each zone—and placed under the control of the General Commissariat for Jewish Affairs.

7. A decree of August 28, 1942 declared that provisionally and until the dues system was definitively set up, the General Union of the Jews of France was called upon to raise, as its share of expenses, beginning with September 1942, a monthly

sum of six million francs, by taxing the financial resources of Jewish families both in the occupied and unoccupied zones. This monthly sum was to be raised either by voluntary contributions or, in case voluntary contributions proved insufficient, by individual taxation.

At the same time, police measures were taken against the Jews.

After October 4, 1940, the Vichy Government decreed that Jews not of French nationality could be interned in special camps by a decision of the district authorities where they lived, and they could have a forced residence assigned to them by the prefect in the district in which they lived.

On November 9, 1942, just as German troops were preparing to cross the demarcation line and occupy all France, a law was issued that as a measure of internal security, all Jews of foreign nationality were forced to reside in the town or city in which they habitually resided and could not leave without obtaining a safe-conduct pass.

On December 11, 1942, another law forced all Jews, French and non-French, to have the word "Jew" written on their identification cards and food cards.

These last two laws really involved only the Jews in the unoccupied zone. Those in the occupied zone, whether French or non-French, no longer had the right to change their residence and were already forced to have the word "Jew" written on all their identification cards.

Despite its racial policies, the French State did not dare to forego sending a representative to the funeral ceremonies, on January 4, 1941, of the noted Jewish philosopher, Henri Bergson. The man sent was Ambassador Fernand de Brinon. A tribute was paid to Henri Bergson by the French Academy of which he had been a member. Lectures on his life and work were given at Vichy, but the speakers failed to mention or made only passing reference to the fact that he was a Jew. Some of the lecturers even hinted that he had converted to Catholicism. This is not so. The same thing was said of Spinoza. Bergson, like Spinoza, was never baptized and for the same reason as his famous predecessor. Despite the deep interest he had in the Christian religion, he could not subscribe to the dogmas of Christianity.

Arrests, Deportations, Massacres

It was not long before police measures were applied in both zones. The first Jews interned were foreigners: Polish, Austrian, Hungarian, Russian, German, Czech, and stateless Jews.

In order better to follow the course of events, we will consider each zone separately, at least until November 11, 1942, when the Germans occupied all France.

Occupied France

In May 1941, 3,200 interned Jews in the occupied zone were placed in two camps: 1,700 at Pithiviers (Loiret) and 1,500 at Beaune-la-Rolande (Loiret). All had been volunteers in the armed forces and their names had been taken from lists in the recruiting offices.

Suddenly, however, the situation grew much worse. On October 20 and 21, 1941, a large-scale raid was made at Paris. Cordons of police surrounded the 11th district. All Jews were arrested, both those whose names were on the lists and those who simply happened to be there. At the same time, 47 lawyers of the Paris bar were seized at their homes. About 4,300 Jews, 1,300 of them French Jews, were arrested on this occasion. They were taken to Drancy near Paris without being allowed to take with them either a change of clothing, linen, or food. They arrived at Drancy just as they were at the moment of their arrest, in summer clothing or work clothes. They were placed eighty in a room. Nothing had been done to prepare for their coming; there were no beds, no mattresses, not even straw. Until the end of October, they slept on boards or on the cement floor. For three days they were left without food. They were forbidden to receive food or clothing packages. When, in the first week of September, clothing packages were allowed, the latter were carefully searched when they arrived, and all foodstuffs and cigarettes found in them were confiscated by the gendarmes. They were obviously undernourished. Not until two months later were food packages allowed, by which time most of the internees had lost from thirty to

forty pounds in weight. An epidemic of dysentery broke out, to which many succumbed. A German medical commission then decided to liberate the most gravely ill, and so at the beginning of November some 1,200 were set free. But several of them died in their homes. The German authorities proceeded at the same time to liberate young people less than 18 and old people over 60—about 150 in all. However, on November 13, the German officer in charge of the camp ordered that no more internees were to be set free.

After the camp of Drancy was set up, another one was opened at Compiègne (Oise). On December 12, 1941, 750 French Jews, most of them ex-servicemen chosen from among lawyers, doctors, dentists, and manufacturers were arrested in Paris at their homes and sent to Compiègne; at the same time, 300 Jews from Drancy chosen from among those who had done non-manual labor, joined them. They did not have the right to receive packages and suffered a starvation diet. Inside the camp a loaf of bread was sold at from 900 to 1,000 francs. The infirmary had no medicines. When the camp personnel demanded some, the German officer assigned to provide them replied cynically "It's useless to send medicines; enlarge the cemetery!"

Nevertheless on March 29, 1942, 250 internees were freed. They were old people over 70 and citizens of countries that were neutral or not at war with Germany. On March 25, 178 others were transferred to Drancy with a view to being deported. They were all aged and sick people; before their departure, the French police in accordance with orders they had received, placed handcuffs on them. Handcuffed and scarcely able to carry their suitcases, they marched through Compiègne. Inhabitants of that town showed their profound sympathy by offering them bread without ration stamps. Among the Jews marched off like criminals were Judge Laemle, Lieutenant-Colonel Roger Masse, and Senator Pierre Masse. The latter said to a lad of 12 who looked at him with an air of astonishment: "Remember, my boy, these are French officers being treated this way."

Soon the deportations to the East began. The first took place on March 22, 1942 and consisted of 1,000 Jews from Drancy and Compiègne. The deportees were searched from

head to foot and stripped of their money, their jewelry, and their gold dentures. Officially, the amount raised by these objects was to be paid into the National Fund! After they were searched, the unfortunates were given prison haircuts, then placed between barbed wire before being shut up 40-60 in sealed cattle cars, for a journey scheduled to last four days and four nights. Each car contained one bucket of water, another for offal, and a little food.

The next deportation was from the camp at Pithiviers and took place in May 1942. It was in this camp that during another deportation, on September 19, 1943, the police inspectors dealing with Jewish affairs carried out a most degrading search with the assistance of an S.S. detachment. They forced men and women to undress and to remain out-of-doors in the nude from noon to 5 p.m.

At the outset, crippled war veterans, prisoners' wives, old people above 60, pregnant women, mothers of tiny infants, and those married to "Aryans" were not deported. But later only those married to "Aryans" were excepted; and they were sent to labor camps in Paris or to camps of the Todt organization, to build the Atlantic Wall.

One of the most dramatic raids was that of July 16-17, 1942 at Paris. Measures had been taken to arrest 25,000 foreign Jews, men, women, children, and old people. It was the first time that in the course of a large-scale raid, women and children had been seized. Thanks to advance information, a good many of those who were on the lists were able to hide. Nevertheless, the police made 15,000 arrests. On Thursday July 16, at 4 o'clock in the morning, 5,000 *gardes-mobiles* were sent with lists of names to various sections of Paris, especially those where foreign Jews lived. They appeared in pairs at apartments, accompanied by a person in civilian clothes, probably a Gestapo agent. The cries of women and children resounded in the streets. People gathered from all sides as the unfortunates were taken away. The arrested Jews were led to trucks that were waiting at street corners. Passersby offered to take some of the children to their own homes. Not having received any explicit orders, the policemen did not dare allow them to do so. In general, the police behaved with a good deal of human feeling and some of them even wept.

The arrests continued the next day. Persons without any family were immediately sent to Drancy. The others—about 9,000, 4,000 of them children—were sent to the Vélodrome d'Hiver while waiting to be transferred to the camps at Pithiviers and Beaune-la-Rolande.

But at the Vélodrome d'Hiver no preparations had been made to house so many people. The newcomers sat down on the stone steps and were forbidden to leave their seats. They were not allowed on the lawn or racetrack where they might have stretched out to sleep, these two places having been reserved for sick people on stretchers.

Most of the internees had brought no food with them. The National Aid (*Secours National*) offered to distribute some but was only given the right to do so after the second day. The Red Cross was authorized to organize medical aid. But sick people could only be evacuated by the doctor of the Prefecture who was not on the spot and who had to be consulted in each individual case by telephone. He was told about one child who had caught scarlet fever and two others with measles. On the pretext that the symptoms of the disease were not clear enough, he refused to evacuate them. The result was a triple epidemic of diphtheria, scarlet fever and measles which broke out a little later in the camps at Pithiviers and Beaune-la-Rolande, involving 300 children, several of whom died. Hygienic conditions at the Beaune-la-Rolande Camp were shocking. There was neither drinking water nor water for toilet purposes. The firemen had to install a pipe which, connected with a hydrant on the outside, crossed the entire enclosure and emptied out in a small court. A single outlet of water for 9,000 internees! Because of the lack of toilets, children and sick people could not wait to satisfy their needs. Small children could neither be washed nor changed. Medical visits took place in public, even examinations by gynecologists. To prevent curious bystanders and children from approaching, the doctor placed a human wall of gendarmes, nurses and assistants around the person he was examining. The internees remained in that state for from 5 to 8 days, according to their condition.

