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Adrien Dallaire

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THÈSE DE DOCTORAT
DE L'UNIVERSITÉ PSL

Préparée à l'École normale supérieure de Paris
(en cotutelle avec l'Université d'Ottawa)

**« Expliquer la survie : La hiérarchie de la persécution et
les Juifs du département de Vaucluse, 1933-1945 »**

Soutenue par

Adrien DALLAIRE

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Composition du jury :

| | |
|--|----------------------------|
| Richard CONNORS Professeur agrégé, Université d'Ottawa | <i>Président</i> |
| Frédéric MONIER Professeur des universités, Université d'Avignon | <i>Rapporteur</i> |
| Pierre ANCTIL Professeur titulaire, Université d'Ottawa | <i>Rapporteur</i> |
| Audrey KICHELEWSKI Maître de conférences, Université de Strasbourg | <i>Examineur</i> |
| Claire ZALC Directrice de recherche, École normale supérieure de Paris | <i>Directrice de thèse</i> |
| Jan GRABOWSKI Professeur titulaire, Université d'Ottawa | <i>Directeur de thèse</i> |



EXPLAINING SURVIVAL
THE HIERARCHY OF PERSECUTION AND THE JEWS OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF VAUCLUSE, 1933-1945

by
Adrien Dallaire

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Doctorate in Philosophy degree in History

University of Ottawa
Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
Department of History

en cotutelle de thèse avec
École normale supérieure de Paris
École doctorale 540 – Lettres, Arts, Sciences humaines et sociales
Institut d'histoire moderne et contemporaine

To Josée, the love of my life.

ABSTRACT

EXPLAINING SURVIVAL
THE HIERARCHY OF PERSECUTION AND THE JEWS OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF VAUCLUSE, 1933-1945

Author: Adrien Dallaire
Year of Submission: 2019

Supervisor (Ottawa): Dr. Jan Grabowski
Supervisor (Paris): Dr. Claire Zalc

How three-quarters of the Jews of France survived the Holocaust has long been a subject of debate between historians. After the war, top Vichy officials sought to frame their participation in the persecution of the Jews in the best light possible and were amongst the first to articulate what came to be known as the “shield thesis.” The Vichy Regime, so the argument went, had served as a shield against the worst of the German demands regarding the Jews, which had the happy result of saving thousands of them—and, in particular, those of French origin—from destruction.

This thesis was subsequently advanced by some of the most prominent scholars in the field, who tended to rally around one of its central tenets: the “French-foreign dichotomy,” the argument according to which the Vichy authorities pragmatically sacrificed the foreign Jews in order to preserve the French *Israélites*.

This dissertation challenges what has become *the* framework for understanding the Holocaust in France, by examining the lives of the Jews of a small, rural department in southeast France through the prism of *quantitative prosopography*. It argues that, through its repeated appeals to the “French-foreign dichotomy,” the historiography has overemphasized one factor for explaining the fate of the Jews in France during the war, by bringing together very different individuals into two artificially homogeneous groups, thereby inadvertently obscuring other, more important differences between them.

This dissertation shows that there was, indeed, a hierarchy between the Vauclusian Jews, but not one narrowly defined by nationality or country of origin. This hierarchy, moreover, evolved throughout the war and was at times one of persecution or of privilege. In the end, it was this hierarchy—underpinned by a confluence of personal, geographical and temporal forces—that enabled the majority of the 2,826 Jews of the Vaucluse to make it through the war intact.

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Lastly, and most importantly, to my fiancée, Dr. Josée Fitzpatrick, to whom this thesis is dedicated. Your love, tireless patience, and endless support and encouragement allowed me to overcome the many moments of discouragement during the writing process. I love you, and I could not have done it without you.

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INTRODUCTION

DÉPARTEMENT DE VAUCLUSE

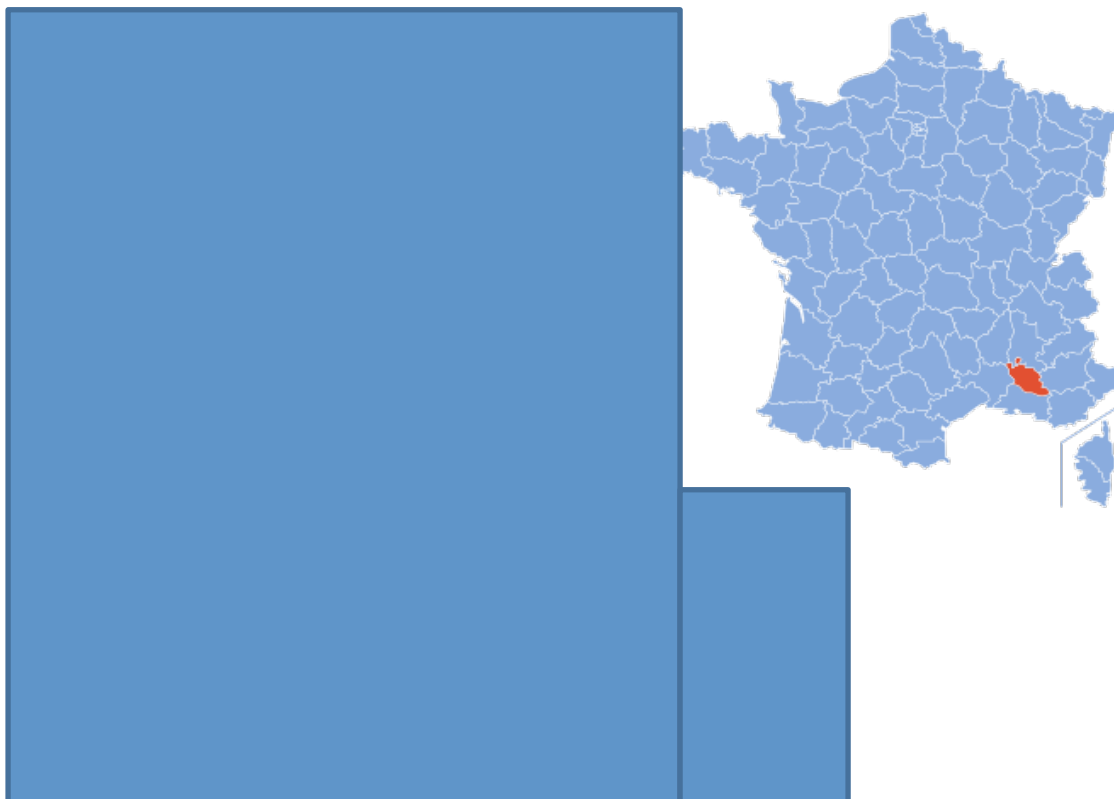
From the medieval fortifications that surround the city to the former papal palace that dominates its landscape, Avignon is a city that is as charming as it is unique. It is famous for its annual art and theatre festival and for the Pont Saint-Bénézet, the landmark bridge that inspired the well-known children's song "Sur le pont d'Avignon." It is also the capital of the department of Vaucluse, itself known for its vineyards and wineries.

Located in southeast France, the Vaucluse is a French administrative division comprised of 151 communes (cities, towns and villages) of all sizes. This is as true today as it was prior to the outbreak of the Second World War eighty years ago. In August 1939, Avignon was by far the most populated city of the department, with 52,110 inhabitants. In importance, it was followed by Carpentras, Cavaillon and Orange, each with a population ranging from 13,000 to 15,000. A handful of towns were populated by some 4,000 to 7,000 persons, while the remaining communes had fewer than 3,000 residents, with most of these not exceeding a few hundred. In total, some 234,846 persons lived in the department of Vaucluse in the summer of 1939.¹

¹ "État comparatif des municipalités de Vaucluse," August 1939, Archives départementales de Vaucluse (hereafter ADV), 4W680.

*Map 1 (left): Cities, Towns and Villages of the Department of Vaucluse.
(Red: Avignon. Black: Carpentras, Cavaillon and Orange.)*

Map 2 (right): Location of the Department of Vaucluse on the Map of France.



Source (Map 1): Anonymes, Justes et persécutés durant la période nazie, <http://www.ajpn.org/imag-departem/84.png>.

Source (Map 2): Wikipedia.org, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Vaucluse-Position.svg>.

The Jews constituted a miniscule share of the total, however. Indeed, although there had been between 2,000 and 2,300 of them in the region at the time of the French Revolution, with the heaviest concentrations found in the four older communities (or *carrières*) of Avignon, Carpentras, Cavaillon and L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue, the Jews

numbered just a few hundred in the years leading up to 1940.² One author estimates that there were no more than three hundred of them in the Vaucluse in 1935—with two hundred living in Avignon, thirty-five in Carpentras, and only eight in Cavaillon and Valréas.³ Although it had begun prior to the Revolution, the decline of the Jewish population of the region turned into a veritable exodus, when, on September 14, 1791, Avignon and the Comtat Venaissin (the Papal State enclaved within the country)—which, combined, later became the department of Vaucluse—were annexed by France. With the impediment barring their resettlement to other parts of the country no longer in their way, the Jews of the Comtat emigrated in large numbers.⁴ In an article published in 1944, Zosa Szajkowski explained the situation in the following manner: “As soon as the opportunity arose, they [the Jews] left. Nor is it difficult to understand why. The papal province was not, in fact, that ‘Jewish paradise’ which so many writers and historians would represent it to have been.”⁵ With hundreds of families leaving the region, the Jewish population of the Vaucluse was decimated. In 1939, the community was nothing more than a shell of its former self. The war, however, changed all that, as hundreds—and even thousands—of Jews from every corner of France and many other parts of Europe poured into the department from 1940 to 1944. In the end, 2,826 Jews came to reside—for various lengths of time—in the Vaucluse. Fluctuating, throughout the war years, between 1,500 and 1,800 persons, the Jewish population of the Vaucluse reached its zenith in the winter and spring of 1943.

² Zosa Szajkowski, “The Decline and Fall of Provençal Jewry,” *Jewish Social Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (January 1944), pp. 32 and 37; Aimé Autrand, *Le département de Vaucluse de la défaite à la Libération, mai 1940 - 25 août 1944* (Avignon: Aubanel, 1965), p. 28.

³ Szajkowski, “The Decline and Fall of Provençal Jewry,” p. 54.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38; René Moulinas, *Les Juifs du Pape : Avignon et le Comtat Venaissin* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1992), pp. 138-139 and 151-152.

⁵ Szajkowski, “The Decline and Fall of Provençal Jewry,” p. 38.

The dramatic influx of Jews into the department after 1940 was largely attributable to one thing: the perceived safety that both the Vaucluse and the cities and villages comprising it seemed to offer. Albert Ickowicz, a Polish Jew who, arriving in Carpentras from Paris, eventually settled in the town of Mazan with his parents and four siblings, summed it up best: “They [Carpentras and Mazan] were *places of refuge*. [emphasis added]”⁶ Jean-Pierre Kaminker, a French Jew who arrived in the Vaucluse in January 1943 with his mother and older brother, made a similar observation, while adding an interesting detail. According to him, “Valréas [a city in the northernmost reaches of the department and the place where the Kaminkers ultimately settled] was *known and sought after* as a place of refuge. [emphasis added]”⁷ But why, one might ask, was this the case?

Much of it had to do with the department’s evolving geopolitical situation throughout the war, as well as with its physical configuration—both of which provided a certain degree of safety (if only temporarily) to a significant number of Jews. Following the armistice between the Third Reich and the French government in June 1940, France was divided into several administrative zones. In the northeast, the departments of Moselle, Bas-Rhin and Haut-Rhin were annexed to the Reich and administered by two *Gauleiters*. Those of the Nord and Pas-de-Calais were placed under the authority of the German military government in Belgium. The northern half of the country, including a

⁶ Albert Ickowicz, Interview 29127, Visual History Archive (hereafter VHA), USC Shoah Foundation, 1997, Part II: 15:32-15:34. Please note: Unless otherwise indicated, all translations—be they of archival documents, secondary sources or VHA testimonies—from French, German and Spanish, are those of the author. Please also note: The following methodology was used when quoting passages from the VHA interviews: If the survivor did not complete their thought or if they abruptly changed topics mid-sentence, this is indicated by three ellipsis points without parentheses or brackets. If, however, it was decided that a certain passage (or parts of a passage) would not be retained, this is indicated by three ellipsis points enclosed by brackets—[...].

⁷ Jean-Pierre Kaminker, *La persécution contrariée : Les Kaminker à Valréas (1943-1944) entre antisémitisme d’État et bienveillance d’une population* (Limoges: Lambert-Lucas, 2007), p. 439.

strip in the west that ran all the way to the Spanish border, was administered by the German military government in Paris and labelled the “Occupied Zone.” The southern half (as well as the remaining territories of the empire), dubbed the “Unoccupied (or Free) Zone,” was placed under the authority of the French government in Vichy.⁸ It is in this zone that the department of Vaucluse was located. Since the threat to their persons appeared less imminent in the Unoccupied Zone, thousands of Jews sought refuge there⁹—with many opting to settle in the Vaucluse.

Map 3: Occupation Zones of France during the Second World War.



Source: Wikipedia.org, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:France_map_Lambert-93_with_regions_and_departments-occupation.svg.

⁸ Nicolas Mariot and Claire Zalc, *Face à la persécution : 991 Juifs dans la guerre* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2010), pp. 38-39; Susan Zuccotti, *The Holocaust, the French, and the Jews* (New York, NY: BasicBooks, 1993), p. 42.

⁹ André Kaspi, *Les Juifs pendant l'Occupation* (Paris: Seuil, 1997 [1991]), p. 131.

The relative safety offered by the Unoccupied Zone did not last, however. In November 1942, the Germans occupied the formerly Free Zone in response to the Allied landings in North Africa. The new situation did not immediately endanger all of the Jews in the department. As the Germans occupied the rest of the country to the Mediterranean, Italy extended its zone of occupation in southeast France. The Italian-occupied zone extended as far west as the Rhône River and included seven French departments in their entirety, as well as portions of three others—Ain, Isère and Vaucluse. In fact, at that point in time, Avignon was the only city of the department that was under German—rather than Italian—occupation.¹⁰ The distinction was not a subtle one. Since the Italians by and large refused to turn over the Jews in the territories under their control to the German and French authorities, those of the Vaucluse—with the exception of the ones residing in Avignon—were more or less protected from arrest and deportation. “[A]s long as the Italians were there, we were fairly safe,”¹¹ remarked Maurice Asa in his postwar testimony. Yet again, however, the safety was only temporary, for in September 1943, Germany occupied large swaths of Italy (including its former occupation zone in southeast France), when it was announced that the Italians had signed an armistice with the Allies. And thus commenced, in the words of Michael Marrus and Robert Paxton, “one of the most brutal manhunts to take place in Western Europe during the war.”¹²

¹⁰ Daniel Carpi, *Between Mussolini and Hitler: The Jews and the Italian Authorities in France and Tunisia* (Hanover and London: Brandeis University Press, 1994), p. 80.

¹¹ Maurice Asa, Interview 52573, VHA, USC Shoah Foundation, 1990, Part I: 18:10-18:13.

¹² Michaël R. Marrus and Robert O. Paxton, *Vichy et les Juifs* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1981), p. 446.

Map 4: Italian Occupation Zone in Southeast France
(November 1942 - September 1943).



Source: Daniel Carpi, *Between Mussolini and Hitler: The Jews and the Italian Authorities in France and Tunisia* (Hanover and London: Brandeis University Press, 1994), p. 81.

No longer safe, the Jews of the former Italian-occupied zone scrambled to find places to hide—some successfully; others less so. Although it was not unique in this regard, the Vaucluse's physical configuration made it an attractive destination for those trying to make themselves scarce. Since it was a predominantly rural department, Jews could hope to find refuge in a number of towns and villages far from the more heavily

populated cities of Avignon, Carpentras, Cavaillon and Orange, where the nature of the danger was quite different. Of course, fleeing to the countryside in no way guaranteed one's safety. In fact, doing so represented something of a double-edged sword. On the one hand, fewer raids were conducted against towns and villages, since the Germans preferred to capture the greatest number of Jews in one fell swoop. This was more easily accomplished in the larger cities, where Jews tended to be more heavily concentrated. On the other hand, one was much more visible in a smaller community and, therefore, more susceptible to being denounced. In this instance, one had to rely on the goodwill of one's neighbours and fellow villagers and townspeople.

In the end, the physical attributes of the Vaucluse and its ever-shifting geopolitical landscape provided a certain degree of safety to the Jews living in the department during the war. It is no small wonder, then, that its Jewish population—which stood at just a few hundred prior to the outbreak of the war—sharply increased after 1940, reaching as high as 1,800 in early 1943. In their own way, these factors (which were not entirely unique to the Vaucluse) bought the Jews some precious time and, in so doing, brought them that much closer to the end of the war and, ultimately, to the day of their deliverance.

Naturally, certain questions arise: Is it perhaps for these reasons that the Jews of the department seem to have fared better during the Second World War than those in other parts of the country? After all, of the 2,826 Jews who resided in the Vaucluse at one point or another between 1939 and 1944, “only” 399—or 14.1 percent—of them were deported, a figure that stands in sharp contrast with the overall deportation rate of

25.0 percent for the country as a whole.¹³ And do these factors, insofar as they protected Jews from arrest until the latter stages of the war, help account for the fact that fifty-seven of the 399 deportees—or 14.3 percent—ultimately returned from deportation, while that was the case for only 3.0 percent of the other Jews deported from France?¹⁴ It is precisely these questions that this dissertation seeks to answer.