They were then transferred, some to the camp at Pithiviers, others to the camp at Beaune-la-Rolande. There, parents were separated from children less than 12 years of

age. Mothers were brutally beaten because they refused to part with their little ones. Parents and grown children were deported. The youngsters from 2 to 12 remained in the camp, facing a precarious future.

Numerous Jews and non-Jews offered to take them in. The General Union of the Jews of France attempted to obtain permission to place them either in orphanages or with families. These attempts were unsuccessful. Children were sent to Drancy and from there, deported in groups of 500. As in the case of the adults, they were transported in sealed cattle cars. To watch over them, there was one woman for every ten children, and some of the children even traveled in the cattle cars without anyone to take care of them. When they left, they received a piece of bread and a can of condensed milk. It is difficult to visualize in what condition they arrived at their destination after several days' journey, if in fact they arrived alive. And as if that were not horrible enough, many of the youngsters from 2 to 5 were deported without anyone knowing their names, since they could not be identified at Drancy.

Unoccupied France

When France fell, Jews who were not French, stateless, or citizens of countries at war with France were in various camps in the central and southern part of the country. Toward the end of 1940, they were sent to Gurs (Basses-Pyrénées). In October, the Nazis drove 7,500 Jews from the German provinces of Baden and the Palatinate. Complete German Jewish communities arrived with their religious and social leaders in France, where they were interned at Gurs under the most appalling conditions. Jews lived in crowded barracks sleeping on the ground, devoured by vermin, suffering from hunger and cold in a damp and muddy region. During the one winter of 1940-1941, they suffered 800 deaths. In January 1941, families with children were sent to Rivesaltes (Pyrénées Orientales), where the situation was just

about as bad. Over this stony and desert-like earth, the wind from the north, the *Tramontane*, blew in gales. Sick people from Gurs were sent to the camp of Noé (Haute-Garonne). The other principal camps were those of Récébédou (Haute Garonne), Le Vernet (Ariège) and Les Milles (Bouches-du-Rhône). Other measures were taken with regard to foreign Jews. On December 10, 1941, an announcement was made in the press that all Jews residing in France who had entered the country since January 1, 1936 would be grouped either into companies of foreign workers or in special centers. The only ones excepted from this measure were those who enjoyed effective protection from their country of birth or of any other country whose nationality they had acquired, and those who could point to certain marks of distinction, particularly those of a military nature. Foreign Jews from 18 to 55 possessing no means of existence or aided by charitable organizations, were organized into work battalions. Those who had financial resources were forced to reside in special centers, called centers of assigned residence.

The situations in the labor battalions differed widely according to the men who commanded them. Many Jews were made to do work for which they were neither physically nor intellectually fit. Doctors, lawyers, teachers, and merchants had to dig canals, chop down trees from a steep mountain slope, or break rocks on the road. At Montlouis (Pyrénées Orientales), they had to work as ditchdiggers. If they did not furnish the requisite amount of work, not only were they not paid but they had to pay in a certain sum to the boss of the job.

The unoccupied zone also had to furnish its quota of deportees. In August 1942, about 15,000 foreign Jews were handed over to the Germans by the Vichy Government, most of them taken from internees in the various camps. Other deportees had been arrested in the course of raids and came from diverse regions, especially around Nice. These convoys did not pass Drancy but went instead directly to Eastern Europe.

In the Two Zones

After November 11, 1942, when the Germans occupied all of Metropolitan France as a result of the landing of American troops in North Africa, large-scale arrests took place in Southern France. At Marseilles, on January 22 and 23, 1943; police raids took place day and night in every section of the city. Individuals arrested were taken to headquarters of the Sûreté Nationale for verification of their identity, and all those whose identification cards bore the word "Jew" were not released. On January 24, a train bearing 1,500 people was sent to Compiègne, including a good many Jews. For some time, as a result of efforts exerted at Marseilles as well as in Vichy, there was some hope that the French Jews arrested at Marseilles would be freed; but such was not the case.

Fleeing the German zone, many of our co-religionists went to Southeastern France, which the Italians had just occupied. There they were in safety. The Italian authorities did not disturb them and often took them under their protection. But the situation of the Jews in this region suddenly became tragic right after the armistice with Italy. In September 1943, the Germans made sweeping raids at Nice, Grenoble, Chambéry, and Aix-les Bains—taking vengeance on the Jews for the kindness shown them by the Italian authorities. The Gestapo was especially active at Nice; arrests occurred in hotels, on the street, in railway stations, trains, and private houses. In the case of men, the police no longer relied on identification cards, making them undress to see if they were circumcised. Gestapo agents and their French collaborators, militiamen and followers of Doriot, followed the same shameful practice in other cities every time they doubted the real identity of the man under arrest. For the five months during which the hunt for Jews continued at Nice, more than 5,000 Jews were deported. To escape the German police, those who could not leave the district in time hid in cellars, attics, and in barns or took refuge in the caves of nearby mountains.

Many labor battalions made up of foreign workmen were dissolved and the members were deported. In many reception centers the Jewish population was deported.

In the entire formerly free zone, even where there were no large-scale raids, Jews were seized daily for the most varied and contradictory reasons. Some were arrested for having broken the law ordering them to write "Jew" on their identification cards, others because they had that word marked on their papers. The Gestapo deported Jews because they needed their apartments. Fake policemen visited Jews and seized everything they could lay their hands on. When the victims complained, they were handed over to the Germans shortly thereafter.

In the formerly occupied zone arrests took place for the most trivial reasons: for having badly sewed on the Jewish star, for having made purchases outside the fixed hours, for having been out-of-doors during an air-raid alarm. The situation at Drancy, to which the arrested Jews were sent, became unbearable with the arrival in June 1943 of *Hauptsturmführer* Bruner. To get rid of embarrassing witnesses, Bruner dismissed representatives of the French police and replaced them with S.S. men. The internees had to suffer all sorts of brutality. One S.S. man took pleasure in beating with a club all those he met on his path. Among the punishments enforced was that of the knife planted in the earth. Having dug a knife into the ground, an S.S. man ordered an internee to walk all around it and each time the unfortunate passed in front of him he lashed out with his club. This depraved game ended only when the Jew fainted away from exhaustion. Bruner often forced internees to hit others, while carrying out orders for corporal punishment that he had given. He also created a special police force to visit families who had one member at Drancy and to invite them, on the threat of shooting the internee, to re-enter the camp "voluntarily." In this way, he obtained a certain number of "voluntary" internees.

In addition to the deportations, the many executions created a reign of terror over the unfortunate Jewish population. Whenever the occupying authorities executed hostages as a result of a patriotic attack, they never failed to choose some of the Jews interned in the camps or held in prison. Yet these executions proved unable to prevent such attacks or to check the mounting activities of the patriots.

From the beginning of 1944 on, the Germans were forced

to resort to large scale expeditions against the various *maquis* forces. The Hitlerites, growing desperate in the villages and countryside, singled out the Jews for their assaults. Beginning in March 1944, the Dordogne was the scene of German atrocities. More than a thousand Jews were arrested and deported, about 150 were executed. Many Jewish families lived for a time hidden in the woods to escape these massacres and deportations.

After the liberation of France many mass graves, in which almost all the corpses were Jews, were revealed to the world!

At the airport of Bron, near Lyons, 109 corpses of men and women were found in five vaults. They had been hastily buried on the very spot where they had fallen. Up to now, 73 Jews have been identified, among them young people from 14 to 17. That massacre took place on August 17 and 18. The victims were taken in trucks to the airfield and forced to dig up unexploded bombs dropped by the RAF. When their work was done, they were executed.

At Saint-Amand-Montrond (Cher), on the night of July 22-23, 36 Jews were arrested and taken to the prison of Bourges. There, a light truck came for them and for a long time their fate remained unknown. But one of them succeeded in escaping the militiamen who were escorting them. Thanks to his information, a search was made after the Liberation in the vicinity of the place to which the Jews had been transported. Finally, three pits were uncovered on the property of Guéry, at Savigny-en-Septaine (Cher). Under enormous boulders, some of them weighing more than 100 pounds each, 35 horribly mutilated corpses were found. An inquest revealed that these unfortunates had been tossed alive into the pits and crushed by heavy rocks.