HISTORIOGRAPHY

How three-quarters of the Jews of France survived the Holocaust has long been a subject of debate between historians. Perhaps this has something to do with the fact that the first answers were provided in the immediate aftermath of the war. After the Liberation, top Vichy officials—such as Pierre Laval and Xavier Vallat—sought to frame their participation in the persecution of the Jews during the war in the best light possible. Consequently, they were amongst the first to articulate what came to be known as the “shield thesis.” The Vichy Regime, so the argument went, had served as a shield against the worst of the German demands regarding the Jews. This, they argued, had the happy result of saving thousands of them—and, in particular, those of French origin—from destruction. Some former bureaucrats were willing to admit that *l'État français* had occasionally done some distasteful things, but only half-heartedly and only with the best intentions. The conclusion to be drawn was clear: the death toll would have been

¹³ Serge Klarsfeld, *Vichy-Auschwitz : Le rôle de Vichy dans la Solution finale de la question juive en France, 1943-1944* (Paris: Fayard, 1985), pp. 179-181.

¹⁴ Marrus and Paxton, *Vichy et les Juifs*, p. 473.

significantly higher had it not been for the actions (or deliberate inactions) of some high-ranking Vichy officials.¹⁵

This interpretation of events was later rehashed by some of the most prominent scholars in the field. “In France, the process by which the Jews were destroyed was the result of the Franco-German armistice,” argued Raul Hilberg in his seminal work, *The Destruction of the European Jews*.

From 1940 to 1944, the unequal relationship between victor and vanquished translated itself into an unending flow of German demands, which would have been difficult to oppose. Among these demands was the destruction of the Jews.

In its reaction to German pressure, the Vichy government attempted to maintain the destruction process within certain limits. These limits were essentially intended to slow the evolution of this process in its entirety. The French authorities sought to avoid all radical action. They recoiled before the adoption of measures without historical precedent. When German pressure intensified in 1942, the Vichy government withdrew behind a second line of defence. The foreign Jews and the immigrants were abandoned to their fate, while an attempt was made to protect Jewish nationals. To a certain extent, this strategy worked. By forsaking a fraction, a large part of the totality was saved.

If the Vichy Regime was able to negotiate the fate of the Jews with the victors, this was because of one very simple reality: the Germans needed the help of the French.¹⁶

According to Hilberg’s interpretation, then, the Vichy authorities were, at best, reluctant participants in the destruction process; at worst, pragmatists willing to sacrifice one group—the foreign Jews—in order to save another—the French *Israélites*.

The “shield thesis” in both of its forms has not gone unchallenged. Indeed, since its formulation, certain elements of it have largely been refuted. In their ground-breaking *Vichy France and the Jews*, Michael R. Marrus and Robert O. Paxton dismissed the idea

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 475.

¹⁶ Raul Hilberg, *La destruction des Juifs d’Europe, Volume II* (Paris: Gallimard, 2006 [1961]), pp. 1122-1123.

that, in France, the destruction of the Jews had simply been the product of a German diktat, made possible by the power disparity between France and the Third Reich. In fact, they saw the impetus for the anti-Jewish measures that ultimately facilitated this destruction as having come primarily from the Vichy Regime itself—with, at least initially, little to no prodding from the Germans. As evidence of this, Marrus and Paxton pointed to the fact that Vichy had already enacted legislation of an anti-Jewish nature when the first German ordinance of September 27, 1940, which defined who was to be considered Jewish and mandated the census of the Jews in the Occupied Zone, was promulgated.¹⁷ What is more, the Vichy government's first piece of legislation specifically targeting the Jews—the *premier statut des Juifs* of October 3, 1940—went above and beyond German expectations. The definition of “the Jew” provided by the French statute was not only more comprehensive than the one found in the German ordinance but was also applicable in both zones, Occupied and Unoccupied.

Since, as Marrus and Paxton made clear, there is no proof that the German authorities ever coerced the leaders of *l'État français* into participating in the crafting and enacting of anti-Jewish measures, it is difficult to view the initiative of the latter in this regard as having merely been the result of pressure coming from above—as the “shield thesis” implies. In fact, the proactive approach of the Vichy officials betrayed a willingness for, and an eagerness toward, an anti-Jewish program—one, ultimately, that paved the way for what was to come.¹⁸ The reasons for this were twofold. First, state-sanctioned antisemitism (*antisémitisme d'État*) was part and parcel of the National Revolution (*Révolution nationale*) espoused by Vichy, which sought, among other

¹⁷ Marrus and Paxton, *Vichy et les Juifs*, pp. 17-18 and 22-23.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 20-23, 30 and 506.

things, to eliminate the perceived pernicious influence exerted by the Jews on French society. Second, the Vichy authorities hoped that, by enacting laws that were even more strict than the ones promulgated by the Germans, they would be deemed acceptable by the occupier and, consequently, applied throughout France. This, in turn, would allow the regime to maintain at least the illusion of French sovereignty.¹⁹ In the end, Vichy officials—far from being “reluctant participants” in the destruction of the Jews—actively contributed to their persecution.

To a certain extent, Marrus and Paxton also took issue with the second pillar of the “shield thesis”: the idea that certain Jews—in particular, those of foreign extraction—were deliberately sacrificed in order to protect those of French origin. Such a theory, they argued, presupposes that the Vichy government had a clearer understanding of the intentions and long-term goals of the Germans than the contemporary evidence seems to suggest. Their main objection, however, was that, even if Vichy had, to the detriment of the foreign-born, shown a clear preference for sparing their Jewish compatriots from deportation, nothing suggests that this objective had ever been part of a concrete, well-thought-out plan or that it was ever given priority over other, more immediate goals.²⁰

In truth, the second pillar of the “shield thesis” has been considerably more resilient to criticism than the first (the idea that the Germans forcibly coerced the Vichy Regime to participate in the destruction process), with many authors continuing to insist that, in France, the foreign Jews were sacrificed so that their French coreligionists could be saved. Looking at the victim ratio between these two “categories” of Jews, it is not

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 32 and 113.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 477.

very difficult to see why. Of the 80,000 Jewish victims of the Holocaust in France, approximately 25,000 of them were French and 55,000 of them were foreign.²¹ Since French and foreign Jews numbered, respectively, 195,000 and 135,000 in 1940, it is clear that—both numerically and proportionally—one group suffered significantly higher losses than the other.²² Indeed, although the numbers vary slightly from one source to another, it is estimated that thirty-nine to forty-two percent of the foreign-born Jews living in France during the Second World War were murdered, while that was the case for “only” twelve to thirteen percent of those of French origin.²³ In many instances, this discrepancy has been viewed through the lens of the “shield thesis.” “The proportion of Jews of French origin who were victims of the Final Solution is greatly inferior to that of the foreign and stateless Jews,” wrote Serge Klarsfeld. “Vichy, in its concessions to the Germans, placed the French Jews at the back of the line.”²⁴

Klarsfeld’s argument rested, in part, on the deal struck in the summer of 1942 between certain elements of the Vichy government and the German authorities in France. Among other things, the former agreed to allow the French police to assist in the arrests of Jews in the Occupied Zone. Only stateless Jews and those of certain foreign nationalities were to be targeted, however, while those of French origin were to be spared (something that was more true in theory than it was in practice). Moreover, to ensure that the Germans would not find it necessary to arrest French Jews in the Occupied Zone in order to meet the victim quota they had set for themselves, *l’État*

²¹ The breakdown of these 80,000 Jewish victims is as follows: 76,000 deported to “the East”; 3,000 deceased in French concentration camps; 1,000 executed in France. See Serge Klarsfeld, *Mémorial de la déportation des Juifs de France* (Paris: Fils et Filles des Déportés Juifs de France, 2012), p. xvii.

²² *Id.*, *Vichy-Auschwitz, 1943-1944*, pp. 179-180.

²³ These estimates are based on the numbers provided by Klarsfeld. See *ibid.* and *id.*, *Mémorial*, p. xvii. See also Zuccotti, *The Holocaust, the French, and the Jews*, pp. 283-284.

²⁴ Klarsfeld, *Vichy-Auschwitz, 1943-1944*, p. 190.

français promised to transfer the foreign and stateless Jews already interned in the south of France to the north. This was also the driving force behind the massive roundups of foreign Jews that took place in the Unoccupied Zone in August 1942. With certain categories of foreign Jews made to bear the brunt of the arrests and deportations in the summer and fall of 1942, Vichy—by all appearances—seemed willing to sacrifice one group in order to preserve another.²⁵

In *Persécutions et sauvetages : Juifs et Français sous l'Occupation et sous Vichy*, Asher Cohen wondered if the protection granted to the French Jews by the Vichy government stemmed from a sincere desire to protect them or, rather, if it was more indicative of the regime's profound desire to rid the country of foreigners, especially those of the Jewish variety.²⁶ After all, as early as October 4, 1940, the government of Marshal Pétain passed a law concerning "foreign nationals of the Jewish race," which granted prefects the ability to intern (or to place in forced residency) any foreign Jew residing in their department.²⁷ The numerous internments that followed in the wake of this law greatly facilitated the transfer of foreign Jews from the south of France to the Occupied Zone in the north when the time came to do so. Thus, the groundwork that permitted this eventual transfer began to be laid nearly two years before the Vichy and German authorities struck the deal that, according to Klarsfeld, ultimately protected the majority of French Jews from deportation in the summer of 1942. One wonders, then, if the foreign-born Jews were truly sacrificed so that those of French origin could be

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 185-191. The interpretation made by Klarsfeld of this deal is somewhat different in his book (of the same title) dealing specifically with the year 1942. See Serge Klarsfeld, *Vichy-Auschwitz : Le rôle de Vichy dans la Solution finale de la question juive en France, 1942* (Paris: Fayard, 1983), pp. 89-133.

²⁶ Asher Cohen, *Persécutions et sauvetages : Juifs et Français sous l'Occupation et sous Vichy* (Paris: Cerf, 1993), p. 265.

²⁷ État français, "Loi sur les ressortissants étrangers de race juive," October 4, 1940, published in the *Journal officiel* on October 18, 1940. The full text can be found in Marrus and Paxton, *Vichy et les Juifs*, p. 614.

saved—as many authors have suggested—or, rather, if the Vichy Regime, without any consideration for the welfare of the French Jews, targeted those having been born abroad for the sole reason that they were both Jewish and foreign. Perhaps, in the end, it truly does not matter, for, as some would inevitably argue, the result was ultimately the same: French Jews suffered significantly fewer losses than their foreign counterparts.

The French-foreign dichotomy in explaining the rate of Jewish survival in France during the Second World War is, however, somewhat problematic. For one thing, it is not always entirely clear what is meant by the terms “French” and “foreign.” Are these “categories” based on an individual’s nationality or, rather, on their country of origin? Or are they some combination of both? It is seldom made explicit. And yet, it is often the basis upon which historians have built their arguments and interpretations with regard to the question of how it was that so many Jews in France survived the Holocaust.

It is not simply a question of semantics, however. The French-foreign dichotomy is, to put it bluntly, highly reductionist and is, therefore, of questionable explanatory value. Consider, for example, the criteria used by Serge Klarsfeld to distinguish between “French” and “foreign” Jews. The former were French citizens from birth (either born in metropolitan France or in Algeria), naturalized French citizens and children born in France to foreign parents; the latter, for their part, included stateless persons and individuals who were of a nationality other than French.²⁸

Even a cursory glance at the criteria provided by Klarsfeld reveals that these two categories of Jews regroup—within one another—very different people. Indeed, no differentiation is made, for example, between a Jewish American citizen living in France and a German Jew who, having lost their citizenship, found themselves stateless. Both

²⁸ Klarsfeld, *Vichy-Auschwitz, 1943-1944*, pp. 180-181.

are considered “foreign” Jews. On the other hand, a naturalized, formerly Polish Jew is placed on an equal footing with a Jew whose French lineage went back many centuries. Both are considered “French” Jews. But were they truly the same? And, more importantly, were they viewed and treated as such by the Vichy and German authorities? Put differently: Were all foreign Jews equally in danger of arrest and deportation and, conversely, did all French Jews equally benefit from the limited protection offered by the Vichy Regime? Overall, the historiography generally leaves one with that impression.

Interestingly, however, Klarsfeld’s very own figures seem to show the precariousness of the oft-repeated French-foreign dichotomy in explaining the Jews’ survival. Of the approximately 25,000 French Jews who were murdered during the war, one-third were French citizens from birth, one-third were naturalized citizens and the final third were children of foreign parents.²⁹ Since these three groups were not made up of the same number of individuals, the fact that the percentages of those murdered are virtually the same from group to group seems to suggest that certain French Jews were more vulnerable to arrest and deportation than others. To be sure, the situation was not all that different for the foreign Jews. And therein lies the problem. Treating “French” and “foreign” Jews as two distinct—yet, internally, artificially homogeneous—groups has a very unfortunate consequence: it erases the (sometimes) significant differences—experiential and otherwise—between the individuals that comprise them. Ultimately, this obscures the hierarchies within the two groups and distorts the conclusions that are drawn. This begs the question, then: Was the French-foreign dichotomy really as important in explaining the survival of the Jews of France during the Second World War

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

as its predominant position in the historiography would seem to suggest? Perhaps. But, then again, perhaps not—as this dissertation will show.

THESIS

In comparison with many other parts of France and, more generally, with the country as a whole, the survival rate of the Jews of the Vaucluse is rather extraordinary. As previously mentioned, “only” 399—or 14.1 percent—of them were ultimately deported, while that was the case for 25.0 percent of the Jews who had resided in France between 1940 and 1944. Moreover, in comparison with the overall figures, a significantly higher percentage of the department’s Jewish deportees survived the German concentration camps and returned from deportation upon the war’s conclusion.

In postwar testimonies and publications, a number of Vauclusian Jews contemplated the reasons for their survival. Interestingly, the explanations provided rarely—if ever—discussed things like nationality or country of origin. In fact, in *La persécution contrariée (Thwarted Persecution)*, Jean-Pierre Kaminker argued that “It would be wrong to believe that, in order to be dispensed from extermination, Jews needed only to be French.”³⁰ Kaminker, who, as mentioned above, had taken refuge with his mother and older brother in Valréas, attributed his survival and that of his family to the goodwill of the population. “On the part of the non-Jewish Valréassian population,” he wrote, “persons targeted in one way or another for persecution benefited from a

³⁰ Kaminker, *La persécution contrariée*, p. 304.

collective goodwill.”³¹ This goodwill manifested itself in a number of ways. At times, it was exhibited overtly, as when Bertrand Helfer, a friend of the Kaminker family, was given an identity card free of the obligatory Jewish stamp by an official at the municipality, even though Helfer’s Jewishness was well-known.³² In other instances, it was more subtle in nature. For example, neither the teachers nor the administration of the school attended by the Kaminker children, who had taken on their mother’s maiden name (Signoret), ever revealed the true identity of their pupils to the authorities.³³ In any event, the goodwill of the Valréassian population stemmed, Kaminker’s account made clear, from a place of altruism and a sincere desire to help those in need. It had, therefore, not been contingent upon things like prewar contacts or wealth, meaning that one did not need to know someone to benefit from the population’s goodwill nor did this goodwill have to be purchased: the Kaminkers arrived in Valréas “without knowing anyone” and “momentarily very poor.” Thus, independently of other factors, the population of this small town of the Vaucluse displayed “no hostility [towards Jews], but much goodwill, with particularly tangible consequences.”³⁴

For Jean-Pierre Kaminker, the goodwill of the population—and the individual acts of generosity, aid and rescue that had stemmed from it—had played a decisive role in curbing the destruction process in Valréas and had allowed for the survival of all—but two—Valréassian Jews. But what about the remaining 150 cities, towns and villages of the Vaucluse? Had a similar goodwill existed there as well? To a certain extent, it had. Indeed, postwar testimonies of Vauclusian Jews are replete with anecdotes detailing

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 439.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 248-249.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

numerous acts of kindness shown to them by villagers and city dwellers alike, as well as by individuals acting in a more official capacity, including municipal employees and bureaucrats at the prefecture. Unlike Kaminker, however, few attributed their survival specifically to the goodwill of those with whom they had come into contact.

Reflecting on their wartime experiences, the overwhelming majority of the Jews attributed their salvation to something for which, as Renée Poznanski aptly observed, “it is very difficult to account”³⁵: *luck*—or, for the more religious among them, a *miracle*. When asked, during her interview with the Shoah Foundation in 1997, to elaborate on the reasons for her survival, Ginette Kolinka (née Cherkasky)—a former inmate at Auschwitz—replied with the following: “Luck. Always being at the right place at the right time. It was not because of courage. It was not because of a desire to live. [...] It was because I was always there at the right moment. [...] I had some luck.”³⁶ Max Sinclair, whose surname during the war was Skripek, offered a similar, if more succinct, explanation for his survival: “Luck. Nothing but luck.”³⁷ Some Jews believed, however, that they had survived not so much as a result of luck or chance but because of the intervention of some higher power. “I think, thinking back on it now,” explained Irene Osborne (née Eichberg), “we were just supposed to survive this, because we had so many close calls, and somebody up there [said while pointing upwards] just wanted us to survive this. And we did.”³⁸ Alfred El Koubi—a survivor of both Auschwitz and

³⁵ Renée Poznanski, *Les Juifs en France pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale* (Paris: Hachette Littératures, 1997 [1994]), p. 345.

³⁶ Ginette Kolinka, Interview 25852, VHA, USC Shoah Foundation, 1997, Part VI: 8:45-9:16.

³⁷ Max Sinclair, Interview 25257, VHA, USC Shoah Foundation, 1996, Part V: 20:03-20:10.

³⁸ Irene Osborne, Interview 42083, VHA, USC Shoah Foundation, 1998, Part II: 2:33-2:53.