Official Protests

French Jewry, as long as it was able to, protested vehemently and energetically against the anti-Jewish measures, arrests, and massacres.

In October 1940, even before the Jewish Statute was promulgated, and when a communiqué issued by the Council of

Ministers indicated that such a Statute was being prepared, Isaiah Schwartz, the Grand Rabbi of France, demanded an audience with Marshal Pétain. General Brécart, secretary-general, received the Grand Rabbi in the name of the Marshal. The spiritual leader of French Jewry discussed with him the question of the Statute and the abrogation of the Crémieux Decree, handing him a memorandum in which, in the name of the Jews, he protested against any discrimination among citizens because of their religion or race. When the Statute in question was published, a "Declaration of the Grand Rabbi of France in the name of the French Jews" was addressed on October 22 to the Chief of State and all his ministers. This Declaration stated in part:

"By imposing on the Jews this dishonorable Statute, the new legislation only increases their sorrows . . .

The law promulgated against the Jews, containing an arbitrary definition of the Jewish race, thus most seriously violates their freedom of conscience. Nonetheless, the Jews declare that they are neither a racial minority nor a political minority but only a religious community. The Jews protest against the infamous accusations of internationalism and anarchism which have been levelled against them and proudly affirm their love of their fatherland; those Jews who have fallen by the side of their comrades-in-arms have, moreover, given striking proof of that fact."

On two occasions, in March 1941 and February 1943, the Grand Rabbi of France was received by Marshal Pétain, to whom he renewed orally his protests against the anti-Jewish measures of the Government.

The Grand Rabbi of Paris, Julien Weill, and the Paris community also sent a letter to Marshal Pétain. The communication, dated October 23, 1940, contained the following:

"The French law does not in appearance violate freedom of religion, since it proceeds from the ethnic point of view. But the studies of anthropology have proved beyond a doubt that there is no such thing as a 'Jewish race.' The execution of this law, therefore, is only possible on a religious basis,

as is the case of the German ordinance, and thus gravely violates the traditional liberty of France."

Other protests followed as the anti-Jewish policies of the Vichy Government became clearer. A good many of them came from Jacques Helbronner, president of the Central Consistory of the Jews of France. His protest of July 1, 1941, sent to Marshal Pétain, dealing with the law modifying the Statute of the Jews, declared:

"Nonetheless French Jews will not attempt to repress their natural sentiments of hatred and contempt toward their persecutors and will preserve their faith in the destiny of eternal France, in order to obtain their just revenge for the law which has today been violated."

When the Government announced the plan to create a General Union of the Jews of France, the Central Consistory on October 26, 1941 addressed a solemn protest in the form of a motion to Marshal Pétain, to the Keeper of the Seal, and to the General Commissariat for Jewish Affairs. This motion declared:

"The Central Consistory again solemnly protests against this measure which tends to deprive French citizens and foreigners of the Jewish faith, their religious communities as well as their charitable institutions, of the protection of the law, and constitutes one step more toward the re-establishment of a real Ghetto.

"In the religious and cultural field, the Consistory refuses to take into consideration a text which is so contrary to the fundamental tenets of French public order: freedom of conscience, freedom of religion, freedom of association, and equality of all French citizens before the law.

"Nevertheless, the Consistory considers that it is its duty, in the social and philanthropic field, urgently to call the attention of the authorities to the grave dangers which such a dissolution of the already coordinated private institutions of Jewish welfare, would entail, without having first considered the serious consequences for the thousands of unfortunate human beings for whom they are providing . . ."

On June 22, 1942, the Central Consistory took its stand against the law forcing Jews in the occupied zone to wear a Jewish star. In its statement it declared:

"The Central Consistory of the Jews of France declares that the law forcing Jews remaining in the Occupied zone to wear a special mark goes beyond the stipulations of the Armistice as well as the International Conventions governing occupation.

"It feels that by no longer opposing this law, at least passively, the authorities have added to all the exceptional measures already applied an act of incomparable gravity, both because of the demoralization it provokes among Frenchmen henceforth, as in the Middle Ages, openly branded with shame and, despite their undeniable sense of civic duty, exposed to further persecutions, as well as because of the material consequences it entails, threatening by isolating them, to make their lives in the capital and larger cities very difficult if not impossible."

Among the protests expressed in various Jewish circles against these acts of persecution, we must quote that of the ex-servicemen. A delegation led by General André Boris, former Inspector General of the Artillery and member of the Central Consistory, was received on August 11, 1941 by Xavier Vallat, General Commissaire for Jewish Affairs. This delegation consisted of 18 ex-servicemen, including four of the members of the Central Consistory and one Rabbi, all veterans of either World War I or World War II or both, possessing 56 citations, 2 military medals, and 18 Legions of Honor for military exploits. Their protest ran as follows:

"Contrary to what you may believe, *Monsieur le Commissaire Général*, we do not come to ask favors or exceptions of you. Nor even the slightest relaxation of a rigorous Statute which, in our eyes, is valid only insofar as we are legally forced to comply with it and does not signify any agreement on our part."

The protest closed with the following words:

"Would the General Commissar for Jewish Affairs consider subversive a statement drawn up by Jewish ex-service-

men, war wounded, widows, orphans and descendants of such men, and written in the following terms:

"We solemnly declare that we renounce any exceptional benefits we may derive from our status as ex-servicemen. The French Jews who died for France, whom we represent, and those who have fought for her do not wish to beg in humiliating fashion for exceptions to a law which, as you yourself have declared, does not except any Jews anywhere—and by the same token, his family—from all of the consequences resulting from his juridical status as a Jew.

"Among the French Jews, those who have given their lives, the wounded who have given their blood, the living who wear its decorations did not think that they had given their lives or received their honors for a country which would reject them.

"Through our voice, the fathers and descendants of our dead, our surviving wounded and crippled declare that, far from denying France despite all that they have suffered, they mean to add their silent sacrifice of today to their sacrifices of former years.

"So, in a juster and freer future, they hope to deserve doubly the name of Frenchmen which they will never relinquish in their hearts even if it is taken away from them by force."

But all these protests were in vain. Moreover, the Government denied that it was pursuing an anti-Semitic policy; and it invoked reasons of state to justify its move. That is what the *chef de cabinet* of Xavier Vallat, General Commissar for Jewish Affairs, wrote on July 5, 1941 to Grand Rabbi Jacob Kaplan, in reply to a protest which the latter had sent him when the law on a census for Jews was promulgated: "There is no anti-Semitism in the Government's attitude, simply the application of reasons of state." (See *Supplementary Document No. 2*).

There even came a time when these protests were dangerous. One of them, addressed on August 2, 1943 to Pierre Laval, head of the Government, and signed by the president of the Central Consistory and the Grand Rabbi of France, caused the arrest and deportation of Jacques Helbronner

and his wife. The signatories had protested the arrest, on July 22, of André Baur, vice-president of the board of the General Union of the Jews of France, and of his family on the pretext that two internees had escaped from the camp of Drancy, and against the vile treatment accorded our co-religionists in that camp. The Gestapo of Marseilles had found a copy of that letter in the office of Raymond-Raoul Lambert, director of the General Union of the Jews of France, who was himself arrested on August 21 and deported together with his entire family.

The president of the Central Consistory was arrested on October 23, 1943. The vice-president, Léon Meiss, former Councilor at the Court of Nancy, succeeded him as head of the Central Consistory.

The turn of the Grand Rabbi of France came next. Gestapo agents came to the offices of the Central Consistory at Lyons in November 1943, thinking that they would find him there. He happened to be out of the office. Arrested six weeks later, in January 1944, he succeeded fortunately in escaping from the militiamen instructed to take him into custody.

The Central Consistory named Auxiliary Grand Rabbi Jacob Kaplan temporary Grand Rabbi of France.

III

MORAL AND MATERIAL AID

Charity in the Camps

Unmoved by protests, the Vichy Government implemented its program of anti-Jewish persecution.

The first urgent task facing the leaders of French Jewry was to procure for the Jews who had lost any chance to earn a living and were without resources, the means of continuing to keep alive. Later there arose the necessity of providing, insofar as possible, for feeding internees in the

occupied and unoccupied zones, for taking care of children deprived of their parents, and for teaching new trades to those who could no longer exercise their former occupations. This task was accomplished thanks to intensified efforts by the already existing welfare organizations: the Federation of Jewish Societies of France, the Community for Aid to Refugees (CAR), OSE, ORT, HICEM, the Jewish Boy Scouts of France, the *Alliance Israélite Universelle*, and the Center of Professional Reclassification, and thanks also to the creation of new welfare organizations such as the Society for Aiding the Evacuated Populations of Alsace-Lorraine, and the Mutual Aid Society of French Jewry. All the Jewish welfare organizations had united in a Central Committee set up first at Vichy and later at Marseilles.

The unhappy plight of foreign Jews, those in the camps as well as those in the labor battalions and reception centers, was also of grave concern to the leaders of French Jewry. The rabbis were the first to give to the internees the spiritual and material assistance they needed. For a time, in fact, they were the only ones authorized to visit the camps. The central committee of the Jewish Society for Mutual Aid created a camp committee, which aimed at centralizing the aid given the internees by the leading Jewish organizations, and maintained intimate contact with the Coordinating Committee for Aid in the Camps founded in December 1940. It included French and foreign welfare organizations, among which were the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, the YMCA, the International Migration Service, the Quakers, etc. The Jews were not the only ones in the camp and labor battalions, which included thousands of "Aryans," especially Spaniards.

Following the example set by other religious faiths, the Jews created a chaplains service in April 1942. It was composed of a head chaplain, René Hirschler, Grand Rabbi of Strasbourg, regional chaplains, and auxiliary chaplains. It maintained contact with the Department of Social Service for Foreigners at Vichy. On a visit to this department, the head chaplain and Léon Meiss learned that a large-scale roundup of foreign Jews was being prepared for August 26, 1942. They immediately notified all communities in the unoccupied zone. Thousands of Jews hid and were thus

able to escape arrest. In some places, the police found only 12 percent of the Jews they had been instructed to apprehend.

The duties of the chaplains were both spiritual and social. They organized religious services in the camps, taught Judaism to the children, and distributed food and clothing. They also made numerous requests to the proper authorities with a view to liberating certain internees, and obtained noteworthy results. The Jewish chaplains service and camp committees extended their field of action to include young French Jews subject to the forced labor law. The law of February 16, 1943 provided that all or a part of this term of forced labor be spent in Germany. The Germans, however, opposed the sending of Jews as laborers to Germany. They also refused to accept Jews in the Todt organization in France and in French factories managed by Germans. In accordance with instructions of the General Commissariat for Jewish Affairs, young Jews simply by presenting their identification cards marked "Jew," were selected for French factories situated in France.

Nevertheless after August 1943, French Jews called up for forced labor were sent to enterprises controlled by the Todt organization, under the command and administration of Frenchmen. In certain of these camps, such as Malaval (Bouches-du Rhône), Miramas (B.-du-Rhône) et Noé (Haute-Garonne), they were treated with extreme harshness, living like convicts. When notified of this, the French authorities declared that they were powerless to improve conditions of the Jews in the camps.

An organization was set up with a view to sending packages to internees, foreign workers, and those doing forced labor. In November 1943, about a thousand individuals began monthly to send packages representing a total value of more than a hundred and fifty thousand francs. Mme. René Hirschler, wife of the head chaplain, became president of this society which rendered enormous services to our fellow Jews. On December 22, 1942, the head chaplain and his wife were deported. Rabbi Henri Schilli, a regional chaplain, became head chaplain.

The law of November 29, 1941, creating the General Union of the Jews of France had, it may be recalled, ordered the

dissolution of all welfare organizations. The latter were therefore dissolved. But although officially merged in the General Union of the Jews of France, they succeeded in retaining their personnel and continued their work as in the past. It then became necessary for them to obtain the necessary financial resources in order to avoid having recourse to the measures provided by the law in question, which set up a special tax to be paid by the Jews and which had envisaged making use of the solidarity fund created by the law of July 22, 1941—which would have constituted a new stage in the spoliation of Jewish wealth.

It was decided to launch an intensive fund-raising campaign throughout the country. It took the name of the Fund of the Grand Rabbi of France; and André Weill, a member of the Central Consistory, became the guiding spirit of the campaign. It was launched among the Jews of France, especially those who had been evacuated to the unoccupied zone. Those in the occupied zone had had a fine of a billion francs inflicted on them in December 1941; and in order to raise this sum, they had been forbidden to dispose of any wealth they still possessed. The efforts of French Jewry were augmented thanks to the generous and untiring cooperation of the J. D. C., which pledged to double the amount collected.

But from month to month the situation of the French Jews worsened. The Fund of the Grand Rabbi of France was no longer able to furnish the sums needed, and so a tax was levied. It amounted to 120 francs per adult in the occupied zone and 360 francs in the unoccupied region. Nor was it possible to avoid using some of the funds from the sale of Jewish properties: this amounted to 80 million francs spent, in accordance with the law of July 22, 1941, for purposes of temporary administration. The J. D. C., directed in France by Jules Jeffroykin and Maurice Brener, assisted magnificently wherever and whenever French Jews were no longer in a position to raise the necessary money to relieve Jewish distress. The J. D. C. called upon Joseph Fisher, general secretary of the Keren Kayemeth and member of the Central Consistory, and Nahum Herman (deported), secretary of the Keren Hayesod, to devise ways and means of raising the necessary funds in France. After

April 1944, Joseph Fisher assumed the entire burden himself. While aiding all needy Jews, especially foreign Jews who no longer dared to appear at the offices of the General Union of the Jews of France for fear of being arrested by the Germans, as had been the case in several different localities, the Fund of the Grand Rabbi of France and above all the J. D. C. placed considerable sums of money at the disposal of the underground welfare organizations.

Underground Work

It was not long before French Jewry realized that the only way of saving the Jews from deportation was to "Aryanize" them. Efforts were at first concentrated on children whose parents had been deported since, as a result of the shift in families carried out by the Germans, these children likewise ran the risk of being arrested and deported. They received false identification cards, as did later those children whose parents requested it. Some were placed with non-Jewish families, others in schools, and still others in Christian institutions.

Nowhere in France, however, could they enjoy real safety. Outside of France, especially in Switzerland, their safety was assured. Hence, secret convoys of children were organized to that country. Young boys and girls, most of them members of the Jewish Boy Scouts of France, which had created a special department for this work known under the name of "The Sixth," or belonging to the Zionist Youth Movement which had set up a similar movement under the name of "Physical Education," devoted themselves to this work. They procured false identification cards, investigated villages where they might place children, visited those who were already there in families or institutions, set up connections between them and their parents, and organized convoys which brought them secretly over the French-Swiss border.

Several thousand children were thus saved, though not without terrible risks for those who took charge of the work. Of the 88 young men and women who did this underground work, 4 were slain and 26 deported. Among those who fell

were Marc Haguenu, general secretary of the Jewish Boy Scouts of France, who died on February 9, 1944 at the hospital of Grenoble, where the Germans had transported him in a severely wounded condition, claiming that he had fallen out of the window of the house in which they had kept him; David Donoff who died on June 27, 1944 in a hospital in Lyons as result of wounds, at the age of 24; and Marianne Cohn (called Colin), who was arrested at Annemasse with a convoy of children she was accompanying to Switzerland. She could have been freed as an "Aryan," but insisted on remaining with her children and caring for them. Her body was found after the Liberation in a mass grave. She had been killed on July 8 at the age of 23.

As the situation deteriorated, the Jews had no chance to escape except by changing their identity. Many decided to do so. This method, however, did not always succeed, especially in the case of men, since there was always the risk of medical inspection. This extensive camouflage was possible thanks to the sympathy and understanding of the general population.

Help of the French Population

A large number of Frenchmen: priests, ministers, free-thinkers, intellectuals, manufacturers, workers, and peasants of both sexes, did their utmost to find havens for the hunted Jews, considering it their imperative duty to help them. The persecutions had shocked the innate sentiments of justice and humanity of the French people. To this must be added the profound hatred felt toward the forces of occupation, for all the harm they were doing to the country.

In July 1942, after the tragic scenes in the Vélodrome d'Hiver, the Cardinals and Archbishops of the occupied zone sent a memorandum to Marshal Pétain in which they wrote:

" . . . We cannot stifle the cry of our country. We raise our voices in the name of humanity and Christian principles to protest in favor of the inalienable rights of the human being.

"This is also a passionate appeal to pity for these terrible sufferings, especially those affecting so many mothers and children . . ."