Mauthausen—affirmed, for his part, that “If we [my wife and I] are alive today, we owe it to a miracle.”³⁹

Considering the enormity of the Jewish tragedy during the Second World War, it is eminently understandable that many survivors would attribute their survival to luck or chance or, for some, to a miracle or an act of God. This sentiment was probably compounded by the *seemingly* haphazard and arbitrary way in which Jews were arrested and deported. Consider the following example. On the morning of August 26, 1942, gendarmes were dispatched throughout the department of Vaucluse (and, indeed, throughout the entire Unoccupied Zone) in order to arrest the foreign Jews who had entered France after January 1, 1936 and who were of the following nationalities: German, Austrian, Czechoslovak, Polish, Estonian, Lithuanian, Latvian, Russian and a few others.⁴⁰ At 5:45 a.m., four such gendarmes presented themselves at 13 Rue de la Sous-Préfecture in Carpentras, the residence of Léopold and Clara Schoenfeld (née Kahn).⁴¹ Born, respectively, in Bad Vilbel and Somborn, Germany, Léopold and Clara were foreign Jews of German nationality. They had arrived in Mulhouse (in northeast France) from Germany in 1937—thus, after January 1, 1936—and had subsequently made their way to Avignon and, thereafter, to Carpentras in August and September 1940.⁴² In theory, both should have been arrested on that fateful morning in August

³⁹ Alfred Elkoubi, Interview 5666, VHA, USC Shoah Foundation, 1995, Part VI: 22:00-22:04.

⁴⁰ Certain Jews having entered France between January 1, 1933 and January 1, 1936 were targeted as well. This was also the case for a handful of other Jews, irrespective of their date of entry. See letter from the Regional Prefect of Marseille to the Prefects of the Region of Marseille, August 24, 1942, ADV, 7W16.

⁴¹ *Procès-verbal* (No. 1025) of the arrest of Léopold Schoenfeld, August 26, 1942, ADV, 7W16.

⁴² “Liste des Israélites en résidence à Carpentras,” Undated document (Posterior to January 1943), ADV, 7W15; “Étrangers – Avis d’arrivée [à Carpentras]” of Léopold and Clara Schoenfeld, Police Commissariat in Carpentras, September 7, 1940 and Letter from the Police Commissariat in Carpentras to the Prefect of Vaucluse, September 7, 1940, ADV, 3W265.

1942. That was not the case, however. In fact, Léopold alone was arrested and brought to Les Milles internment camp in Aix-en-Provence, while Clara remained behind.⁴³

But how was this possible? How was it that one German Jew having arrived in France after January 1936 was arrested and interned, while another—the former’s spouse—was left alone? The reason is a simple—albeit seemingly arbitrary—one: the Schoenfeld’s were not the same age. Indeed, Léopold was born on September 11, 1884, making him fifty-seven years old on August 26, 1942, while Clara, born on October 8, 1880, was sixty-one years old. It was a crucial—and, in the end, fatal—difference. As it turns out, the authorities had decided to exempt certain Jews (fitting the initial criteria) from arrest. This included “elderly individuals over the age of 60.”⁴⁴ Clara was therefore not targeted for arrest on the day that her and her husband were visited by the French gendarmes.⁴⁵ This ultimately saved her life, for Léopold was deported on convoy 29 from Drancy to Auschwitz twelve days after his arrest, a voyage from which he never returned.⁴⁶ Clara was “lucky.” She survived.

With scenarios such as this one having taken place time and again in the Vaucluse from 1942 to 1944, it is not at all difficult to see why some Jews might attribute their survival to something resembling luck or chance. The case of Léopold and Clara Schoenfeld suggests, however, that arrests were perhaps less haphazard than they

⁴³ *Procès-verbal* (No. 1025) of the arrest of Léopold Schoenfeld, August 26, 1942, ADV, 7W16; Prefecture of Vaucluse, “Liste des Juifs étrangers ayant fait l’objet des mesures de regroupement prévues par les instructions de M. le Ministre Secrétaire d’État à l’Intérieur en date des 5 et 15 août 1942 et ayant rejoint effectivement le camp des Milles (B.D.R.) du 23 au 26 août 1942,” Undated document (Probably August 1942), ADV, 7W16.

⁴⁴ Letter from the Regional Prefect of Marseille to the Prefects of the Region of Marseille, August 24, 1942, ADV, 7W16.

⁴⁵ Prefecture of Vaucluse, “Liste des Israélites étrangers entrés en France depuis le 1^{er} janvier 1936 qui doivent faire l’objet des mesures prévues par les instructions de M. le Ministre Secrétaire d’État à l’Intérieur en date des 5 et 15 Août 1942,” Undated document (Probably August 1942), ADV, 7W16.

⁴⁶ Deportation list of convoy 29, Centre de documentation juive contemporaine (hereafter CDJC), C29_50.

may have appeared. It also highlights the precariousness of the much-repeated French-foreign dichotomy in explaining survival. In fact, when it came to the Jews, there was a clear, although ever-evolving, *hierarchy of persecution*—or, depending on one’s vantage point, *hierarchy of privilege*⁴⁷—and one was “lucky” insofar as they happened to meet the criteria of the day. In the department of Vaucluse, the persecution of the Jews followed a certain, though twisted, logic based on this very hierarchy—one, as the case of Léopold Schoenfeld shows, with very real and tragic consequences.

The criteria underpinning the hierarchy of persecution, it must be stressed, were not solely of a personal or individual nature nor did they remain static. In fact, quite the opposite was true: they changed over time and could, depending on the circumstances, prove to be either a liability or a godsend to the person concerned—leading, at times, Jews to see “luck” where it did not exist.

For the moment, one example should suffice to illustrate this point. It concerns the health and physical capabilities of the individual Jews. Strange as it may seem, being in *poor* health could, at times, be a life-saver, in that it occasionally allowed one to be spared from arrest and deportation. Aron Strummer, a Polish Jew born in Stryj in 1906, was one of twenty-six foreign Jewish men to be arrested in the department between August 23 and 26, 1942 and incorporated into a *groupe de travailleurs étrangers* (foreign labour battalion).⁴⁸ On August 25, he wrote a letter to the mayor of Villelaure,

⁴⁷ Ironically, Raul Hilberg was the first to notice the existence of a similar hierarchy with regard to the persecution of the Jews. He does not appear to have viewed it as having been a decisive factor in explaining survival, however—preferring, instead, to remain within the traditional framework of the French-foreign dichotomy. See Hilberg, *La destruction des Juifs d’Europe, Volume II*, pp. 1156-1157.

⁴⁸ Prefecture of Vaucluse, “Liste des Juifs étrangers ayant fait l’objet des mesures de regroupement prévues par les instructions de M. le Ministre Secrétaire d’État à l’Intérieur en date des 5 et 15 août 1942 et ayant rejoint effectivement le camp des Milles (B.D.R.) du 23 au 26 août 1942,” Undated document (Probably August 1942), ADV, 7W16.

the town in which he had resided since January 2, 1941.⁴⁹ “I am addressing you this letter to inform you that I have left Montmirail and am currently in Beaucaire,” Strummer wrote. “We are leaving for Les Mil[les], where we will undergo a triage. Then, we will be deported to Germany. [...] Before leaving,” he added, “we will undergo a medical examination. If they find me to be in good health, I will be sent off. And if they find me ill, I may be able to return to my family.”⁵⁰ Strummer thus hoped to be too sick to be deported. Unfortunately, that is not what transpired. He was sent to Les Milles on August 26 and, from there, was transferred to Drancy on September 2, 1942. He was deported to Auschwitz on convoy 30, exactly one week later.⁵¹

Strummer’s intuition about the significance of one’s health proved to be correct, however. Six Jews—whose names appeared on the list of those to apprehend—were deemed too sick to be transported to Les Milles on August 26 and were, as a result, not even subject to arrest.⁵² They had, in short, benefited from the exemption given to those regarded as being “not transportable.”⁵³ In the end, none of them were ever deported—and all of them survived the war.

This was not an isolated occurrence. In fact, Jews were occasionally exempted from arrest for health reasons as late as 1944. At 8 o’clock in the morning on

⁴⁹ Mayor of Villelaure, “État nominatif des étrangers résidant dans la commune à la date du 31 janvier 1941,” February 1, 1941, ADV, 3W266.

⁵⁰ Letter from Aron Strummer to the Mayor of Villelaure, August 25, 1942, ADV, 7W16.

⁵¹ Prefecture of Vaucluse, “Liste des Juifs étrangers ayant fait l’objet des mesures de regroupement prévues par les instructions de M. le Ministre Secrétaire d’État à l’Intérieur en date des 5 et 15 août 1942 et ayant rejoint effectivement le camp des Milles (B.D.R.) du 23 au 26 août 1942,” Undated document (Probably August 1942), ADV, 7W16; Deportation list of convoy 30, CDJC, C30_15.

⁵² Prefecture of Vaucluse, “Liste des Israélites étrangers entrés en France depuis le 1^{er} janvier 1936 qui doivent faire l’objet des mesures prévues par les instructions de M. le Ministre Secrétaire d’État à l’Intérieur en date des 5 et 15 Août 1942,” Undated document (Probably August 1942), ADV, 7W16; Prefect of Vaucluse, Document titled “Regroupement de certaines catégories de Juifs étrangers,” September 12, 1942, ADV, 7W16.

⁵³ Letter from the Regional Prefect of Marseille to the Prefects of the Region of Marseille, August 24, 1942, ADV, 7W16.

February 17, 1944, an unidentified number of German soldiers arrived at the domicile of Michel Altman, who had been naturalized French in 1934, in order to arrest him. Stricken with brucellosis (Malta fever), Altman, who was thirty-eight years old at the time, was deemed too ill to be transported. Although the Gestapo returned the very next day at 2 a.m. to take him away, Altman had, at least initially, been exempted from arrest due to his health.⁵⁴ Ultimately, he was not deported. Even though it is nothing more than speculation, is it possible that he was exempted from deportation precisely because of his ailing health? The idea should not be dismissed too quickly. After all, a number of Jews—including Zenaida Keisermann from Apt, who, faking a severe heart condition, was released from the internment camp at Gurs⁵⁵—were set free on account of their health.

Of course, poor health could, on some occasions, be tantamount to a death warrant. One wonders, for instance, if Aron Strummer would have so wished to be deemed ill had he known that, regardless of his condition, he would be deported. That is unlikely, for had he been (or had he appeared) unhealthy, he would have almost certainly been sent directly to the gas upon his arrival at Auschwitz. Thus, one's health (or lack thereof) could, on occasion, get one exempted from arrest and deportation. But for those who had the misfortune of being deported, it was preferable to be physically fit and capable. Circumstances, one might say, were everything.

Yet again, one understands the temptation to view the survival of some and the death of others as something entirely random—the product of luck and chance, nothing

⁵⁴ “Arrestations effectuées par les autorités allemandes” (and corresponding “Fiche de renseignements”), February 22, 1944, ADV, 6W37; Division Commissioner and District Chief of Police in Avignon, “Liste des personnes arrêtées pour des raisons politiques par les services de police allemands,” November 24, 1944, ADV, 6W37.

⁵⁵ Zena Keiser, Interview 33206, VHA, USC Shoah Foundation, 1997, Part I: 24:24-25:59 and 28:34-28:53.

more. As with the French-foreign dichotomy in explaining the survival of three-quarters of the Jewish population of France during the Second World War, this, also, is too simplistic a view. In the end, it was a *hierarchy of persecution* (or *of privilege*)—underpinned by a *confluence of personal, geographical and temporal forces*—that enabled the majority of the Jews of the Vaucluse to make it through the war intact.

METHODOLOGY—“QUANTITATIVE PROSOPOGRAPHY”

Prosopography has, in recent years, continued to gain in popularity. It is being applied by historians of all periods to answer an ever-increasing number of questions on a wide range of topics. There has, however, been some hesitation over whether it is best described as a “method,” a “technique,” an “approach” or an “analytical tool.”

In an influential article published in 1971, Lawrence Stone argued that “Prosopography is the investigation of the common background characteristics of a group of actors in history by means of a collective study of their lives.”⁵⁶ More recently, in their “Short Manual to the Art of Prosopography,” three scholars from Ghent University defined prosopography as “a historical research technique based on the systematic analysis of the biographical data of a selected group of historical actors.”⁵⁷ With these definitions in mind, it is perhaps understandable that prosopography has, in many instances, come to be viewed as synonymous with “collective biography”—a

⁵⁶ Lawrence Stone, “Prosopography,” *Daedalus*, Vol. 100, No. 1 (Winter 1971), p. 46.

⁵⁷ Koenraad Verboven, Myriam Carlier and Jan Dumolyn, “A Short Manual to the Art of Prosopography,” in *Prosopography: Approaches and Applications: A Handbook*, edited by K. S. B. Keats-Rohan (Oxford: University of Oxford, 2007), p. 69.

misnomer, to be sure. Nevertheless, K. S. B. Keats-Rohan's argument against equating prosopography and collective biography seems to go a little too far, suggesting, rather cynically, that the individuals upon whom prosopographical works are based are often viewed as little more than a means to an end:

Biography, autobiography and collective biography are focused upon individuals and all details of their lives. The subjects of biography have a direct personal interest for their biographers. Prosopography, by contrast, is impersonal: *prosopographers are only interested in individuals in so far as they relate to groups of connected persons sharing one or more common characteristic.* [emphasis added]⁵⁸

If this is indeed the typical way of viewing things, it is a perception that does not at all resonate with the current author.

The reluctance in some circles to attribute the label of “method” to prosopography stems from the fact that prosopography is not uniformly applied in all circumstances. In fact, one's approach to it varies depending on the sources at one's disposal, the questions needing to be answered and the data analysis tools available. Thus, there is not one single and unique way of conducting prosopography, but many. As Keats-Rohan remarked, “Prosopography is [...] a plural rather than a singular beast so attempts at definition are necessarily more descriptive than prescriptive.”⁵⁹

Even if the intermediary steps are susceptible to vary from historian to historian and from subject to subject, prosopographical research is largely conducted in two stages. First, there is the collection and the compiling of the data pertaining to each individual in the identified group; second, the analysis and the interpretation of that data. Regardless of the chosen topic or the time period considered, the creation of a database

⁵⁸ K. S. B. Keats-Rohan, “Introduction: Chameleon or Chimera? Understanding Prosopography,” in *Prosopography: Approaches and Applications*, Keats-Rohan, p. 16.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

is often necessary to both of these tasks. This database, moreover, will generally be quite elaborate, seeing as the goal is to systematically collect a vast array of information on the individuals concerned. In the case of the current study, the database contains the following information—and, indeed, much more—on the Vauclusian Jews: age, gender, nationality, place of origin, marital status, education, military service, profession over time and movements throughout the war. In total, the database is comprised of over three million cells—1,125 variables for 2,826 Jews.

Some authors believe that it is a mistake to try and define prosopography as either a quantitative or a qualitative approach, since, in their view, it is both.⁶⁰ They would, therefore, almost certainly object to the use of the adjective “quantitative” to describe the particular form of prosopography used here. In many ways, their objection would be warranted, for prosopography is, in fact, a hybrid of sorts: a *qualitative* approach is used to extract the information contained in the sources, while a *quantitative* one is at the heart of the statistical analyses performed on the collected data. In this particular case, however, the qualifier was deemed appropriate and therefore added, because of the preponderant role played by quantification in the study.

As is perhaps clear by now, prosopography is (by its very nature) a labour-intensive and time-consuming endeavour. Indeed, some may even wonder whether it is worth the significant investment in both time and effort. *It is*. For one thing, prosopography is, in many ways, an attempt to limit some of the traditional pitfalls inherent with historical research, namely, the danger of drawing conclusions and making hasty generalizations from a handful of interesting—though atypical—cases or examples. By collecting and analysing vast quantities of data on the individuals

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

belonging to the group being investigated, the particular traits and characteristics of that population as a whole become visible. This thus reduces the risk of giving undue weight to exceptional and, consequently, unrepresentative individual cases.⁶¹

Prosopography also has the added advantage of enabling researchers to detect previously hidden links between the different variables comprising the database. In this regard, there is an obvious affinity between microhistory and prosopography. Indeed, just as the microhistorical approach has enabled historians, by narrowing the scale of observation, to uncover things that would have remained difficult—if not impossible—to perceive at a larger, or macro, scale, the use of quantitative methods and statistical analyses allows for the identification of patterns that would not be discernible otherwise, that is, not even at a traditional micro scale.

Nevertheless, one should not overestimate the potential of the prosopographical method nor view it as some kind of panacea to the standard difficulties involved with historical research. In fact, as one author has noted, prosopography sometimes reveals only “partial linkages” between variables and often allows for only “statistically modest generalizations.” “The statistical modesty of those conclusions,” the same author nonetheless asserted, “does not deny their historical value.”⁶²

⁶¹ Verboven, Carlier and Dumolyn, “A Short Manual,” p. 36.

⁶² William Bruneau, “Toward a New Collective Biography: The University of British Columbia Professoriate, 1915-1945,” *Canadian Journal of Education*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (1994), p. 67.

SOURCES

The database that underlies the current research is the product of a systematic gathering and compiling of a large number of different sources from several archives: files on individual Jews, police and arrest reports, deportation lists, concentration camp records, and, most importantly, lists and censuses of the Jews of the department. Not all sources were as thoroughly and systematically exploited, however. Indeed, the documents from the Archives départementales de Vaucluse in Avignon, as well as those from the International Tracing Service (ITS), were methodically entered into the database, while those from the Archives nationales de France in Pierrefitte-sur-Seine and those from the Centre de documentation juive contemporaine in Paris (with the exception of the deportation lists and the documents pertaining to the Drancy internment camp) were used in a less systematic fashion. There are a number of reasons for this. First and foremost is the sheer volume of the documentation. Alone, the National Archives in France contain tens of thousands of documents concerning the Jews of the department. In fact, the AJ³⁸ subseries (used in nearly every work concerning the Holocaust in France) includes 164 aryianization files⁶³ (ranging from a handful of documents to several hundred) detailing the expropriation and plunder experienced by the Vauclusian Jews during the war. Evidently, this does not include the thousands of pages worth of reports by the *Section d'enquête et de contrôle* (SEC) that also concern the Jews of the department. Although these files contain additional (and, admittedly, interesting) information on the 2,826 Jews who were identified, they largely shed light

⁶³ The number of aryianization files concerning the Jews of the Vaucluse is, in fact, higher than that, because businesses owned by Vauclusian Jews but located outside the department were not included in the total.

on things that fall outside of the scope of this study—the aryanization of Jewish businesses, for example. Consequently, they could not, and were not, exploited nearly as systematically as some of the other sources—the most important of which will be discussed in turn.