On August 20, 1942, the Council of the Protestant Federation, under the signature of its president, Pastor Marc Boegner, wrote to Marshal Pétain protesting against the deportation of Jews and the inhuman manner in which orders for these deportations were being carried out:

" . . . France's stubborn loyalty to her traditions of human generosity and spiritual nobility, even and especially during the tragic days through which she has been living for the past two years, remains one of the basic reasons for the respect which many other nations continue to feel for her. As vice-president of the Oecumenical Council of the Christian Churches, embracing all the important Christian sects, apart from the Roman Catholic Church, I cannot refrain from conveying to you the profound emotion felt by the churches of Switzerland, Sweden, and the United States, at the news of what is going on at this very moment in France and which is known to the entire world.

"I beseech you, *Monsieur le Maréchal*, to take the requisite measures to prevent France from inflicting upon herself a moral defeat, the consequences of which would be incalculable . . ."

At Lyons, an organization known as the "Christian Friendship" was formed in 1941 and headed by Catholics and Protestants, in order to help persecuted Jews and place their children in Christian institutions, with a pledge of the ecclesiastical authorities not to convert any of the children. At the time of the deportations of August 1942, families arrested in the unoccupied zone were able either to take their children with them or to give them over to a Jewish or non-Jewish institution. About 100 children were entrusted to the OSE at Lyons. But as a result of a counter-order from Vichy, the police chief of Lyons demanded them on September 1, 1942 and informed the OSE that he would come for them that very afternoon. A freight car was waiting in the station to be attached to a train of deportees which was to bring them to the occupied zone. The "Christian Friendship" took these children under its

wing, so that when the police appeared at the OSE office, the children were no longer there. For this, sanctions were taken against the Rev. Father Chaillet, one of the leaders of "Christian Friendship," who was kept for a time under house arrest.

In both Catholic and Protestant churches, men of religion publicly expressed the emotion which these tragic events had provoked in the country. Pastoral letters were read to the faithful. (See below *Supplementary Document No. 3*, the letter of the Bishop of Montauban.)

Much earlier, at the end of 1941, Paul Claudel, the great Catholic writer and Ambassador of France, had written to the Grand Rabbi of France to tell him of "the disgust, horror, and indignation," which all good Frenchmen felt in the face of the anti-Jewish persecutions. (See *Supplementary Document, No. 4.*)

Political leaders insisted on expressing to the Grand Rabbi of France and the Central Consistory, either by letter or orally, their profound sympathy before this "flouting of human rights and French traditions." (See the letter of Jules Jeanneney, president of the Senate, and Edouard Herriot, president of the Chamber of Deputies in *Supplementary Document No. 5.*)

Jews in the Resistance Movement

Jews did not disguise themselves only to seek safety. They became "Aryans" in order to fight more effectively against the enemy. A great many of them took an active part in the resistance movements. In 1942, at the initiative of the Zionist Youth of Toulouse, a group called "Jewish Armed Forces" was created and placed under the orders of the Zionist Organization of France which, from 1943 on, had sections in the principal cities of France under the name of A.J. (Jewish Army). In the beginning, their task was to send young Jews eager to enlist in the Palestinian armed forces or those of General de Gaulle into Spain. Later the A.J. became a combat unit within France itself, taking the name of O.J.C. (Jewish Organizations of Combat). In Jan-

uary 1944, it created a *maquis* group in the mountains of Tarn. This was the Jewish squad of the Free Corps of the Black Mountain. Several German divisions attacked them in July. Lieutenant Raymond Lévy, known as Leblond, leader of this squad, was taken prisoner and executed. But the group re-formed almost immediately afterwards, participating in the battles which occurred after Allied troops landed on the Mediterranean at St.-Pons and Moulins, and taking many prisoners.

The Jewish Boy Scouts of France also participated in the armed struggle, joining the O.J.C. They had their *maquis* in the Tarn mountains at Lamalquière and Sarrié. The group at Sarrié, consisting of very orthodox young people, was a kind of secret Yeshiva, which did not, however, neglect military training. The group at Lamalquière, a splendid fighting force, was led by Lieutenant Roger (Cahen). About 50 non-Jews were members of this force. It became so numerous that it formed a company with three sections, under the command of Captain Robert Gamzon (known as Lagnes), national head of the Jewish Boy Scouts of France. The company took the name of Marc Haguenau, in memory of the general secretary of the Jewish Boy Scouts of France, who had been killed by the Germans in Grenoble. On August 19, 1944, these troops attacked an armored train at Mazamet (Tarn). After a twenty-four hour battle, the Germans were beaten and surrendered. Considerable booty and about fifty prisoners were taken. "You are surrendering to a Jew," said Lieutenant Roger to the German commander. As a result of this exploit, Mazamet was liberated by the Marc Haguenau Company.

The Jewish Boy Scouts took part in the capture of Castres and paraded with the other troops through the liberated city.

The Marc Haguenau Company joined forces with the First French Army and fought in the Belfort region where it suffered heavy losses.

Young Jewish Communists formed free corps in various cities throughout the country. In Paris, Michel Rayman, member of the F.P.P. (*Francs-Tireurs et Partisans*), took part in August 1943 in the execution of General von Schauen-

burg and in September 1943 in that of Julius Ritter, head of the organization sending forced labor to Germany. Rayman paid with his life for his heroism—on March 21, 1944, he was shot at the age of 19.

Two companies, the Michel Rayman, named after the above, and the Marcel Langer fought actively in the battles for the liberation of Paris.

On August 19, a Jewish combat group proceeded in automobiles to liberate the camp at Drancy. To arrive there it had to pass through a German cordon surrounding the capital. At Drancy, they were pleasantly surprised to find the camp free of Germans and for the past three days under the protection of the Red Cross, as a result of an agreement reached between the Swedish Consul and the German Commander of Greater Paris. The Red Cross was preparing to free the internees but forty of them had been taken away as hostages by the hateful torturer Bruner. The last convoy of deportees to leave Drancy had departed in July 1941 and included 400 children. Another convoy was scheduled for August 13 but did not leave because of what ensued. 1,800 internees thus regained their freedom.

In addition to these young people who considered it a matter of honor to fight as Jews, there were others who entered the Resistance movement and fought under a false name side by side with their comrades of other faiths. Many of them distinguished themselves and died as heroes. The head of liaison for the Southern zone was a Jew, Gilles Lévy de Souza, known as Chambrey. He was arrested and executed by the Germans in 1944, at the age of 22. In September 1944, on his first visit to Lyons, General de Gaulle paid tribute to his memory. It was likewise the Jew, Maurice Loebenberg, known as Cachoud, who in 1944 reorganized the supply of false identification papers for the National Liberation Movement, furnishing tens of thousands of food cards, work cards, demobilization notices, and all the other necessary documents. Arrested on July 17, he underwent terrible torture. He was 28 years old.

It was a young Jewish woman, Paula, who stole the plans for the launching platforms of the V-1 bombs and those of

the underground Gestapo in Paris. The Germans deported her in August 1944 together with the hostages of Drancy.

The Central Consistory under the presidency of Léon Meiss took an increasingly active part in all kinds of underground work: supplying false identification papers, removing children to safety in Switzerland, and maintaining contact with the leaders of the fighting groups of the underground. The latter, a new form of activity, became its principal task in 1944.

But the Gestapo was watching, and the Central Consistory felt itself in danger. Toward the end of May, the head of the Lyons Gestapo, accompanied by three police officers, visited the offices of the Consistory to find out what was going on there.

On June 13, the German police swooped down on the Lyons synagogue on Quai Tilsit, arresting the officiating rabbi, the secretary, the caretaker, and a few members of the congregation who were present.

The Central Consistory then decided to close its offices and enter boldly upon underground work. Two or three days later, militiamen and followers of Doriot occupied its headquarters. The few members of the Consistory who remained at their post held meetings in private houses or cafés.

The formation of the C.R.I.F.—Representative Committee of the Jews of France—dates from these heroic days. The Central Consistory, the French Social Welfare Organizations, the Zionist Organization, the Federation of Jewish Societies, the Bund, the Jewish Communists, the Union of Jews for Resistance and Aid, and the Action Committee of Jewish Youth came together and set up a united front against the enemy, under the chairmanship of Léon Meiss.

Their meetings were not without danger. Leaving one of them, Léon Meiss barely escaped arrest at the hands of men armed with tommy-guns who had come to get him. The meeting had ended a few minutes before.

The temporary Grand Rabbi of France, Jacob Kaplan, was arrested on August 1 in the street by three members of the French Popular Party working for the German police.

They searched his home hoping to find proof of underground work, and questioned him at length. But not having discovered anything after having detained him for several hours, they decided to release him without handing him over to the Germans.