COMPOSITION OF THE JEWISH POPULATION OF THE DEPARTMENT AND COMINGS AND GOINGS OF THE JEWS

The department of Vaucluse was identified as an interesting *terrain de recherche* for a number of reasons. First among them was the quality and quantity of the local archival material available.⁶⁴ This is particularly evident in the case of the lists and censuses concerning the Jews, which have, for the most part, been remarkably well preserved.

There are a total of 177 lists recording the names of Jews in the Vaucluse—or 183 when the postwar commemorative plaques (which are scattered throughout the department) are factored in.⁶⁵ The lists, which contain anywhere from one or two names to several hundred and, in certain cases, in excess of 1,500, provide the names of, and a wide range of socio-demographic information on, 9,445 individuals, many of whom can be found on multiple lists.⁶⁶ Typically, they provide the following information on the

⁶⁴ I would like to extend a special thank you to Professor Claire Zalc for bringing this fact to my attention. Having spent time at the Archives départementales de Vaucluse while conducting the research for her most recent book, *Dénaturalisés : Les retraits de nationalité sous Vichy* (Paris: Seuil, 2016), Prof. Zalc encouraged me to make the trip from Paris to Avignon to proceed with an initial *dépouillement* of the archives. The idea was that this trip might serve as a springboard for my dissertation. The rest, as they say, is history.

⁶⁵ A handful of these lists, it should be noted, do not explicitly concern the Jews but, rather, “foreign refugees.” They were nevertheless counted towards the total because most—if not all—of the individuals whose names appear on them were, in fact, Jews.

⁶⁶ The majority of these lists are found in two boxes at the departmental archives in Avignon, 7W15 and 7W16. The others are located in boxes 20W10 and 3W265.

individuals concerned: surname and given name, date and place of birth, nationality, profession, marital status and current address. There are, in general, four different types of lists: (1) Censuses conducted with the deliberate intent of tracking the Jews, including the two department-wide censuses of July 1, 1941 and May 13, 1944, as well as the local ones (the “*États des Israélites*”) conducted in the fall of 1943; (2) Lists recording the names of the foreign Jews targeted for, or evading, arrest (1942); (3) Lists concerning the Jews who were part of a *groupe de travailleurs étrangers* (1942); and (4) Lists of those having received the “Jewish stamp” on their identification papers and ration cards (1943).

As one can see, the censuses and lists cover a significant part of the war—July 1941 through May 1944. By compiling them in a database, one is thus able to determine the precise composition of the Jewish population of the department at various points in time. But, perhaps more importantly, one is also able to get a fairly clear picture of the Jews’ comings and goings during that period. This is especially true for those that remained in the Vaucluse for the duration of the war. In this instance, the numerous lists enable one to see whether or not the Jews remained at the same address the entire time and, in the event that they moved, to follow them from place to place within the department. What is more, the lists also help to identify the newcomers to the Vaucluse and to determine the approximate date of their arrival and, conversely, the date of departure, for those who may have left. But how, one might ask, is it possible to follow the Jews that fled the department, irrespective of the date on which they left? For that, one must have recourse to other sources, such as those relating to an individual’s arrest.

ARRESTS

There are a number of sources that provide answers to the standard questions surrounding an individual's arrest: Who? Where? When? Why? And by whom? The local archives in Avignon contain lists providing information on the arrests of persons who, for the most part, had been deliberately targeted. The list of the seventy-six foreign Jews arrested and brought to camp des Milles in August 1942 is an example of one such document.⁶⁷ Such lists, it should be observed, provide little information (with the exception of that concerning the identity of the individual who was arrested and the date on which they were taken into custody) that was not already found on the "regular" lists and censuses of the Jews, namely, the individual's surname and given name, date and place of birth, nationality, familial situation, profession and address. In the case of the arrests having taken place in August 1942, however, there is often—though not always—an accompanying police report describing the individual arrests. These reports are considerably more detailed than the lists. They not only provide the date and time of the arrest in question, as well as the names of the officers involved, but also elaborate on the arrest itself, offering information on the reaction of the individual upon the news that they were being apprehended, and indicating whether they were given any time to prepare their things and whether they left any family members behind.

⁶⁷ Interestingly, the names of only sixty-one of the seventy-six Jews arrested had appeared on the list of those to be targeted. See Prefecture of Vaucluse, "Liste des Israélites étrangers entrés en France depuis le 1^{er} janvier 1936 qui doivent faire l'objet des mesures prévues par les instructions de M. le Ministre Secrétaire d'État à l'Intérieur en date des 5 et 15 Août 1942," Undated document (Probably August 1942) and Prefecture of Vaucluse, "Liste des Juifs étrangers ayant fait l'objet des mesures de regroupement prévues par les instructions de M. le Ministre Secrétaire d'État à l'Intérieur en date des 5 et 15 août 1942 et ayant rejoint effectivement le camp des Milles (B.D.R.) du 23 au 26 août 1942," Undated document (Probably August 1942), ADV, 7W16.

While similar to those discussed above, the lists concerning the years 1943 and 1944 are, nevertheless, quite different, especially with regards to the information that they contain. There are, in fact, two sets of lists that help track the arrests that took place in the department of Vaucluse during those years. Neither of them exclusively concerns the Jews. The first is something of a master list. Dated November 24, 1944, the document is titled “List of persons arrested for political motives by the German police forces.”⁶⁸ Among other things, the source provides the date of, and the motive for, the arrest of the 565 persons apprehended ostensibly for a political motive in 1943 and 1944, of whom 106 were Jews. It also indicates the name of the authority having conducted the arrest. In theory, this document should allow for the identification of every Jew taken into custody in the Vaucluse during the latter stages of the war. Like all sources, however, this one is far from perfect. When one compares the master copy to the second set of lists concerning the arrests in the department over the same period, it quickly becomes apparent that certain individuals are missing. These secondary lists, individually titled “Monthly statement of the arrests of French nationals operated by the German authorities” (or, occasionally, “by the Italian authorities”), present a month-by-month breakdown of the arrests having taken place in the Vaucluse from April 1943 to July 1944. In general, the “monthly statements” provide much of the same information as that contained in the master list. Both sets of lists are needed to identify arrested Jews, however, as some names appear on only one of them.

Once again, one is confronted with the fact that all of the sources discussed—no matter how rich in information they are—have the distinct disadvantage of concerning

⁶⁸ Division Commissioner and District Chief of Police in Avignon, “Liste des personnes arrêtées pour des raisons politiques par les services de police allemands,” November 24, 1944, ADV, 6W37.

the sole department of Vaucluse. How, then, does one proceed to determine which Jews were arrested outside the territorial limits of the department? There are, in fact, a number of sources—both primary and secondary—that allow one to do so. These include the deportation lists and the Drancy receipts found at the Centre de documentation juive contemporaine in Paris, as well as Serge Klarsfeld’s monumental *Mémorial de la déportation des Juifs de France*. Not wanting to anticipate too much on the sources concerning the deportation of the Jews, however, these sources will only be discussed in the following section.

DEPORTATIONS

When it comes to the deportation of the Vauclusian Jews during the Second World War, four sources are indispensable: (1) the postwar plaques (found throughout the department) commemorating the Jews of the Vaucluse who were victims of the Holocaust; (2) the deportation lists of the convoys that left France for “the East”; (3) Serge Klarsfeld’s *Mémorial de la déportation des Juifs de France*; and (4) the “Pages of Testimony” and other documents found via Yad Vashem’s Central Database of Shoah Victims’ Names. This quadruple failsafe, so to speak, helps keep to a minimum the number of those who, while having been deported, may, for a variety of reasons, have been overlooked.

Of the six plaques found in the department, two are of critical importance, by virtue of the number of names engraved on each of them. Located at the synagogue on Place Jérusalem in Avignon, the first plaque, which is dedicated “To the Martyrs of the Faith of Israel, 1940-1944,” contains the names of seventy individual Jews and five

family names. All were victims of the Holocaust. Not all, however, were “Vauclusian Jews.” Indeed, only fifty of them were ultimately identified as having lived in the department during the war. For the most part, the others were relatives of Jews who had found refuge in the Vaucluse during those years and who sought to commemorate their loved ones when the plaque was unveiled in October 1948.⁶⁹ In any event, the plaque is an excellent point of departure for identifying those who were deported between 1940 and 1944.

The second and, arguably, most important plaque bears the heading “Jews Deported from the Vaucluse to the Nazi Extermination Camps between 1942 and 1944.” Located in the Doms Garden right next to the Papal palace in Avignon, the plaque provides the names of 422 Jews—407 deportees and fifteen individuals killed in France. Of those who were deported, thirty-three survived (this is indicated on the plaque by an asterisk next to the person’s name). As one can see, the number of Jews identified as having been deported exceeds by eight the total (399) at which the current research arrived. There are many reasons for this discrepancy. For one thing, the admirable people behind the creation of the plaque did not utilize all of the lists available to them in the archives in order to identify all of the possible Jewish victims having come from the Vaucluse—as, indeed, this dissertation does. Instead, they opted to focus their attention on the censuses of July 1941 and May 1944, as well as on the list of foreign Jews targeted for arrest in August 1942.⁷⁰ As a result, some thirty-eight Jews, whose names almost always appeared on one of the many lists not used by the plaque’s authors, are missing from the monument.

⁶⁹ Bernard Weisz, “Juifs du Pape en Vaucluse pendant la Shoah,” *L’Écho des Carrières*, No. 61 (2010), p. 12.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

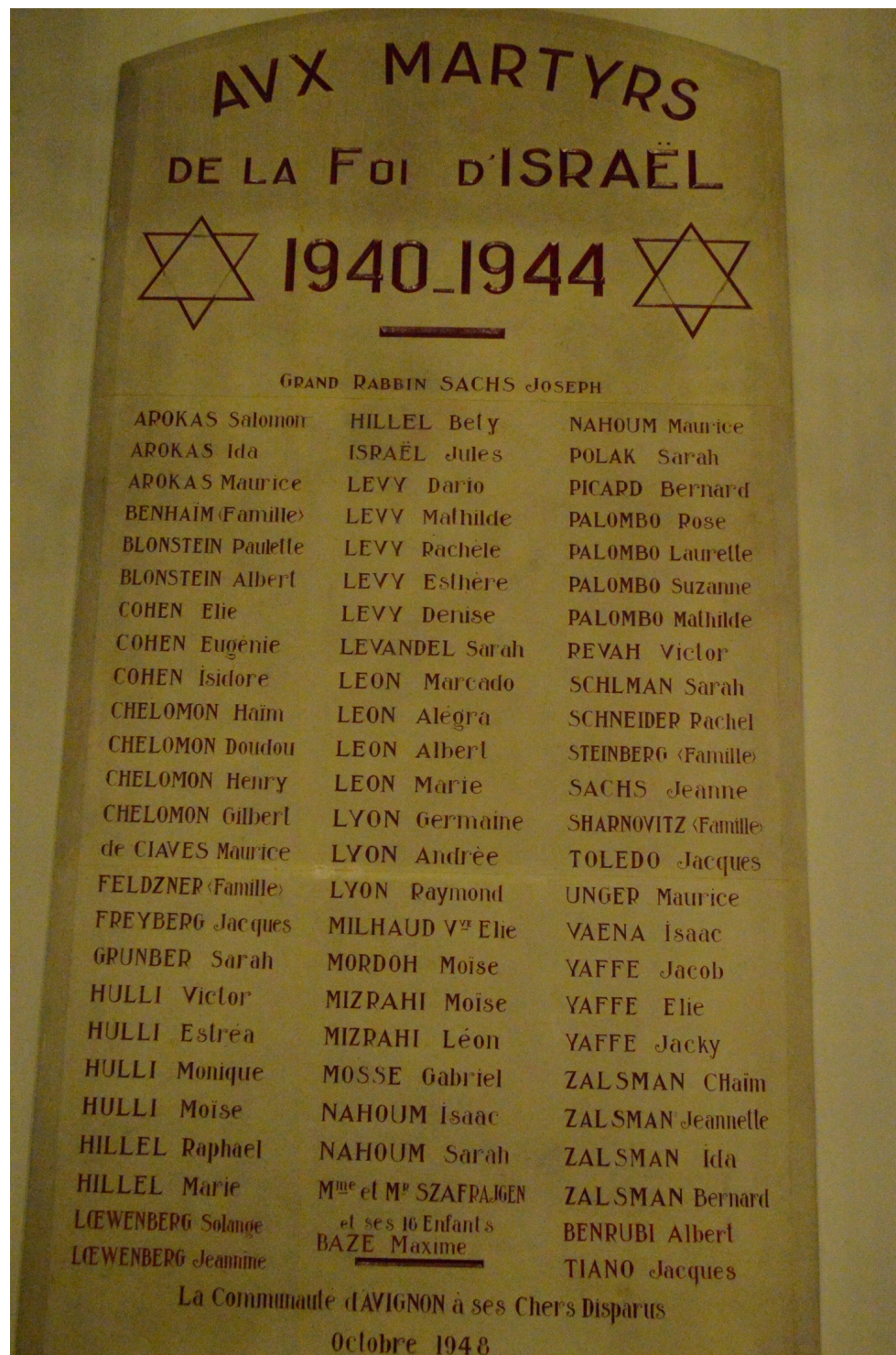
In some instances, it is clear that the discrepancy was partly the result of cases of mistaken identify. For instance, an individual by the name of Ernest Scheuer was identified on the plaque as having been deported. When one verifies the deportation lists, one finds that an individual by that name was indeed deported from Drancy to Auschwitz on August 26, 1942, aboard convoy 24.⁷¹ But was it the same Ernest Scheuer as the one who had lived in the Vaucluse? It seems unlikely. Not only are the dates of birth not a perfect match (one was reportedly born in 1907; the other, in 1915), but the individual from the Vaucluse is also recorded as living in the town of Pertuis on May 13, 1944⁷²—thus, nearly two years after he was supposed to have been deported. Consequently, they are probably not the same person. In forty-eight other cases, Jews whose names appeared on the plaque could not be found on any other document, local or otherwise. Indeed, no proof indicating that these individuals had resided in the department during the war was ever found. The reasoning behind the decision to include them on the plaque thus remains unclear.

In spite of its shortcomings, the plaque to the deported Jews of the Vaucluse is an invaluable source when it comes to identifying the Jewish deportees of the department. This is especially true when it is used in conjunction with the three other sources mentioned earlier: the deportation lists, the “Pages of Testimony” and Klarsfeld’s book. Since these are heavily intertwined and best used in tandem, they will be discussed together.

⁷¹ Deportation list of convoy 24, CDJC, C24_38.

⁷² Prefecture of Vaucluse, “Liste complémentaire des Israélites étrangers résidant en Vaucluse à la date du 13 mai 1944,” May 13, 1944, ADV, 7W15.

Image 1: "To the Martyrs of the Faith of Israel, 1940-1944."
(Synagogue, Place Jérusalem, Avignon)



Source: Adrien Dallaire, 2015.

Image 2: “Jews Deported from the Vaucluse to the Nazi Extermination Camps between 1942 and 1944.”
(Jardin des Doms, Palais des Papes, Avignon)



Source: Adrien Dallaire, 2015.

The deportation lists of the seventy-nine convoys that left France for “the East” survived the war more or less intact (two pages are missing from the list of convoy 20, which left Drancy for Auschwitz on August 17, 1942).⁷³ They have been digitized and may be consulted via the online catalogue of the Centre de documentation juive contemporaine (CDJC).⁷⁴ The catalogue, which regroups a number of different databases, allows one to conduct a nominal search of the victims of the Holocaust in France. This includes not only those who were deported but also those who were

⁷³ Klarsfeld, *Mémorial*, p. iii.

⁷⁴ CDJC, Database of Victims, Jewish Resistance Members and Righteous of France, http://bdi.memorialdelashoah.org/internet/jsp/core/MmsGlobalSearch.jsp?PEGA_HREF_1973698162_0_0_goToPersonSearch=goToPersonSearch.

executed or who died while in internment in France. For the Jews falling into either one of these categories, an individual notice has been produced. These notices provide whatever background information is available on the individual in question, including, in the case of those who were deported, the convoy number, the date of deportation, and the names of the camps to and from which they were deported. They also contain a link to the page of the deportation list in which the individual's name appears. Although the lists vary slightly in style from one to the next, they generally provide similar information on the deportees: surname and given name, date and place of birth, and nationality. Occasionally, the individual's address is also given. This information is particularly useful in the cases where the person in question had left the department and been arrested somewhere else, since it gives an idea of the trajectory they took following their departure.

Rich as they are in information, the deportation lists should be (and, in this case, were) complimented by other sources. One that must not be overlooked is Serge Klarsfeld's *Mémorial de la déportation des Juifs de France*. The *Mémorial*, which in many ways resembles a telephone book of a medium-sized city, contains the names (in alphabetical order) of the 80,000 Jewish victims of the Holocaust in France. Once again, this includes all those who were deported, executed or died while in internment. The book is the result of an incredible undertaking: all of the deportation lists were painstakingly compiled and, whenever possible, supplemented by other archival sources—found both in France and abroad.⁷⁵ As a result, much of the information found in the *Mémorial* is identical to that found on the deportation lists themselves. Nevertheless, since other sources were also used, the book provides information not

⁷⁵ Klarsfeld, *Mémorial*, p. ii.

found on the aforementioned lists, including the individual's address at the time of their arrest and the name of the prison or the camp (or, at the very least, the city) in which they were imprisoned or interned prior to their transfer (in most cases) to Drancy. Yet again, this provides an indication as to the whereabouts of the Jews who had fled the Vaucluse.