Religious Life

Religious life under the occupation deserves a special section. Officially, the Germans did not attack religion, but in practice synagogues were destroyed or damaged by bombs and grenades. Scrolls of the Law were mutilated and trampled underfoot; Jews praying in synagogues were assaulted and many arrested; and numerous rabbis were deported.

At the outset of the occupation, some synagogues were completely razed, especially in Alsace-Lorraine, including the great Strasbourg Synagogue. During 1941, frequent attacks were made against religious institutions. Bombs damaged the Jewish Reformed Temple in Marseilles in May, that of Vichy in August, and that of Paris in October.

In Paris, seven synagogues were despoiled during the night of October 2, 1941. Fortunately, there were no human casualties but considerable material damage was caused in many places.

Throughout 1942, there was a series of assaults on Jews who had gathered in their houses of worship. Thus in June, about thirty young people armed with clubs and iron bars broke into the synagogue on Rue Dubouchage at Nice, beating those they found inside and injuring many, destroying religious objects, and tearing to pieces a Scroll of the Law.

At Paris, on the night of July 20, six members of the French Popular Party broke open the door of the synagogue on Rue de la Victoire and, after beating up the caretaker, defiled the altar, mutilated the Scroll, and trampled on it.

The right of asylum in synagogues was not respected. When in August the French police hunted down foreign Jews to send them into camps, hundreds of individuals sought refuge in houses of worship, especially in Lyons and Toulouse. At Lyons, Jews remained in the synagogue for several weeks,

sleeping on benches and fed by the Jewish community. Thanks to the devotion of the heads of the synagogue and of charitable individuals, many of the women, children, and sick people were placed in individual homes or institutions. To justify this influx of Jews into the synagogue in the eyes of the authorities, a letter of the Grand Rabbi of France ordered public prayers to be held day and night in view of the sorrows visited upon Jewry; and a notice to that effect was posted at the entrance of the synagogue. The police, who were not unaware of what was going on, visited the place to investigate and seemed at first unwilling to take any action. But on the night of October 20, they broke into the building and arrested all foreign Jews found there—about fifty people in all. The next day, Jacques Helbronner, president of the Central Consistory, protested energetically to the chief of police. As a result, most of the individuals arrested were released.

The next year, on Wednesday, August 25, 1943, some twenty militiamen rushed into the synagogue at Toulouse, forbade anyone present to leave, proceeded to question them, seized them, and announced that in the morning they would be executed in reprisal for an attack on a militiaman. All night the condemned prayed before the open Ark of the Covenant, Rabbi Mosse leading them in services. At daybreak, at the insistence of the rabbi, a priest was permitted to visit them. He intervened in their behalf, but it was not until the beginning of the afternoon that the chief of police came and issued orders to free them.

On October 9, Yom Kippur, the Gestapo appeared at the synagogue of Enghien-les-Bains near Paris during the morning service. All the worshippers, numbering 35, were arrested and taken in cars to the *Kommandantur*. Several of them were then sent to Drancy.

On December 10, grenades were hurled into the synagogue of Lyons during a Friday evening service, wounding ten worshippers, men and women.

Despite all these attacks, religious services were held regularly in the communities. It was only after the Gestapo began to make arrests within the houses of worship that some of them were closed. In Lyons, services were held

every morning and evening until June 13, 1944, when the officiating rabbi, the secretary, the caretaker, and several members of the congregation were arrested in the synagogue building. The synagogue itself was occupied shortly thereafter by gangs of militiamen and members of the Doriot party. At Paris, services took place almost without interruption, with the Grand Rabbi of Paris, Julien Weill, who remained in the capital during the German occupation, officiating.

Rabbis were naturally in a particularly exposed position since their religious duties kept them in the public eye. As early as 1942, four of them were searched by the police. According to the reply of the Secretary of State for the Interior to the letter of protest of the Grand Rabbi of France, the police were said to have discovered documents proving that members of the rabbinate were in contact with the Independent Order of B'nai B'rith. The Grand Rabbi then declared that the Order of B'nai B'rith was entirely independent of the two rites of world freemasonry. The rabbis involved were no longer molested after that.

But soon arrests of rabbis began in various communities. Eighteen French rabbis were deported: four of them, including Rabbi Wiener, Grand Rabbi of Belgium, were more than 75 years old. One rabbi was shot: Samuel Weiss, chaplain of the Jewish Youth and *maquis* groups, appointed in January 1944 assistant to the temporary Grand Rabbi of France. He was arrested and executed as he was about to return to his post on the fighting front.

A seminary student aged 26, Aaron Wolf, who was just about to become a rabbi, was shot on May 19, 1944, while he was staying temporarily on a Jewish farm in Saint-Germain (Ain), together with some other young Jews who were there and to whom he was giving courses in religious instruction.

Rabbi Abraham Deutsch, evacuated with his community of Bischeim (Bas-Rhin) to Limoges, was arrested three times. Five other rabbis succeeded in escaping the agents of the Gestapo. Several rabbis, prevented from exercising their religious functions, joined the *Maquis* as chaplains.

Important work was done in providing education for the youth. Courses in adult education were started and correspondence courses were instituted for young people in regions where there were no teachers. Works on religious instruction were published, such as *Hillel and Judaism* by Aimé Pallière, reading guides, and a Hebrew grammar for beginners by Rabbi Joseph Bloch. A new edition of a prayer-book in French translation was begun but interrupted, due to the shortage of paper. Finally, at the initiative of the education committee created by the executive committee of the Zionist Organization, a Hebrew language manual, *Hayenu*, was published.

To give Jews courage and confidence in the future, the Grand Rabbi of France issued a number of religious messages and statements on the occasion of the high holidays and in other circumstances. But he did not receive permission to publish a religious paper. On several occasions, he renewed his request for such permission to the Vichy authorities. The latter refused on the grounds of a "scarcity of paper."

The Rabbinical School, headed by Grand Rabbi Maurice Liber, continued to train future rabbis. Evacuated to Vichy during the war, it was set up after the defeat at Clermont-Ferrand, and later at Lyons. A school preparing students for the Rabbinical School was opened at Limoges.

But after forced labor was introduced and young people were hunted by the police, many students were forced to interrupt their studies, and many, concealing their identity, joined the *maquis*.

Shehitah was kept up in a great many communities and *Matzoh* was made each year to celebrate the Passover festival. These religious activities were maintained despite all the risks and dangers involved. They were, in a sense, the flag of Judaism unfurled above the battlefield.

For war raged constantly, an inexorable underground war, with sudden blows falling on all Jews, especially those who admitted that they were Jews. They lived dangerously from day to day, by the grace of God. When they left they did not know if they would return to their homes. When they returned, they wondered whether they would find their

families there. When they went to bed, they did not know if they would be arrested during the night. When their doorbell rang unexpectedly, they prepared for the worst. If an automobile stopped in front of their house, their hearts beat faster. If a member of the family was late in coming home, uneasiness quickly became mortal terror.

There came a moment, at the beginning of 1944, when there was no longer any doubt that the Hitlerite program called for the extermination of French Jewry by deportations and massacres. This program was applied with increasing harshness. Gestapo agents and their French henchmen redoubled their efforts. They laid hands now on one community, now on another. Entire Jewish communities, or what was left of them, were arrested. At Nancy and Poitiers, rabbis and their congregations were whisked away together. The hunt was on for the Jews of Bordeaux, Brive, and Vichy. At Paris and Lyons, the German tactics were first to weaken the Jews numerically, and then to deport the survivors at a single stroke.

Arrests and assassinations of Jews went on daily. Victor Basch, honorary professor at the Sorbonne and former president of the League of the Rights of Man, was executed at Lyons in January 1944 by militiamen; his wife suffered the same fate. Georges Mandel, a former cabinet minister, was handed over to the militiamen on July 7 by the prison authorities; the next day he was struck down in the Forest of Fontainebleau. At Lyons, at the end of July, 400 militiamen and Doriot followers working for the German police, launched a manhunt for Jews. The Allied landing on the beaches of Normandy had provoked the Nazis' rage.

Now French Jews were in a most tragic plight. Already 100,000 had been deported and 10,000 slain. If German occupation were to continue for some time to come, how many more tens of thousands of Jewish victims would be added to the ghastly toll?

Then suddenly came the victorious advance of the Allied armies and the liberation of France! French Jewry, rendering thanks to God for the salvation of the country, celebrated at the same time its own liberation. All the Jews left in France were literally men reprieved from death.

IV

THE PRESENT TASKS OF FRENCH JEWRY

After liberation, the Grand Rabbi of France, Isaiah Schwartz; the president of the Central Consistory, Léon Meiss; members of the Central Consistory and the C.R.I.F.; and the heads of the French Jewish welfare organizations returned to Paris.

A member of the Central Consistory, René Mayer, is at present Minister of Public Works and Transport in the Government of General de Gaulle. The president of the *Alliance Israélite Universelle*, Professor René Cassin, is vice-president of the Council of State.

An ordinance of August 9, 1944 of the Provisional Government of the French Republic, concerning the re-establishment of republican laws, declared null and void all acts setting up or applying any discrimination whatever in the case of Jews. The General Union of the Jews of France was therefore dissolved. Jewish welfare organizations reformed and resumed work on an autonomous basis.

Liberation set in relief the extent of the tragedy which had befallen French Jewry. A third of the Jewish population had been either deported or murdered. Those who remained had lost their material resources; their property was in the hands of administrators, their commercial holdings in the hands of temporary administrators or of "Aryans" who had purchased them. A good many Frenchmen had not hesitated to participate in unjust measures directed against the Jews and had acquired the latter's property. Moreover, almost all the Parisian Jews returning from the Southern zone had lost their apartment and house furnishings, the Germans having looted the homes of deportees and those who had gone to Unoccupied France, and their apartments having been rented to "Aryan" tenants. As the result, tens of thousands of Jews found themselves homeless, and about twenty thousand of them were forced to approach the Jewish welfare organizations for assistance.

Twenty synagogues had been destroyed, including the

magnificent structure at Strasbourg. Ten others, occupied by the Germans, the militiamen or Doriot men, had been profaned and looted, including those of Metz, Bordeaux, and Lyons. Still others were partially ruined as a result of attacks.

Several thousand children had been hidden in institutions with Christian families; and it became urgent to bring them back to a Jewish environment, especially since some of them had been converted or had been approached with a view to being converted.

Some adults had likewise been influenced by the religious propaganda of a few Catholic and Protestant clergymen who had taken advantage of the persecution of the Jews to attract desperate souls to their faith.

Despite the lack of rabbis, most of the communities had been reorganized. One of the first tasks of the welfare organization dealing with the youth has been to open childrens' homes. A great majority of the children are at present either with their families or, in the case of deportees, in Jewish institutions. To hasten the return of those who are still in non-Jewish environments, a Committee for Jewish Children had just been formed comprising all the agencies interested in this problem.

The Government has issued various ordinances with respect to the restitution of Jewish property: that of October 16, 1944 concerning real estate in the hands of administrators; that of November 14, 1944 concerning property in the hands of temporary administrators and the return of Jews to apartments from which they had been evicted; and that of April 21, 1945 concerning goods sold by temporary administrators. But the return of Jews to their apartments and the restitution of their businesses have met with resistance on the part of the present occupants and possessors. The latter have formed groups which have staged demonstrations with a view to opposing forcibly the application of these ordinances.

On June 6, 1945, the Minister of the Interior dissolved these organizations and announced that in the future all groups pursuing anti-Semitic activities would be dissolved.

The defeat of Hitlerism has liberated the survivors among

our unfortunate co-religionists who were interned in camps in Germany or in German-occupied countries. In accordance with a government measure, all Jews, French and non-French, who were deported from France will be repatriated. Unfortunately those who return are few in number. Up to now, none of the deported rabbis has come back; some of them are no longer alive and we are without news of the others.

Léon Blum, former Prime Minister and leader of the Socialist Party, a political deportee, recently returned to France.

Despite the diminished resources at its disposal as a result of the disappearance of part of its élite and the general impoverishment of the population, French Jewry has undertaken to accomplish the tremendous task of religious, spiritual, social, and material reconstruction incumbent upon it.

V

NORTH AFRICA

The Jews of Algeria were the first victims of Vichy legislation. A law of October 7, 1940 abrogated the decree of the Government of National Defense known as the Crémieux Decree which, on October 24, 1870, had accorded French citizenship to native Jews of Algeria. The law providing for a Statute of the Jews of October 3, 1940 preceded it, but it appeared in the *Official Journal* on October 18, several days after the abrogation of the Crémieux Decree.

Those Jews who had received the Legion of Honor for military deeds, the Military Medal, or the *Croix de Guerre* retained their political status as French citizens. The others were placed on the same footing as native Moslems in the matter of political rights and on the same level as French Jews in the matter of civil rights. Thus they found themselves in a position inferior to that of the native Moslems by virtue of the racial laws, which imposed upon them all sorts of disabilities which the native Moslems did not have to suffer. Measures taken against the Jews in Metropolitan

France were applied to those in Algeria. According to the census of 1941, the Jewish population in Algeria numbered 116,885: including 34,742 in the *département* of Alger, 15,413 in the *département* of Oran, 25,614 in the *département* of Constantine, and 6,115 in the southern territory.

Since the proportion of Jews in the total population of Algeria was much greater than in that of Metropolitan France, the maintenance of the same *numerus clausus* percentage affected the Algerian Jews even more adversely. Furthermore, since the native Jews had for the most part a higher level of education than did the other natives the number of employees and functionaries dismissed from government service—teachers, policemen, letter-carriers, postal employees, etc., and from public utilities companies such as railroad, streetcar, gas, electricity and water companies, was proportionately higher. In Algeria more than 3,000 Jews lost their positions.

The *numerus clausus* in the school system which in Metropolitan France was only applied to higher education, was extended in North Africa to the secondary and primary school system. This state of affairs lasted from October 7, 1941 to March 31, 1943.

The American landing in November 1942 did not signify the re-establishment of republican laws. General Giraud, High Commissioner in North Africa, not only did not re-establish the Crémieux Decree; on the contrary, he confirmed its abrogation in his speech of March 14, 1943 when he declared that the Vichy laws denoting racial discrimination had been abrogated. He asserted: "In the same spirit of eliminating racial discrimination, the Crémieux Decree, which in 1870 had set up a difference between native Moslems and Jews, has been abrogated."

It was not until October 21, 1943 that the French Committee of National Liberation proclaimed that "the Crémieux Decree remains in force."

After the November 1942 landing, Jews were mobilized. But despite their protests and their oft-repeated desire to serve France with arms in their hands, they were sent to work camps rather than to combat units. It was not until March 1943 that they obtained the right to be treated like

all other mobilized Frenchmen in Algeria. As for those who were in labor battalions, after May 1943 they were sent into the French Expeditionary Corps. Very many Jews volunteered for service in the free corps. A Jew, Lieutenant Pierre Rosenthal, serving in the free corps, died a hero near Mateur in Tunisia while fighting with eighteen men against two enemy companies.

A shock troop secretly formed before the arrival of the Americans occupied the principal public buildings in Algeria at the moment of the landing. It was composed of 600 men, nearly 500 of whom were Jews, as were most of the officers.

As for our fellow-Jews in French Morocco and Tunisia, they are still governed by personal statute; that is to say, they are subjects of the Sultan or of the Bey. According to a declaration of Xavier Vallat, General Commissar for Jewish Affairs, there were 160,000 Jews in Morocco and 50-60,000 in Tunisia at the outbreak of the war. There was no German occupation of Algeria or Morocco; and the Axis occupation of Tunisia lasted six months.

Supplementary Documents

- (1) *Excerpts from the letter of Grand Rabbi Jacob Kaplan to Xavier Vallat, General Commissar for Jewish Affairs, dated July 31, 1941.*

... Since it is a great honor for me to belong to Judaism, I am pleased to have this opportunity of making an official declaration to that effect. Nevertheless, I am well aware that it is not to honor them that you are forcing Jews, under penalty of very severe punishment, to reply to your questionnaire, but that it is in order to inflict exceptional measures upon them, measures which denote that being a Jew is something disreputable.

For a pagan or an atheist to defame Judaism is not strange. He is certainly wrong but not illogical in acting thus. But on the part of a Christian, does not such an attitude appear spiritually illogical as well as ungrateful?

Need I recall that the Jewish religion is the mother of the Christian religion, and that before Christianity it proclaimed the existence of the true God—one God, Creator of the heaven and the earth and of all mankind; human brotherhood—all men having

descended from their common father, Adam; respect for the human person—God having created man in His image; love of one's neighbor—the Mosaic law ordering men to love their neighbor as themselves; and the Ten Commandments—the moral and religious charter of civilized humanity?

It would be easy for me to continue with this enumeration. Allow me only to assert—and for me it is the most precious of assertions—that most of the great religious and moral ideas of our time have been taught to Jews and non-Jews by the Old Testament, the Book of Israel.