Rounding out the sources concerning the deportation of the Jews are the "Pages of Testimony" and the other documents found in Yad Vashem's Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names.⁷⁶ This database contains the names and biographical details of nearly five of the six million Jewish victims of the Holocaust. Of all the different types of records that can be found within it, two are particularly important. The first are the deportation lists from France. These records reproduce almost verbatim that which can be found in Klarsfeld's *Mémorial*. So why, then, are they important? It has much less to do with the information that they provide than with the failsafe that they represent. For instance, if an individual who had been deported was—for whatever reason—mistakenly overlooked when the original deportation lists were consulted, this provided another chance to identify them.

The second records of import are the "Pages of Testimony." Submitted by survivors, family members, friends or researchers, these one-page forms contain the names, biographical details and, on occasion, photographs of victims of the Holocaust. Though short, they often provide details that cannot be found elsewhere—in particular, with regards to an individual's movements throughout the war. This is also true, however, with regards to a person's deportation. For example, in August 2001, Lydie

⁷⁶ Yad Vashem, Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names (hereafter YV, CDSVN), <https://yvng.yadvashem.org/>.

Lachenal-Ritter (née Weissberg) submitted a “Page of Testimony” on behalf of her father-in-law, Ojser Warszawski. The document not only thoroughly retraces his steps during the war years—thereby providing precious details not found anywhere else—but also indicates that Warszawski, who had made his way to Italy in September 1943, was arrested in Rome on May 17, 1944 and was subsequently deported to Auschwitz.⁷⁷ Evidently, the names of Jews deported from Italy do not appear on the French deportation lists. Thus, without this “Page of Testimony,” Warszawski’s deportation would have gone completely unnoticed.

CONCENTRATION AND EXTERMINATION CAMPS

The archives of the International Tracing Service (ITS) are essential to anyone seeking to determine the fate of Jews who were deported. The original archives, which are comprised of thirty million documents (concerning the fate of nearly eighteen million persons), are housed in Bad Arolsen, Germany. Digitized copies of the records are available, however, in a number of institutions around the world, including the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. and the National Archives in Paris. The documentation is wide-ranging and includes, among other things, files from concentration camps, records on forced labour and registers concerning displaced persons.

Once again, searches are conducted nominally. They are done via the database’s Central Name Index. Once a name has been entered, a series of white reference cards (organized alphaphonetically) are displayed. One must comb through these cards to

⁷⁷ “Page of Testimony” submitted by Lydie Lachenal-Ritter on behalf of Ojser Warszawski, YV, CDSVN.

identify those pertaining to the individual being sought. One then uses the reference numbers provided on the various cards to search for the corresponding documents (found in another section of the database). It is, in truth, more complicated a process than it may appear.

The ITS archives are especially useful in that they allow researchers to identify the Jews who were not immediately gassed upon their arrival at Auschwitz (or at other camps). If, for instance, an individual's name can be found on a camp entry register or on any other document attesting to their presence in the camp, then that person was evidently not murdered upon arrival. In theory, one is thus in a position to determine the identity of those who, at the very least, survived their initial deportation. In practice, however, that is not always the case, as the example of Estréa Asséo (née Zaharia) highlights. A foreign Jew born in 1908, Asséo, who lived in Avignon with her husband and two children, was arrested on June 6, 1944 and was deported from Drancy to Auschwitz three weeks later, aboard convoy 76.⁷⁸ Interestingly, not a single document concerning her was found in the ITS archives. This is strange, seeing as Asséo survived not only Auschwitz but also the camps at Neustadt and Ravensbrück—all of which is recounted in her memoirs, titled *Les souvenirs d'une rescapée (Memories of a Survivor)*.⁷⁹ Cases such as this one are, nevertheless, certainly the exception rather than the norm.

The archives of the International Tracing Service also enable one to reconstruct the movements of the Jews within the German concentration camp system. Camp entry

⁷⁸ Division Commissioner and District Chief of Police in Avignon, "Liste des personnes arrêtées pour des raisons politiques par les services de police allemands," November 24, 1944, ADV, 6W37; Deportation list of convoy 76, CDJC, C76_3.

⁷⁹ Estréa Zaharia Asséo, *Les souvenirs d'une rescapée* (Paris: La pensée universelle, 1974).

registers and various *Transportlisten*, for example, provide a clearer picture of an individual's often-chaotic journey through the system, as they were shuffled about from camp to camp, especially in the latter stages of the war. Infirmary records, for their part, make it possible to determine the precise date on which an individual succumbed in the camp, as well as the alleged cause of their death. Finally, postwar lists of patients in hospitals and displaced persons camps, as well as immigration records, allow for the identification of survivors.

SURVIVOR TESTIMONIES

All of these sources are—both in terms of quality and quantity—perfectly suited for a study such as this, which privileges a quantitative approach. They are, however, for lack of a better word, dry. Indeed, with the impersonal nature of the various lists used, be they censuses or arrest and deportation lists, it would be easy to lose sight of the human element of the story. But that, precisely, is the most important part. One, therefore, needs to find a way of giving a voice to the victims themselves. In this case, the testimonies of thirty-one Jewish survivors of the department of Vaucluse, found in the Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive, were used to complement the otherwise dispassionate documents. A number of postwar publications (also by survivors) were additionally used towards that end. Few of these Jews were survivors of the death camps. Most, as Édouard Ermantier (previously Ehrlichman) put it in his testimony, were “people who lived simply, who had a few adventures.”⁸⁰ They were, one might say,

⁸⁰ Édouard Ermantier, Interview 34652, VHA, USC Shoah Foundation, 1997, Part III: 18:23-18:26.

ordinary people, who happened to live at a time that was anything but. This dissertation seeks to tell their tale.

CHAPTER 1

COMPOSITION OF THE JEWISH POPULATION OF THE VAUCLUSE, 1939-1944

IDENTIFYING THE “VAUCLUSIAN JEWS”

What is “a Jew?” *Who* is “a Jew?” And what does it mean to be “of the Vaucluse?” Seemingly straightforward, these questions are the foundational blocks upon which the present study rests. As a result, they need to be explored and answered.

On October 3, 1940, the Vichy government instituted what came to be known as the *premier statut des Juifs*. Among other things, the law provided the criteria for defining “the Jew,” while simultaneously barring those who would henceforth be considered Jewish from exercising a number of public functions and professions. According to Article I, “a Jew is, for the purpose of this present law, any person having three grandparents of the Jewish race, or having two grandparents of that race, if their spouse is Jewish.”¹ The statute of October 3, 1940, was subsequently supplanted by the *second statut des Juifs* of June 2, 1941. Going considerably further than the original, the second statute provided an updated and even more encompassing definition of “the Jew” and multiplied the professions forbidden to those so defined. In particular, the new statute made clear what had been meant by “Jewish race” in the law that had preceded it. A “Jew” was now defined as:

¹ État français, “Loi portant statut des Juifs” (also known as the *premier statut des Juifs*), October 3, 1940, published in the *Journal officiel* on October 18, 1940. The full text can be found in Marrus and Paxton, *Vichy et les Juifs*, pp. 610-613.

1. A person, belonging or not to a particular faith, having at least three grandparents of the Jewish race, or having only two grandparents of that race, provided their spouse has two grandparents of the Jewish race.

A grandparent having belonged to the Jewish religion is considered to be of the Jewish race.

2. A person belonging to the Jewish religion, or who belonged to it on June 25, 1940, and who has two grandparents of the Jewish race.²

Once the legal precepts defining “the Jew” were in place (which provided an answer to the question “*What is a Jew?*”), the French administration sought to develop mechanisms that would enable it to identify those belonging to this newly defined group. As it turns out, answering the question “*Who is a Jew?*” proved to be a more complicated task. How, for instance, was the Vichy government to succeed in this endeavour, when the category of people it hoped to identify had, for all intents and purposes, been created overnight? What is more, the French administration could not turn to the censuses taken in years past for guidance. The reason for this was simple: questions pertaining to an individual’s religious status ceased to be a part of French census taking as early as 1872, with the exception of the censuses conducted in the colonies and in the departments of Alsace-Lorraine.³ Consequently, French and foreign Jews alike were recorded according to their respective nationalities—nothing more. Thus, as far as statistics were concerned, a French *Israélite* was considered as much of a Frenchman as any other French citizen. The same applied to Jews of foreign origin. According to the censuses, they were Germans, Poles and Spaniards—not Jews.

How, then, were Jews to be identified? In France, the government attempted to compel individuals to come forward and to declare themselves. On June 2, 1941, the

² État français, “Loi du 2 juin 1941 remplaçant la loi du 3 octobre 1940 portant statut des Juifs” (also known as the *second statut des Juifs*), June 2, 1941, published in the *Journal officiel* on June 14, 1941. The full text can be found in Marrus and Paxton, *Vichy et les Juifs*, pp. 615-622.

³ Mariot and Zalc, *Face à la persécution*, p. 38.

Vichy Regime passed a law prescribing the census of the Jews. Complimenting the *second statut des Juifs*, the law stipulated the following:

Article 1. All persons who are Jewish as regards the *statut des Juifs* of June 2, 1941 must, within one month of the publication of the present law, submit to the prefect of their department or to the sub-prefect of the district in which they reside, a written declaration indicating that they are Jewish as regards to the law and mentioning their marital status, their familial situation, their profession and the state of their possessions.

The declaration is to be made by the husband for the wife and by the legal representative for the minor.⁴

In order to ensure compliance, the law asserted that failure to declare oneself constituted a punishable offence. One risked a prison term of one month to one year, a fine ranging from 100 to 10,000 Francs, and possible internment in a special camp in France, for failing to comply with the ordinance.⁵

If one believes those responsible for identifying and tracking the Jews in the Vaucluse in the summer of 1941, it would appear that the majority of those living in the department at that time ultimately obeyed the law, by declaring themselves to the prefectural authorities in Avignon. A report by an unnamed individual, who visited the departmental prefecture on October 21, 1941, to meet with the prefect, Louis Vallin, in order to discuss the “Jewish question,” contains the following observation: “No non-declarations suspected.”⁶ Following, as it does, the total number of Jews identified as living in the department at the time the census was taken, this notation might lead one to conclude that most—if not all—of the “1,500 Jews in the Vaucluse” submitted the

⁴ État français, “Loi du 2 juin 1941 prescrivant le recensement des Juifs,” June 2, 1941, published in the *Journal officiel* on June 14, 1941. The full text can be found in Marrus and Paxton, *Vichy et les Juifs*, pp. 623-624.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Undated and unsigned document, entitled “Visite à la préfecture du Vaucluse le 21 octobre 1941,” CDJC, LXXII-7/8.

declarations required of them by law.⁷ Perhaps that was the case. The archival material available today, however, does not lend itself well to determining the precise number of Jews in the department who chose to identify themselves to the authorities in June and July 1941. For one, the declarations themselves are not to be found in the archives.⁸ As a result, there is nothing upon which to base an estimate of the number of declarations made. Second, the one document that could have possibly provided an indication in this regard (a document registering the declarations submitted by the Jews to the prefecture) is, for unknown reasons, severely incomplete. In fact, the document contains the names of only 103 persons having declared themselves as Jews between June 21 and July 10, 1941—a far cry from the “1,500” mentioned in the previously-cited report.⁹

In any event, it is highly improbable that all of the individuals, who were regarded as Jews by the *second statut des Juifs* and who resided in the Vaucluse in the summer of 1941, declared themselves to the authorities, as the law demanded. In many cases, moreover, “defiance” of the statute does not appear to have amounted to a conscious and deliberate attempt to shirk the law. The problem was that, as a result of the statute of June 2, 1941, the definition of “the Jew” had become so broad that many individuals, who had never personally had any affiliation with Judaism and who had never previously viewed themselves as Jews, were caught in the dragnet.¹⁰ The following, an excerpt of the minutes of an interrogation conducted by the Police Commissioner in Avignon of Jean Arthur Waiss, is emblematic of the reigning

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ This is true with the exception of the handful of those that can be found in the box containing files on individual Jews. This is the case, however, for only a very small number of individuals. See ADV, 7W17.

⁹ See “Recensement des Juifs : Registre des déclarations (Exécution de la loi du 2 juin 1941),” Undated document (Register “begun on June 21, 1941”), ADV, 7W15.

¹⁰ Richard H. Weisberg, *Vichy Law and the Holocaust in France* (Washington Square, NY: New York University Press, 1996), pp. 60-61.

confusion with regard to the question of whether or not one was to be considered “a Jew”:

I was born in France and am of French nationality. I do not believe that, according to the most recent laws, I am of the Jewish race, even though I have two Jewish grandparents on my father’s side. My parents were both Catholics, as were my grandparents on my mother’s side. I am Catholic and am married to a Catholic.¹¹

Similar scenarios come up time and again in the archival documentation.¹² In fact, the uncertainty displayed in the case of Jean Arthur Weiss seems to have permeated the minds of those who viewed themselves as sitting on the proverbial fence with regard to their “race.”

In order to ensure that they were not violating the law concerning the census of the Jews and, on the chance that they were, in order to preempt any accusations that they were doing so deliberately, certain individuals—like Georges Wolff—went out of their way to determine if they were Jewish according to the law. A practicing Catholic living in Avignon in 1941, Wolff, whose mother was also a Catholic, was uncertain of his “Jewishness.” For him, the question mark resided in the fact that both his father and grandfather were Jews and that he, himself, had only recently (in October 1939) converted from Judaism to Catholicism. As a result, Wolff submitted his declaration to the Prefecture of Vaucluse only on February 14, 1942—several months after the deadline prescribed by law. The delay was the result of the long back-and-forth between Wolff and various organs of the administration to determine if, indeed, he should be considered a Jew. Finally, when the verdict returned and he was told that he met the criteria outlined in the statute of June 2, 1941, Wolff provided the declaration as

¹¹ Undated *procès-verbal* of the interrogation of Jean Arthur Weiss by the Police Commissioner in Avignon, Weiss folder, ADV, 7W17.

¹² See, in particular, the folders concerning individual Jews in ADV, 7W17.

required.¹³ Interestingly, the proactive approach he displayed in his attempt to determine his veritable “race” did not go unnoticed by some local French officials. In the draft version of a memorandum prepared by Aimé Autrand (the Chief of Division 1, Bureau 2 at the Prefecture of Vaucluse) for the prefect, dated May 28, 1942, the author writes: “In these circumstances, it appears to me that [Georges] Wolff acted in good faith and that he did not attempt to evade the [declaratory] obligations befalling the Jews.”¹⁴

Evidently, not all Jews were as preoccupied as Georges Wolff in ensuring that they were on the right side of the law when it came to the census of the Jews. As a result, the Vichy authorities developed means of detecting those who had deliberately chosen not to declare themselves. One method for rooting out recalcitrant Jews was to identify them via their name. Surely, all individuals with the surnames Bloch, Cohen and Lévy, and all those with the given names Isaac, Abraham and Sarah, were Jews—right?

In the local archives in Avignon and, in particular, in the archives of the *Commissariat général aux questions juives* (CGQJ), it is not at all uncommon to find reports providing variant forms of the following statement: “M[ister]. Floom, Isaac, presumed to be Jewish on account of his given name.”¹⁵ Just how many investigations were opened against individuals who, like the doctor directing the Roquefraîche Sanatorium in Lauris, “ha[d] a name of Jewish consonance” is unclear.¹⁶ One thing is certain, however: it was a more than questionable method for identifying undeclared

¹³ Draft of a memorandum prepared by Aimé Autrand for the Prefect of Vaucluse, May 28, 1942, Wolff folder, ADV, 7W17; Letter from Georges Wolff to Aimé Autrand, November 26, 1942, Wolff folder, ADV, 7W17.

¹⁴ Draft of a memorandum prepared by Aimé Autrand for the Prefect of Vaucluse, May 28, 1942, Wolff folder, ADV, 7W17.

¹⁵ Undated memorandum prepared by the Deputy Chief of Division at the Prefecture of Vaucluse for the Prefect, Floom folder, ADV, 7W17.

¹⁶ Letter from the *Commissaire général aux questions juives* to the Prefect of Vaucluse, June 2, 1943, Mayer folder, ADV, 7W17.

Jews. One reason is that, according to Paul Lévy, author of *Les noms des Israélites en France*, “there do not exist exclusively Jewish surnames, that is to say, surnames belonging ‘solely’ to Jews. [...] Throughout history, some Jews have had primitively non-Jewish surnames, while certain non-Jews have had originally Jewish ones.”¹⁷ During the war, this onomastic approach to the identification of Jews was further complicated by the large number of foreigners—both Jewish and non-Jewish—who, having come from all corners of Europe and taken refuge in the Vaucluse, brought with them new and previously unheard of given and surnames. As might be expected, those with a Jewish ring to them were singled out for special attention.