Would I convince you more profoundly of the high value of the Mosaic law and the Jewish religion by citing as witnesses the greatest French writers? For they have paid a magnificent tribute to Judaism.

Pascal said: The Law of Israel is the oldest and most perfect.

Bossuet said: That Law is holy and righteous.

Fénelon said: The Jewish people formed the ideal religious society.

Montesquieu said: The Jewish religion is an old trunk which has produced two branches that have covered the earth.

Rousseau said: The Mosaic Law has withstood the test of time.

Chateaubriand said: The Law of Sinai is the Law of all peoples.

Guizot said: The Ten Commandments bind together religion and morality.

Renan said: Israel was the stalk on which was grafted the faith of the human race.

Will you reply that it is not their religion but their race that you hold against the Jews? Expressly questioning the use of the term "race" as applied to the Jews, may I ask you the following: do you really think, *Monsieur le Commissaire*, that it is a crime to belong to the "Jewish race," the race of Jesus and the Apostles? Have you forgotten that Jesus was circumcized like every son of Israel and that the date of his circumcision has been kept in the civil calendar, which every year celebrates it as January 1?

Do you not realize that when you attack the "Jewish race," you assail at the same time the founders of Christianity? Listen to what the Catholic writer, Léon Bloy, has to say: "Suppose that people around you constantly talked of your father and mother in terms of the greatest contempt and referred to them only with insults and outrageous jibes—how would you feel? Well, that is what happened to Our Lord Jesus Christ. We forget, or rather do not care to remember, that our God made into man is a Jew, the Jew *par excellence*, the Lion of Judah; that His Mother is a Jewess, the flower of the Jewish race; that the Apostles were Jews as were

all the Prophets; and finally, that our entire sacred Liturgy has been taken from Jewish books. If that is so, how can one measure the outrageousness and blasphemy involved in slandering the Jewish race?"

The Jewish race, finally, is that of the Patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, three great Jews whom our non-Jewish countrymen honor in their cathedrals and churches and of whom they are proud to be the spiritual descendants.

Is it therefore a crime to belong to the Jewish race? On the contrary, according to the Christian liturgy itself, it is a badge of glory.

But perhaps I have illusions concerning the excellence of the Jewish "race" because I myself am a Jew? I might think so, if I did not have to support me and assure me that I am not mistaken, such eminent Christians as Ignatius de Loyola, founder of the Jesuit Order, who wished that he were a Jew in order to resemble Jesus more; and Pope Pius XI who said: "We are spiritually Semites."

Or would you prefer that I quote great French writers on this point? Here are a few:

Lacordaire spoke of "the magnificent graces which the Jewish people received in the realm of the spirit."

De Sacy said: "... I think that this little Jewish people ... is the greatest of the peoples, the noblest of families in the human family, the race truly chosen by God."

In answering the questionnaire, I have noted my military services ... I am convinced that the overwhelming majority of my co-religionists have served the Fatherland with the same love and devotion. Nothing has therefore caused us greater sorrow than to see doubts cast on our patriotism. The participation of the Jews in the War from 1939-1940 cannot yet be accurately ascertained; but when the final story is written, it will reveal that the Jews have done their duty like all other French citizens.

But our participation in World War I is well known. It was officially expressed in the name of the French Government by César Campinchi, Navy Minister, on June 19, 1938, at the inauguration of the Monument to the Jews at Douaumont. M. Campinchi declared: "Of the 190,000 Jews in France and Algeria, 32,000 were mobilized and 6,500 killed; 12,000 foreign Jews volunteered to defend our country which had given them refuge, and more than 2,000 of them were killed fighting in the ranks of the Foreign Legion."

As for the patriotism of the Jews, allow me to cite only two of a long list of tributes by great French writers:

First, this moving confession by Maxime du Camp: "It has been said and I have said myself that the Jews had only an incomplete notion of the Fatherland . . . Forgive me for having said so."

Then this phrase of Maurice Barrès, on the occasion of the heroic death of Grand Rabbi Abraham Bloch, killed on August 29, 1914 as he was carrying a crucifix to a dying French soldier: "The old rabbi presenting to the dying soldier the immortal sign of Christ on the Cross is an image that will not die."

Alas! In 1941, the anti-Jewish exceptional laws as well as the anti-Semitic campaign launched against us prove that the image which Barrès thought deathless has quickly been effaced.

Let me finish with a phrase from a French author who is today very popular, and rightly so: Charles Péguy. The "National Revolution" is fond of quoting his writings and of calling them the very voice of France. Péguy wrote: "The anti-Semites do not know the Jews."

As between the writers mentioned in the course of this letter and who represent the élite of French thought, and the anti-Semites "who do not know the Jews," can any sincere Frenchman hesitate? I cannot but think that that is likewise your sentiment and that you recognize with me that the day on which reason again comes into her own (and she *will* come into her own in this land of Descartes and Bergson), anti-Semitism will lose out . . .

(2) *Reply of the General Commissariat for Jewish Affairs to the letter of Rabbi Kaplan, dated August 5, 1941.*

Vichy, August 5, 1941

Rabbi J. Kaplan
2 bis, Rue Carnot
Cusset

Dear Rabbi:

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your letter of July 31 in which you quoted to me a certain number of texts which are of course quite well known. They would never have been refuted in any French legislation if there had not been, during the past few years, an invasion of our territory by a host of Jews having no ties with our civilization.

I do not intend to refute in detail a certain number of your arguments, in particular the statistics you give of the Jews who have entered the armed forces and died for France. That is a matter which deserves too much respect to become the object of a controversy. Let me simply point out that in the Government's attitude

there is no anti-Semitism, simply the application of reasons of state.

Please be assured, Rabbi, of my genuine regard.

Signed: JARNIEU
For the General Commissaire
By his *Chef de Cabinet*

(3) *Letter of Monsignor the Bishop of Montauban on respect for the human person.*

My very dear Brethren:

Painful and at times horrible scenes are occurring in France—though France is not responsible for them.

At Paris tens of thousands of Jews have been treated with the most savage barbarism. And now our provinces have witnessed an even more heart-breaking spectacle: families are broken up, men and women are being treated like cattle and sent to unknown destinations where they face the gravest dangers.

On behalf of my outraged Christian conscience, I raise my voice in protest and I assert that all men, Aryans and non-Aryans, are brothers because they have been created by the same God; that all men, whatever their race or religion, have the right to be respected by individuals and states.

The present anti-Semitic measures flout human dignity and violate the most sacred rights of the human person and family.

May God console and fortify those who are being unjustly persecuted; may He grant to the world a true and lasting peace, based on justice and charity.

Signed: PIERRE MARIE
Bishop of Montauban

To be read without comment at all masses, in all churches and chapels of the diocese on Sunday, August 30, 1942.

(4) *Letter of Paul Claudel to Rabbi Kaplan.*

Chateau de Brangues
Morestel
December 24, 1941
On Christmas Eve

Sir:

My good friend, Vladimir d'Ormesson, has just given me your address.

I must write you and tell you that all good Frenchmen, especially

the Catholics, feel disgust, horror and indignation at the sight of the injustices, persecutions, and ill-treatment of all kinds now being visited upon our Jewish compatriots. I have had frequent contacts with Jews of all nations, and I have always found in them not only open minds but also generous and kindly hearts. I am proud to have many Jewish friends. A Catholic cannot forget that Israel has always been the oldest Son of promise as today it is the oldest Son of sorrow. But "blessed are those who suffer persecution for Justice." May God protect and bless Israel on this road to redemption! "I shall not always be angered," said the Lord through the mouth of his prophet.

Please accept my sincerest regards.

Signed: PAUL CLAUDEL
Ambassador of France

(5) *Letter of Jules Jeanneney and Edouard Herriot to Rabbi Kaplan*

The Senate—Office of the President
Chatel-Guyon
August 30, 1942

Dear Grand Rabbi Kaplan:

For almost two years now, legislative and other measures have been taken in France against the Jews. We have condemned them from the very outset.

We have watched with indignation the iniquities and persecutions that have been committed.

We feel a sense of horror before the measures that have just been inflicted, both in the unoccupied and occupied zone, on Jews driven from their country who had found refuge in our land; and we are horrified by the barbarous treatment meted out to their children.

We feel with you. And we would like to convey to you our profound sympathy along with all those who, shocked by such flouting of human rights and French traditions, must have expressed their sympathy to you.

Please accept, Grand Rabbi Kaplan, this expression of our reverent regard.

Signed: JEANNENEY
President of the Senate

HERRIOT
President of the Chamber of
Deputies