No better example than that of Abraham Goldstein serves to illustrate the ruthlessness with which some individuals were pursued on account of their Jewish-sounding name. Born in Paris on January 15, 1905, Goldstein moved to Avignon in 1935 and, in 1940, opened a cabinetmaking shop. Since he had failed to declare himself to the authorities in the summer of 1941, Goldstein was immediately suspected by those working for the *Police aux questions juives* (PQJ), the predecessor of the *Service d’enquête et de contrôle* (SEC), of contravening the law mandating the census of the Jews. One thing, at least initially, caught their attention: his name. “Goldstein claims that he is not a Jew, even though he has a Jewish given name and surname,” reads one report. Written by inspector Jean Lebon of the SEC in March 1943, this report provides a window into the investigation that had been conducted up until that point on the targeted individual. From it, one can learn a great deal. For instance, Abraham Goldstein had been baptised as a Catholic in 1918 (a certificate attesting as much is attached to the

¹⁷ Paul Lévy, *Les noms des Israélites en France* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1960), p. 11, cited in Mariot and Zalc, *Face à la persécution*, p. 245.

report). He was married to Marie Adrienne Chanut, also a Catholic. He had fought in the war of 1939-1940, had been made a prisoner and, ultimately, had escaped from captivity. One also learns that he had been part of the *Service d'ordre légionnaire* and, subsequently, of the *Milice française*—two groups infamous for their collaboration with the Germans.

In spite of all this, several things continued to preoccupy the PQJ and, later, the SEC. The first was his Jewish-sounding name. What particularly troubled the authorities was the fact that Goldstein was unable to provide any information concerning his ascendants, since his parents had abandoned him when he was barely five months old. Evidently, this made it much more difficult to verify his racial lineage. Another red flag was that he had been circumcised as a child. Even though Goldstein explained that he had taken the surname of the Jewish couple that had taken care of him following his parents' departure and that his circumcision had been a condition for his admittance to the Public Assistance in Paris, he failed to convince those tasked with unmasking him. In the end, inspector Lebon of the SEC concluded his report with the following remark: “the investigation did not allow me to determine with certainty that Goldstein belongs to the Jewish race.” Consequently, it was decided that, although “Goldstein is [...] in all probability of the Jewish race, he cannot be pursued for failing to declare himself as a Jew.”¹⁸

The case of Abraham Goldstein is an instructive one. Among other things, it serves to highlight the shortcomings of attempting to identify Jews using an onomastic approach. Indeed, as the case underscores, one's given name or surname was no

¹⁸ All quotes and information concerning Abraham Goldstein are found in the same report by inspector Jean Lebon of the SEC. See Jean Lebon, SEC Marseille, Report No. 1542, March, 12, 1943, AN, AJ³⁸ 3805.

guarantee of “racial *impurity*”—nor, conversely, was it necessarily indicative of “racial purity.” Consequently, with regard to the current study, attempting to weed out the Jews from the non-Jews based solely on an individual’s name would have proved incredibly unsound from a methodological standpoint. A short example should suffice to illustrate this point. Had the “Jewishness” of one’s name been the benchmark for determining who should—and who should not—be considered a Jew, one would have probably been inclined to include Marie Dreyfus from Carpentras among the Jews of the Vaucluse. There were, after all, over two hundred people by the surname of Dreyfus (or Dreyfuss) who were deported from France during the war.¹⁹ On the other hand, one might have instinctively thought to exclude the Lajeunesse family (comprised of Roger, Denise and their son, Jean) from the same group, for could there be a more French—and less Jewish-sounding—name than “Lajeunesse?” In both instances, however, the onomastic approach would have led one astray: a non-Jew would have been identified and counted as a Jew, while three Jews would have been excluded and, therefore, not counted as such.

In order to avoid the pitfalls associated with the onomastic approach in the identification of Jews (thereby avoiding a scenario similar to the one outlined above), the current research was conducted following one basic principle: all individuals included in the study had to have been—at one point from 1940 to 1944—“positively” identified as a Jew by either the French or German authorities. The sole exception to this rule were those individuals whose names were not found on a list or any other contemporary document but for whom there was proof that they had been persecuted as

¹⁹ See Klarsfeld, *Mémorial*, pp. 162-164.

a Jew during the war. Most often, these were Jews who had escaped detection during the war years and who testified about their wartime experiences sometime afterwards.²⁰

Now that the questions “*What* is a Jew?” and “*Who* is a Jew?” have been answered, one question remains: What, precisely, was required for an individual to earn the demonym “*Vauclusian*?” Put differently: What relation did a Jew have to have with the department in order to be considered “of the Vaucluse?” For the purpose of the present study, a “Vauclusian Jew” has been defined as *a Jew who resided in the department of Vaucluse for any length of time, however brief, between September 1, 1939 and August 25, 1944*—that is, between the outbreak of war in Europe and the Liberation of Avignon.²¹ The operative word being *resided*, having merely been arrested in the department was insufficient for one to be considered “of the Vaucluse.” One had to have lived in the department, if even for a few days. Consequently, Isaac Lévy, who was living at 54 Boulevard Clémenceau in Perpignan (Pyrénées-Orientales) when he was arrested in Avignon on April 22, 1943, was not counted as a “Vauclusian Jew.” According to the report detailing his arrest, Lévy was simply “passing through Avignon” when he was captured by the Germans.²² The same logic applies to the case of Claude Veil. Having been arrested in Digne-les-Bains (Basses-Alpes) in June 1944, he was subsequently transferred to the Sainte-Anne Prison in Avignon, from which he

²⁰ The majority of the individuals included in this group are those who provided a postwar testimony for the USC Shoah Foundation’s Visual History Archive.

²¹ Another timeline could have, indeed, been envisioned for the study. For example, it would have been possible (and perfectly acceptable) to consider only those Jews who had resided in the department in the period following the Franco-German armistice of June 22, 1940. The date of September 1, 1939 was chosen, however, because it allowed for the inclusion of those individuals who had been displaced as a result of the war and who had sought refuge in the department prior to the Occupation of France—in particular, during the mass exodus of May and June 1940.

²² “État mensuel [avril 1943] des arrestations de ressortissants français opérées par les autorités d’opérations allemandes ou italiennes en zone libre,” Undated document (Probably April 1943), ADV, 6W37.

ultimately escaped. He had never resided in the department prior to his arrest, nor did he do so following his evasion from prison.²³ He was not, therefore, considered a “Vauclusian Jew.” In contrast, Alfred, Suzy and Emma Schaechter—foreign Jews who, having come from Limoges, settled in Courthézon on August 18, 1942 and who were arrested and interned a mere eight days following their arrival in the department—were counted as “Jews of the Vaucluse.”²⁴

Although some may question the intellectual rigour of such an inclusive definition²⁵, it has been adopted because of the possibilities that it offers, namely, by providing the opportunity to address a range of questions that would otherwise be impossible to answer: Who, concretely, were the Jews that filtered into the department over the course of the war? Why did they choose to settle, however briefly, in the Vaucluse? Was it only for the possible safety the department provided? Or were there other motivations? Did they settle in a large city like Avignon or a small village like Modène? And why? What was their ultimate fate? And was it contingent upon the size and location of the commune in which they chose to find refuge? These are but some of the questions that will be addressed in the pages that follow.

²³ Claude Veil, Interview 9149, VHA, USC Shoah Foundation, 1996, Part III: 21:00-26:33.

²⁴ Report by Warrant Officer Rebol of the Courthézon Brigade, “Renseignements sur les biens laissés à Courthézon par les Israélites étrangers,” October 30, 1942, ADV, 7W16; Prefecture of Vaucluse, “Liste des Juifs étrangers ayant fait l’objet des mesures de regroupement prévues par les instructions de M. le Ministre Secrétaire d’État à l’Intérieur en date des 5 et 15 août 1942 et ayant rejoint effectivement le camp des Milles (B.D.R.) du 23 au 26 août 1942,” Undated document (Probably August 1942), ADV, 7W16. The Schaechters were deported to Auschwitz via Drancy on September 7, 1942, aboard convoy 29. Deportation list of convoy 29, CDJC, C29_48 and CDJC, C29_56.

²⁵ One of the consequences of an inclusive definition such as this one is that certain “Vauclusian Jews” can be found in studies concerning other cities, departments and regions in France. For instance, Max Skripek and Léon Pulvermacher—two “Vauclusian Jews”—are also considered “Jews of Dordogne” (a department in west-central France). See Bernard Reviriego, *Les Juifs en Dordogne, 1939-1944 : De l’accueil à la persécution* (Périgueux: Fanlac / Archives départementales de la Dordogne, 2003), pp. 428 and 457.

NUMBER OF JEWS HAVING LIVED IN THE VAUCLUSE DURING THE WAR

When all of the censuses and lists, as well as all of the other sources, have been compiled, one is left with a grand total of 2,826 Jews (as defined above) for the entire department of Vaucluse for the years 1939 to 1944. Representing nearly one percent of the total number of Jews in France at the outset of the war, this figure should be taken as a hard *minimum* and not as a perfect and comprehensive total.²⁶ In truth, in spite of one's best efforts, it is impossible to know how many Jews managed to live in the department during the war without ever being identified by the French or German authorities. One suspects, however, that this could have been the case for a not insignificant number of individuals. Indeed, as a result of the thirty-one testimonies of survivors that had either themselves lived in the Vaucluse during the war or that had been related to (or had known) someone who had, some forty-four individuals—whose names had, up until that point, never appeared on an archival document of any kind—were identified and included towards the total number of Vauclusian Jews. Without these testimonies, the presence of these survivors (or that of their loved ones) in the department would have gone virtually unnoticed by the historical record.

The number and diversity of the sources used for the current study has, in all likelihood, helped keep the number of unidentified Jews to a minimum. Consider the following example. A list produced by the Central Police Commissariat in Avignon on September 28, 1940 and titled “Foreign Refugees Having Come from Belgium” provides information on twenty-two individuals, among them, the Stein and Goldmann families. At the time the document was drafted, both families (all Polish Jews) were

²⁶ Hilberg, *La destruction des Juifs d'Europe, Volume II*, p. 1131.

living at the home of David Ehrenfreund, 3 Rue Henri Fabre in Avignon. A French Jew born in Poland, Ehrenfreund appears to have been a lifelong friend of both Elchunon Stein and Eisig Goldmann, the heads of their respective households. Having taken refuge in the Vaucluse, the two families “obtained a visa from Mister the Consul of Venezuela in Marseille on September 12, 1940, in order to travel to Venezuela.” They (along with the Steins’ maid, Margita Dubowa, who was also a Jew) were to leave France “as soon as the health of Mrs. Stein, who is on the verge of giving birth, will allow”—something it appears they did.²⁷ But why, one might ask, is any of this important? The reason, quite simply, is this: the document in question constitutes the only trace of the Stein and Goldmann families’ presence in the Vaucluse during the war. Too often, the value of a list such as this one is obscured by the fact that there are nearly two hundred more just like it in the archives. But without this particular list, *nine* Jews, who had evidently spent some time in Avignon in the fall of 1940, would have been overlooked and, thus, never counted as Vauclusian Jews. In the end, even though it is likely that some Jews managed to live undetected in the department during the war, while never leaving any traces of their presence for the historian to find, every effort was made to locate and identify them.

COMPOSITION OF THE JEWISH POPULATION OF THE VAUCLUSE, 1939-1944

The Jewish population of the department of Vaucluse from 1939 to 1944

²⁷ Central Police Commissariat in Avignon, “Réfugiés étrangers provenant de Belgique (Exécution des instructions du 24 septembre 1940),” September 28, 1940, ADV, 3W265.

reflected, in many ways, what one might expect to observe in the general population. Men and women represented, respectively, 52.2 percent and 46.4 percent of the population, with 1.4 percent whose gender remained unknown.²⁸ When it came to age (using 1940 as a baseline), the bulk—35.8 percent—were between thirty-one and fifty years old, with smaller percentages of people falling into the groups on either side of this cohort: individuals from sixteen to thirty years of age represented 21.5 percent of the total; those fifty-one and over, 23.1 percent. The smallest group—children fifteen and younger—constituted 15.4 percent of the population, while the date of birth of 2.4 percent of the Jews could not be determined.²⁹ Table 1 breaks down these age groups by gender.

Table 1: Age Groups of the Vauclusian Jews by Gender (Baseline: 1940).

| Gender | 1 to 15 Years Old | 16 to 30 Years Old | 31 to 50 Years Old | 51 Years Old and Over | Age Unknown | Born during the War | Total (2,826) |
|---------|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|----------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Male | 209 | 313 | 575 | 319 | 28 | 31 | 1,475 (52.2 %) |
| Female | 211 | 286 | 424 | 331 | 38 | 21 | 1,311 (46.4 %) |
| Unknown | 14 | 8 | 14 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 40 (1.4 %) |

While the numbers pertaining to the Jews' age and gender are not out of the

²⁸ In forty cases, it was not possible to determine the individual's gender. The reasons for this are diverse, but they all stem from the fact that, for certain Jews, this particular information was never provided on the documents concerning them and their gender could not be inferred from the information that was available. In certain cases, the individual's given name was not provided or had simply been replaced by an initial. In other instances, the person's given name was a unisex one, that is, it could have belonged to either a male or a female. In others still, the individual had a seemingly male given name but also had a maiden name. Occasionally, some Jews were identified on different documents as having both the male and female variants of the same given name, even though there was no doubt that the information concerned the same individual. Finally, some individuals had a given name of foreign origin, from which the gender could not be surmised.

²⁹ The remaining 1.9 percent goes to those born between 1940 and 1945 (i.e., after the adopted baseline).

ordinary, the situation is rather different for those relating to their “status,” nationality and place of origin. An individual’s “status” was the way in which they were perceived by the Vichy and German authorities, that is to say, as either a French or a foreign Jew. The category to which a particular person belonged can be gleaned from the various lists that differentiate between these two “types” of Jews. The department-wide censuses of July 1941 and May 1944, for instance, are comprised of two parts: one concerning the French Jews; the other, the foreign Jews.³⁰

One’s status, it must be stressed, appears to have been only tenuously linked with one’s nationality and place of origin. Indeed, one sometimes gets the impression that the labels “foreign” and “French” were somewhat inconsistently applied. For example, Salomon Chazine, a Russian Jew born in Berdychiv in 1895 and who obtained French citizenship through naturalisation, was invariably considered a French Jew.³¹ On the other hand, Joseph and Victor Léon, two French Jews born in Paris, were identified on separate occasions as belonging to each of the categories. A possible explanation is that their parents, Abraham and Sultana Léon (née Behau), had both been born in Turkey and were themselves considered foreign Jews.³²

In any event, the numbers are rather striking. Of the 2,826 Jews having lived in the department during the war, only 1,492—or 52.8 percent—were considered French.

³⁰ See Prefecture of Vaucluse, “État nominatif des Juifs *français* résidant en Vaucluse au 1^{er} juillet 1941” and “État nominatif des Juifs de *nationalité étrangère* résidant en Vaucluse au 1^{er} juillet 1941,” July 1, 1941, ADV, 7W15; Prefecture of Vaucluse, “Liste nominative des Juifs *français* (13 mai 1944),” “Liste nominative des Juifs *étrangers* en résidence dans le département de Vaucluse à la date du 13 mai 1944” and “Liste complémentaire des Israélites *étrangers* résidant en Vaucluse à la date du 13 mai 1944,” May 13, 1944, ADV, 7W15.

³¹ See Police Commissariat in Apt, “État des Juifs s’étant présentés dans nos services pour l’apposition de la mention ‘Juif,’” February 9, 1943 and “État des Israélites—Ville d’Apt,” September 1, 1943, ADV, 7W15; Prefecture of Vaucluse, “Liste nominative des Juifs français (13 mai 1944),” May 13, 1944, ADV, 7W15.

³² See Prefecture of Vaucluse, “État nominatif des Juifs français résidant en Vaucluse au 1^{er} juillet 1941,” July 1, 1941, ADV, 7W15; “Liste des étrangers qui désiraient retourner dans leur pays d’origine,” Undated document (after March 1943), ADV, 7W16.

The 949 Jews deemed to be foreigners constituted, for their part, 33.6 percent of the total Jewish population, while forty-five individuals—or 1.6 percent—were identified as belonging to both groups. The status of the remaining 340 Jews—or 12.0 percent—is unknown. For clarity, the breakdown of the statuses of the Vauclusian Jews is provided in Table 2.

Table 2: Statuses of the Vauclusian Jews.

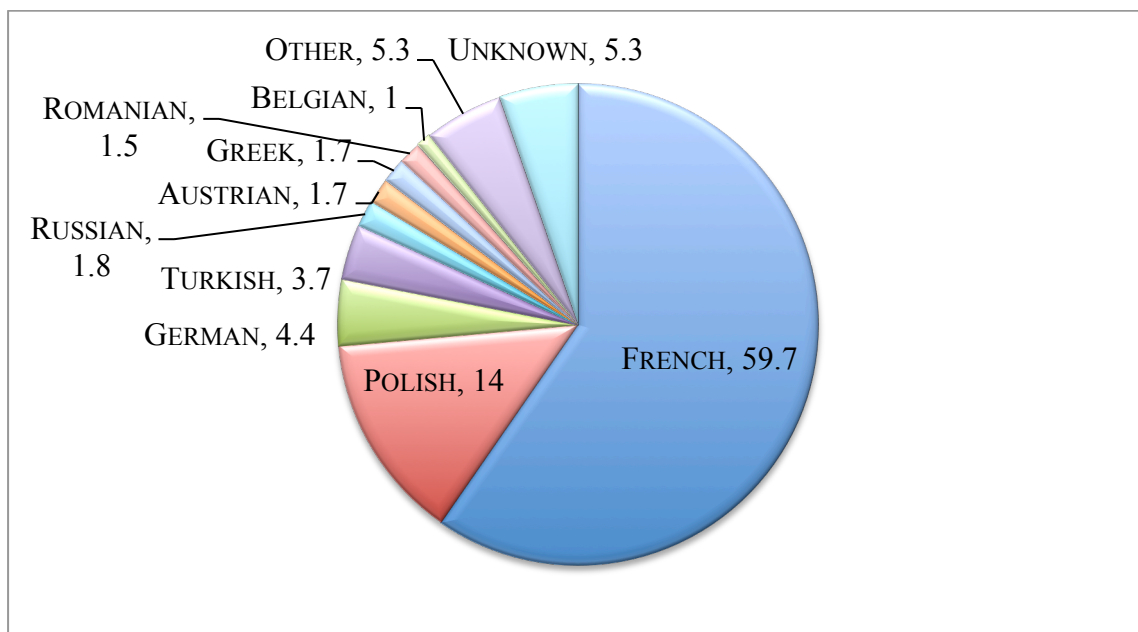
| Status | Number of Jews | Percentage of the Jewish Population |
|---------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|
| French | 1,492 | 52.8 % |
| Foreign | 949 | 33.6 % |
| Both (French and Foreign) | 45 | 1.6 % |
| Unknown | 340 | 12.0 % |
| Total | 2,826 | 100.0 % |

The ratio of French to foreign Jews in the Vaucluse from 1939 to 1944 (as determined by the variable “status”) is reflected, albeit imperfectly, in the numbers concerning their nationality. As a group, the Vauclusian Jews were comprised of individuals of thirty—mostly European—nationalities.³³ Perhaps unsurprisingly, French Jews accounted for the lion’s share of the total—59.7 percent. The runners-up numerically were the Poles, constituting exactly 14.0 percent of the Jewish population of the department. Behind them in importance were the Germans and the Turks, standing at 4.4 percent and 3.7 percent, respectively. Five other nationalities—the Austrians, Belgians, Greeks, Russians and Romanians—each represented between one and two percent of the total. Combined, the remaining twenty-one nationalities accounted for 5.3 percent of the Jewish population of the department, a number matched by those whose

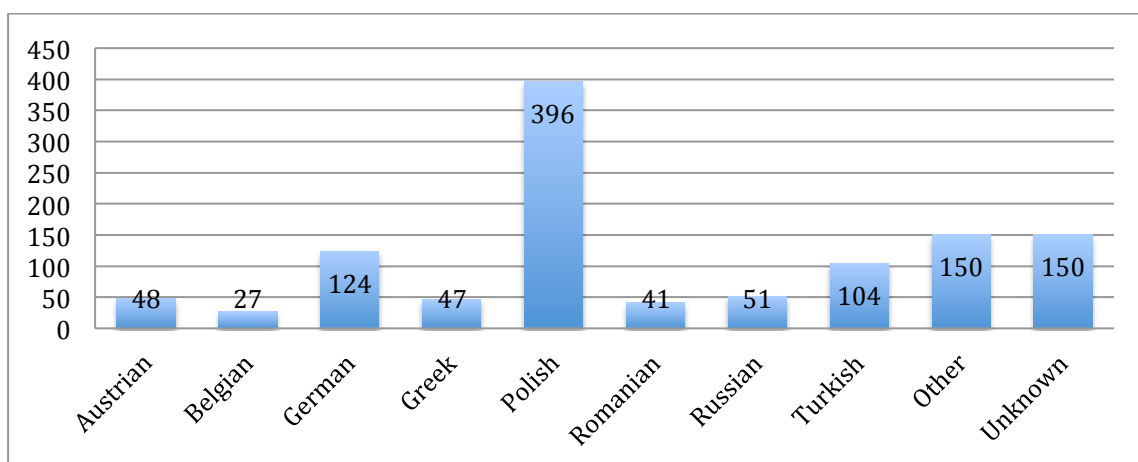
³³ The variable “nationality” concerns thirty-two categories of individuals, however: one for each of the thirty nationalities represented, one for “stateless Jews” and one for individuals whose nationality was unknown.

nationality remained unknown. Graph 1 depicts the share held by each nationality in the composition of the Jewish population. Graph 2 further breaks down these percentages, by providing the total number of Jews of each nationality—excluding the French.

Graph 1: Share Held by Each Nationality in the Composition of the Jewish Population of the Vaucluse.



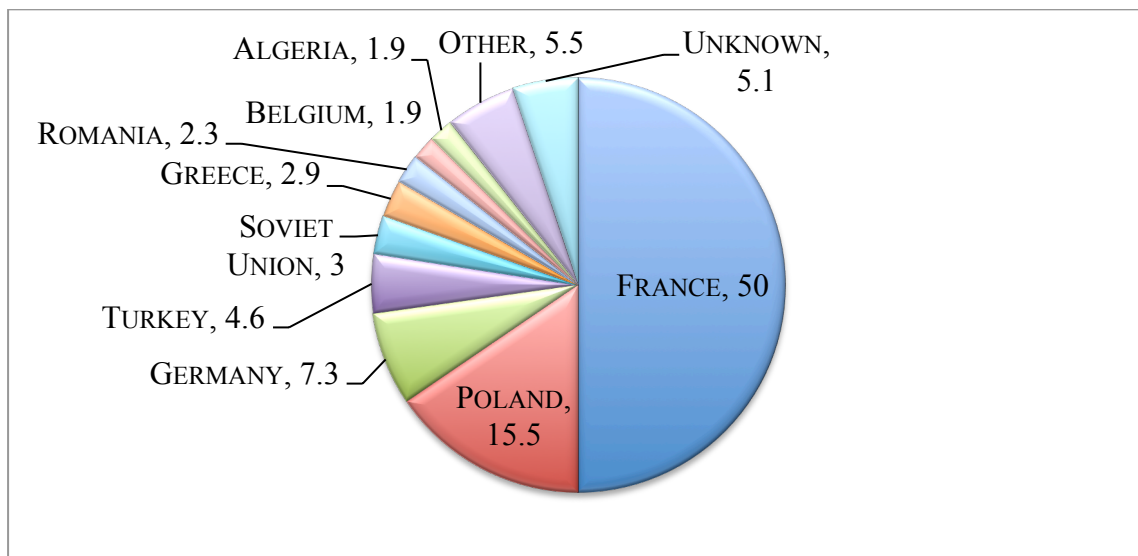
Graph 2: Number of Vauclisian Jews of Each Nationality (French Jews Excluded).³⁴



³⁴ The category “Other” includes all nationalities not reaching the threshold of 1.0 percent of the total Jewish population. The largest group within this category were the stateless Jews (20).

The group was also far from homogeneous when it came to their country of origin, with the Jews having been born in no fewer than thirty-seven different countries (based on a map of 1939). As one would expect, Jews born in France vastly outnumbered those coming from any one other country. What is perhaps more surprising is that only 50.0 percent were born in metropolitan France. Of the remaining half, 15.5 percent were born in Poland, while Germany and Turkey were the birthplace of 7.3 percent and 4.6 percent, respectively. Collectively, Russia, Greece, Romania, Belgium and Algeria—the fourth through eighth runners-up—were the countries of origin of 12.0 percent of the Jews, each providing between 1.9 and 3.0 percent of the total Jewish population. The birthplace of the remaining Jews was either one of twenty-eight other nations (5.5 percent) or remained unknown (5.1 percent). Graph 3 illustrates the countries of origin (in percentages) of the 2,826 Vauclusian Jews. As one can see, it is reminiscent of the one depicting the Jews' nationalities. There is, however, one remark to be made: all of the nationalities—with the exception of the French—are underrepresented when the countries of origin are considered. Thus, the number of Jews born in a particular country is—in every case save that of France—superior to the number of those of the corresponding nationality. This is not all that surprising, seeing as many Jews born abroad would have acquired French citizenship following their arrival in France. What will be interesting to see is whether or not this reality had an impact when the time came to arrest and deport the Jews. Was French citizenship, in and of itself, something of a protective force against arrest and deportation? Or did an individual's country of origin also matter? Put differently: Was a French Jew who had been born abroad granted the same degree of protection as those born in France? These questions will be examined later.

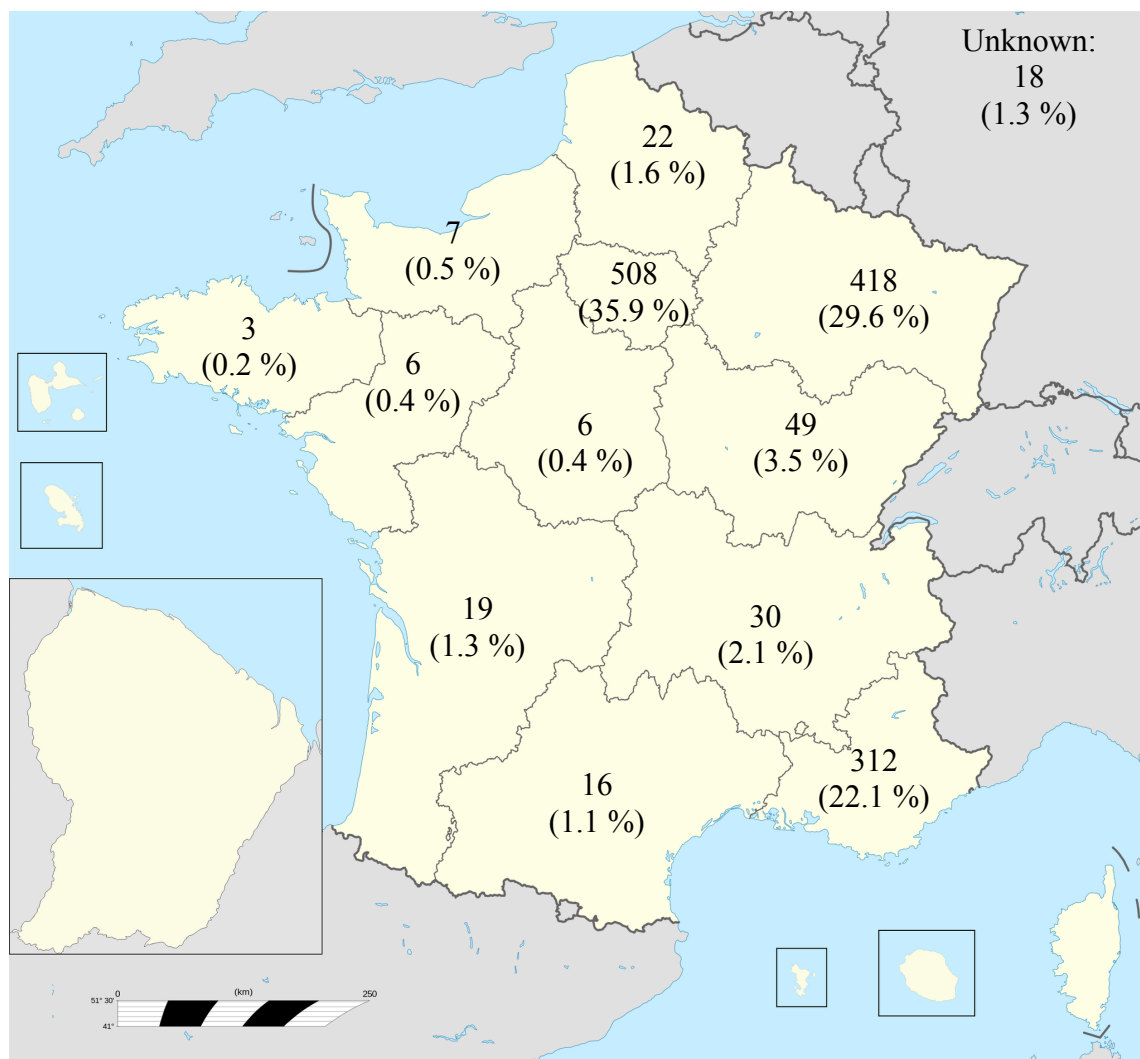
Graph 3: Countries of Origin (in Percentages) of the Vauclisian Jews.



Of the 1,414 Jews born in France, only 234—or 16.5 percent—of them were originally from the Vaucluse. The rest had come from one of fifty-two other departments. Interestingly, however, only nine of these had been the birthplace of more than one percent of the Vauclisian Jews. They tended, moreover, to be largely located in the same part of France—the northeast. Indeed, seven such departments—Bas-Rhin, Haut-Rhin, Meurthe-et-Moselle, Moselle, Vosges, Doubs and Territoire de Belfort (in order of importance)—accounted for 30.8 percent of the Vauclisian Jews who had been born in France. The departments of Seine and Bouches-du-Rhône (home to Paris and Marseille) were the two other large purveyors of Vauclisian Jews, having, respectively, been the birthplace of 34.9 percent and 5.1 percent of those born in the country. The place of origin of the remaining 12.7 percent was either one of forty-three other departments (11.4 percent) or was unknown (1.3 percent). Map 5, which divides France into the eighteen regions comprising the country today (themselves comprised of a number of departments), provides the total and the percentage of the Vauclisian Jews

who were born in each of these regions. It serves to highlight the importance of certain parts of France—in particular, the northeast and the region around Paris—in the composition of the Jewish population of the Vaucluse during the Second World War.

Map 5: Number and Percentage of the Vauclisian Jews Born in Each Region of France.



Source: Wikipedia.org, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:France_fond_de_carte_27_r%C3%A9gions.png.

While interesting in and of themselves, the numbers describing the Vauclisian Jews run the risk of leaving a false impression: that the Jewish population of the

department was somehow stagnant or, at the very least, highly consistent from 1939 to 1944. This was certainly not the case. Indeed, hundreds—and even thousands—came and went at various moments during the war. And while this chapter described who they were and, to a certain extent, where they came from, it did not discuss the motivations that brought so many of them to this small, rural department in the southeast of France, nor did it elaborate on the reasons that may have enticed some to leave. For that, one must turn to the next chapter, which concerns the Jews' comings and goings.

CHAPTER 2

COMINGS AND GOINGS, 1933-1944

EVENTS PRECEDING THE ARRIVAL IN THE DEPARTMENT

JOURNEY TO FRANCE

The persecution of a number of Vauclisian Jews began well before the occupation of France by the Third Reich in June 1940. For many of the German Jews who eventually made their way to the department, their ordeal began a full seven years earlier, with the ascension of Adolf Hitler as Chancellor of Germany in 1933. Subsequent political and military events—the *Anschluss* with Austria (March 1938), *Kristallnacht* (November 1938), the invasion of Poland (September 1939) and that of the Low Countries (May 1940)—sparked an important movement of Jews westwards. Out of desire or out of necessity, tens of thousands of Jews relocated to France during this period.¹ Of these, several hundred came to reside in the department of Vaucluse—arriving at various times, for different reasons, and while having taken a variety of trajectories to get there.

Of course, not all foreign-born Jews living in the department arrived in France between 1933 and 1940. Nor did all of them come from Central and Eastern Europe. Indeed, some arrived in the years and decades preceding the advent of the Nazis,

¹ It is estimated that, as a result of the war, the number of Jews in France swelled by as much as ten percent—or 30,000 persons—between the summers of 1939 and 1940. Kaspi, *Les Juifs pendant l'Occupation*, p. 20.

especially during the two waves of immigration that occurred in the 1920s and 1930s, which brought Jews from Poland and countries around the Mediterranean basin—in particular, Turkey and Greece—to southeast France.² This is reflected in the countries of birth of the 1,511 Jews who were recorded as living in the Vaucluse in June and July 1941 (see Table 3). Unfortunately, for the Jews who arrived in France before 1933, the sources offer an incomplete picture of their whereabouts prior to their arrival. In fact, of the fifty-seven Jews that were identified as having relocated to France between 1906 and 1932, the country from which they came was known for only eight of them. Evidently, it would be hazardous to try and draw any firm conclusions from such a small number of documented cases.

The situation is different for those who arrived in France in the period following 1933. The sources are much more detailed and provide a clearer picture of the trajectories taken by the Jews to reach France. What is more, various survivor testimonies allow for a better understanding of the contexts in which these voyages were undertaken. Of the 185 Jews who entered France between 1933 and 1942, the country from which they came is known in 114 cases: four came from Poland, twenty-six from Germany, two from Austria, fifty from Belgium, thirty-one from Luxembourg and one from Algeria.

On their own, the numbers are somewhat misleading, since they seem to suggest that relatively few Jews arrived in France from Germany, Austria and Poland, compared to those having arrived from Belgium and Luxembourg—which is surprising, given that the former were the birthplaces of nearly twelve times as many Vauclusian Jews than the latter (when the numbers concerning the Jewish population of the department in June

² Weisz, “Juifs du Pape en Vaucluse pendant la Shoah,” p. 14.

and July 1941 are considered). This apparent discrepancy can be explained, however. A greater number of Jews arrived in France from Belgium and Luxembourg than from anywhere else because the majority of them transited in these countries on their way to (what, for many, would become) their final destination. Indeed, for Jews fleeing Nazi persecution, the Benelux countries largely served as way stations on their journey to France.

Table 3: Countries of Birth of the Jews Living in the Vaucluse in June and July 1941.³

| Country of Birth (Map of 1939) | Number of Jews Born in the Country | Percentage of the Total Number of Jews |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| France | 833 | 55.1 % |
| Algeria | 36 | 2.4 % |
| Belgium | 20 | 1.3 % |
| Germany | 107 | 7.1 % |
| Poland | 194 | 12.8 % |
| U.S.S.R. | 33 | 2.2 % |
| Romania | 34 | 2.3 % |
| Turkey | 90 | 6.0 % |
| Greece | 52 | 3.4 % |
| Other | 77 | 5.1 % |
| Unknown | 35 | 2.3 % |
| Total | 1,511 | 100.0 % |

³ The category “Other” includes all countries in which fewer than twenty Jews were born. Twenty countries fall within this category, the most important of which is Switzerland—the birthplace of twelve Vauclusian Jews.

Unfortunately, it is not always possible to identify the Jews who, although recorded as having come from Belgium or Luxembourg, had actually begun their journey to France from elsewhere. The numbers nevertheless suggest that this was often the case. Of the Jews identified as having come from Germany, six are known to have transited through Belgium on their way to France, while two others are known to have passed through Luxembourg. One Jew from Austria and another from Poland are, for their part, known to have travelled to France by way of Belgium. Other figures are even more suggestive. Of the Jews who are recorded as having arrived in France from Luxembourg, fourteen were born in Germany and twelve in Poland. In addition, these countries were, respectively, the birthplaces of nine and twenty-seven Jews recorded as having come from Belgium. Though only suggestive, these numbers paint a picture of a movement of Jews westwards—from Germany, Austria and Poland to France via Belgium and Luxembourg.

The decision to leave one's family, friends, home, and life behind must have been a difficult one. Sadly, the motivations behind these decisions is not known for the majority of the Jews who made their way from Central and Eastern Europe to France during the years in question. There is, however, a common theme that runs through the testimonies provided by survivors: flight was almost always the direct result of an escalation in the persecution to which the Jews were subjected. In a letter to the Prefect of Vaucluse dated August 26, 1940, Friedel Franck explained that he was "chased out of Germany during the anti-Jewish demonstrations of 1933" and that he and his family

arrived in Mulhouse, France on April 11th of the same year.⁴ The Francks were almost certainly amongst the first to leave Germany for France following Hitler's rise to power.

Others held out considerably longer before deciding it was time to leave. Most often, the decision came on the heels of an overt act of violence, which served to dispel any illusions one might have had about life under the Nazis. In the testimony that he provided in 1998, Manfred Kempowski (who changed his name to Marcel upon arriving in France) recounted his experience of *Kristallnacht*. Kempowski, who was ten years old at the time, recalled how, on the evening of November 9, 1938, the front door of his apartment was kicked in and "SA [*Sturmabteilung*] and SS [*Schutzstaffel*] stormed in." They "threw everything that one can imagine one has in a six-room apartment through the windows." "Whatever they could lift, they threw out," he explained. "The beds, the trunks, the china, the chairs. Everything went in the street." Manfred also remembered how, adding insult to injury, he "heard people applauding [outside]." When all was said and done, the furniture, which lay in shambles in front of the building, was put to the torch. These events, his account makes clear, were the impetus that drove his family "to try to make plans, [...] and to try to escape, to go somewhere that would have us."⁵ They immediately set out for France.

Irene Eichberg, her sister, Ruth, and her parents, Josef and Emmy, also endured the horrors of *Kristallnacht*. Their apartment was looted, the local synagogue was destroyed, and Josef was arrested and sent to Buchenwald. As had been the case for the Kempowskis, the events of November 1938 precipitated the Eichbergs' departure from Germany. "The thing that was uppermost in my mother's mind was to get us, the

⁴ Letter from Friedel Franck to the Prefect of Vaucluse, August 26, 1940, ADV, 3W265.

⁵ Marcel Kempowski, Interview 48360, VHA, USC Shoah Foundation, 1998, Part I: 18:58-26:11.

children, to safety,” Irene explained.⁶ Without hesitation, Emmy and her daughters left for Aachen and, shortly thereafter, for Eupen, Belgium, where other family members lived.⁷

The trajectory taken by the Eichbergs appears to have been more commonplace than the one adopted by the Kempowskis, in that the journey to France was not a direct one but, rather, one with an intermediary stay in a country of the Benelux (Belgium, in this case). “A lot of Jews [...] who ran away from Germany and Austria [...] came to Luxembourg,” declared Marie Wagmann, a Luxembourger Jew born in 1927.⁸ (And Belgium as well, she could have added.) The available evidence tends to corroborate this assertion. Indeed, between 1933 and 1939, a grand total of nineteen Jews were identified as having arrived in France from abroad, with only one recorded as coming from the Benelux. In 1940 alone, the number more than doubled, with forty-one foreign Jews entering France. Of these, thirty-six came from one of two countries: Belgium or Luxembourg.

The primary catalyst for this movement of Jews westwards was Germany’s invasion and occupation of the Low Countries. “The 10[th] of May [1940], the German Army invaded Luxembourg and that’s when everything started,” recalled Wagmann. And although she acknowledged that “Not too much changed for the Jews in Luxembourg at the beginning” and that “They [the Germans] didn’t bother us too much for maybe two or three months,” few Jews were willing to take a chance.⁹ “People were scared,” noted Max (Menachem) Doktorczyk, a Jew born in Antwerp on January 15,

⁶ Osborne, VHA, Part I: 10:42-10:49.

⁷ *Ibid.*, Part I: 6:49-7:40, 9:34-10:08 and 10:50-11:43.

⁸ Marie Nestelbaum, Interview 28158, VHA, USC Shoah Foundation, 1997, Part I: 13:28-13:35.

⁹ *Ibid.*, Part I: 10:15-10:26 and 10:44-10:56.

1921. “The Jews from Germany, they came to Belgium... you know, the refugees... and told a story [of how they had been persecuted at home]. So everybody was afraid.”¹⁰ Having experienced Nazi brutality firsthand, those telling the “stories” were, one imagines, even more afraid than those to whom these stories were being told. It is little wonder, then, that many Jews—most of whom had come from Central and Eastern Europe—fled Belgium and Luxembourg before the advancing German Army.

Not all Jews who entered France from these two countries did so of their own volition, however. Indeed, over two dozen of them were deported *to* France. The Yad Vashem Central Database of Shoah Victims’ Names contains lists providing the names of thirty-one Jews having been forcibly expelled from Luxembourg into southern France—twenty-nine in late 1940 and two in 1941. Unfortunately, no such lists exist for the Jews having come from Belgium. Similar deportations are, nevertheless, known to have occurred. Irene Eichberg recounted how her father, Josef, who had been released from Buchenwald and had made his way to Belgium, was arrested shortly after the occupation of the country and subsequently deported to France.¹¹

Irrespective of the way in (or the date on) which they arrived, most Jews appear to have viewed their arrival in France with some satisfaction. “My God! What joy! Going to France, [...] no longer fearing tomorrow,” wrote Estréa Asséo in her memoirs.¹² Describing his and his parents’ arrival in Annemasse, a French city bordering Switzerland, Manfred Kempowski made the following observation: “A new chapter [had] started. [...] We were in peace.”¹³

¹⁰ Max Doktorczyk, Interview 9779, VHA, USC Shoah Foundation, 1995, Part I: 21:49-21:59.

¹¹ Osborne, VHA, Part I: 11:56-12:09 and 14:32-15:10.

¹² Asséo, *Les souvenirs d’une rescapée*, p. 23.

¹³ Kempowski, VHA, Part II: 3:07-3:13.

JOURNEY THROUGH FRANCE

Arriving in France was the first step in many Jews' journey, with some needing to travel over 1,500 kilometres to get there. These Jews (and many others, both French and foreign) ultimately travelled several hundred more to reach the small, rural department of Vaucluse in southeast France, where they settled for various lengths of time. But, asked Manfred Kempowski, "Who would wind up there?"¹⁴ Who, indeed?

Retracing the movements of the Jews prior to their arrival in the Vaucluse is a complicated endeavour, one requiring the use of a wide range of sources. On occasion, the sources are explicit with regards to an individual's whereabouts at a particular moment in time. For example, the census of July 1, 1941, provides (in addition to the Jews' "current address") information concerning their domicile in 1939.¹⁵ Other lists, for their part, provide the address(es) of the Jews' "former (or previous) residence(s)," as well as the date on which they arrived in the department.¹⁶ Documents such as these enable one to identify the cities, towns and villages that were visited by, or that were the residences of, the Jews in the period preceding their arrival in the Vaucluse. They are thus instrumental in reconstructing the trajectories taken by the Jews, as they journeyed from place to place through France before, ultimately, settling in the department.

At other times, the sources allow one only to infer the Jews' location prior to their arrival. For instance, nearly all of the local censuses conducted between August and

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, Part II: 24:38-24:40.

¹⁵ See Prefecture of Vaucluse, "État nominatif des Juifs français résidant en Vaucluse au 1^{er} juillet 1941" and "État nominatif des Juifs de nationalité étrangère résidant en Vaucluse au 1^{er} juillet 1941," July 1, 1941, ADV, 7W15.

¹⁶ The following are examples of such lists: Police Commissariat in Apt, "État des Juifs s'étant présentés dans nos services pour l'apposition de la mention 'Juif'," February 9, 1943 and Sub-Prefecture of Carpentras, "Liste des Juifs domiciliés dans la commune de Vaison-la-Romaine," January 12, 1943 and "Liste des Israélites en résidence à Carpentras," Undated document (Posterior to January 1943), ADV, 7W15.

October 1943 (the *États des Israélites*) provide details on the Jews' personal identification papers, including the dates on which the identity cards were issued and the cities in which they were rendered. This information is important because, in the cases where the ID cards were issued outside of the department, it provides a clue as to the Jews' whereabouts at that time and allows one to establish, with a greater degree of certainty, a timeline of their individual movements. Other sources, such as those discussing the where and the when of an individual's self-declaration as a Jew to the French and German authorities, can be used in a similar way.

Mapping out the Jews' movements during the war is a complicated task. Discussing the topic in a way that is intelligible is, however, perhaps even more difficult. The reason, quite simply, is this: there were a myriad of trajectories that led the Jews to the department of Vaucluse—each one more complicated than the next. Some Jews followed a direct path. Others transited in one or two cities before arriving. And others came and went in a dizzying zigzag pattern. There were, nevertheless, certain trends and patterns behind the Jews' seemingly chaotic movements. The first concerns their “starting point” in France—or, if one prefers, the location at which they were first known to have resided.

The starting point for the Jews having come from outside the department is known in 1,040 cases. They came from 156 cities (and fifty-nine departments) throughout France. Twelve cities alone were the points of departure of some 701 Jews—or 67.4 percent. These included, in order of importance: Paris, Marseille, Strasbourg, Nice, Colmar, Lunéville, Mulhouse, Lyon, Besançon, Joëuf, Metz and Nancy. The number of Jews having begun their journey to the Vaucluse from these locations is broken down in Table 4.

Table 4: Initial Point of Departure (by City) of the Jews Having Come from Outside the Vaucluse.¹⁷

| City of Departure | Number of Jews Having Come from the City | Percentage of the Jews Having Come from the City |
|-------------------|--|--|
| Besançon | 10 | 1.0 % |
| Colmar | 24 | 2.3 % |
| Joeuf | 10 | 1.0 % |
| Lunéville | 22 | 2.1 % |
| Lyon | 17 | 1.6 % |
| Marseille | 100 | 9.6 % |
| Metz | 10 | 1.0 % |
| Mulhouse | 22 | 2.1 % |
| Nancy | 10 | 1.0 % |
| Nice | 25 | 2.4 % |
| Paris | 394 | 37.9 % |
| Strasbourg | 57 | 5.5 % |
| Other | 327 | 31.4 % |
| Unknown | 12 | 1.2 % |
| Total | 1,040 | 100.0 % |

For those familiar with the geography of the country, the names of the cities listed should already begin to highlight the preponderance of one region (outside of the metropolises of Paris and Marseille) as the initial point of departure of a large number of

¹⁷ The category “Other” includes all cities from which fewer than 10 Jews (or 1.0 percent) departed. One hundred and forty-four cities fall within this category, the most important of which were Belfort, Bischwiller and Dijon—each the points of departure of nine Vauclusian Jews.

Vauclusian Jews. This preponderance becomes all the more evident when one considers the Jews' original point of departure by department rather than by city. As previously mentioned, the Jews came from fifty-nine different departments. They did so in very unequal numbers, however. Indeed, sixteen of these departments were the points of departure of 920 Jews—or 88.5 percent of those having come from outside the Vaucluse. Table 5 provides a breakdown of the number of Jews having come from each department, while Map 6 provides a visual of these numbers on the map of France.

*Table 5: Initial Point of Departure (by Department) of the Jews Having Come from Outside the Vaucluse.*¹⁸

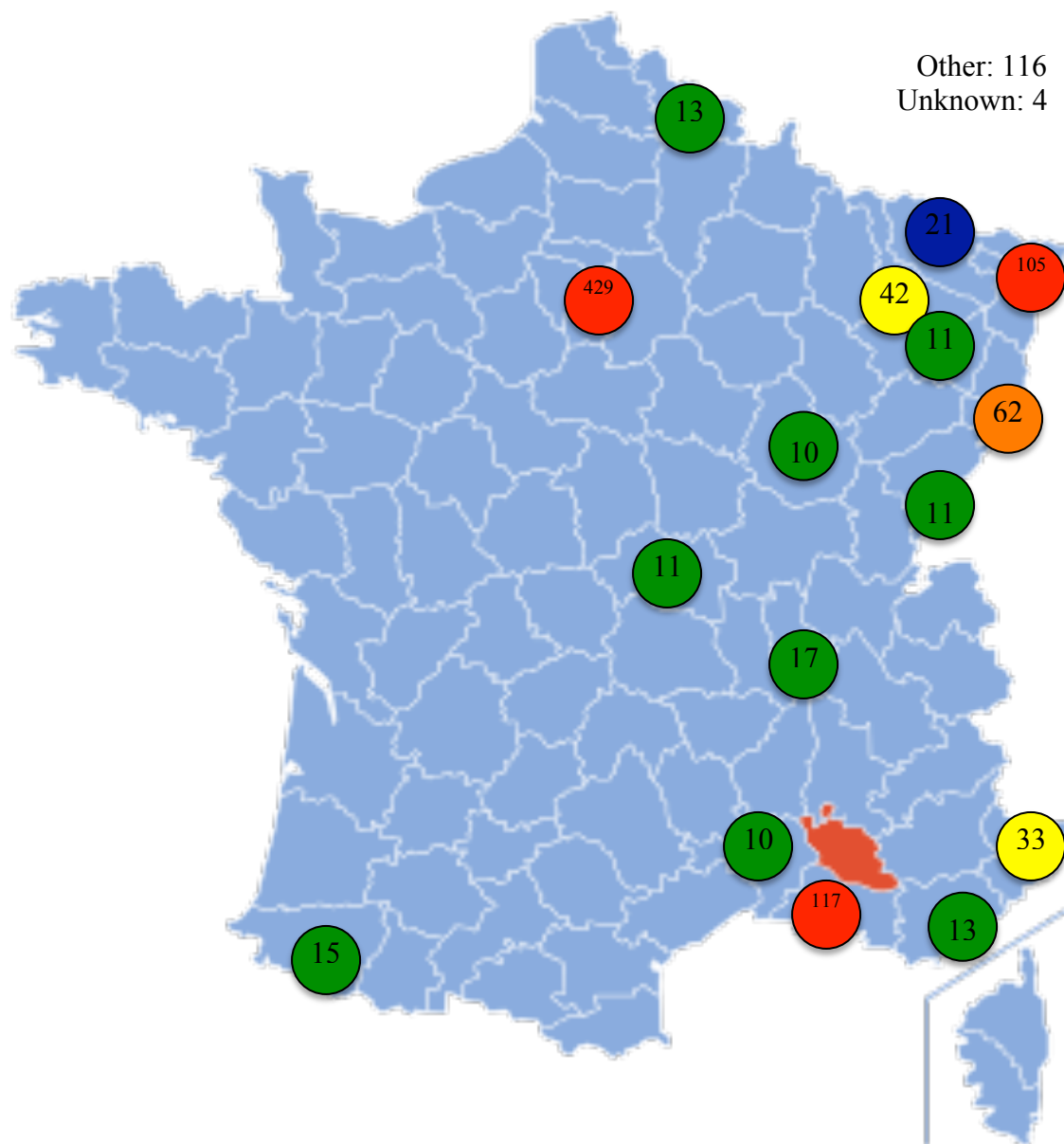
| Department of Departure | Number of Jews Having Come from the Department | Percentage of the Jews Having Come from the Department |
|-------------------------|--|--|
| Allier | 11 | 1.1 % |
| Alpes-Maritimes | 33 | 3.2 % |
| Bas-Rhin | 105 | 10.1 % |
| Basses-Pyrénées | 15 | 1.4 % |
| Bouches-du-Rhône | 117 | 11.3 % |
| Côte-d'Or | 10 | 1.0 % |
| Doubs | 11 | 1.1 % |
| Gard | 10 | 1.0 % |
| Haut-Rhin | 62 | 6.0 % |
| Meurthe-et-Moselle | 42 | 4.0 % |

¹⁸ The category “Other” includes all departments from which fewer than 10 Jews (or 1.0 percent) departed. Forty-three departments fall within this category, the most important of which was Territoire de Belfort (in the northeast)—the point of departure of nine Vauclusian Jews.

| | | |
|---------|-------|---------|
| Moselle | 21 | 2.0 % |
| Nord | 13 | 1.3 % |
| Rhône | 17 | 1.6 % |
| Seine | 429 | 41.3 % |
| Var | 13 | 1.3 % |
| Vosges | 11 | 1.1 % |
| Other | 116 | 11.2 % |
| Unknown | 4 | 0.4 % |
| Total | 1,040 | 100.0 % |

As one can see, with the exception of those having come from the departments of Seine and Bouches-du-Rhône (whose *chefs-lieux*, or capitals, are Paris and Marseille, respectively), an important number of Jews who settled in the Vaucluse came from one particular region in France—the northeast. Remarkable as it may seem, this should have perhaps been expected. After all, this part of the country had been the birthplace of a sizeable percentage of the Jewish population of the department (see Chapter 1). This begs the question, however: What was it that prompted over 250 Jews to flee the northeast and to embark upon a journey that would ultimately lead them to the Vaucluse?

Map 6: Visual Representation of the Jews' Initial Point of Departure by Department.



Source: Wikipedia.org, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Vaucluse-Position.svg>.

Legend:

- Red: Department of departure of more than one hundred Jews.
- Orange: Department of departure of fifty-one to one hundred Jews.
- Yellow: Department of departure of thirty-one to fifty Jews.
- Blue: Department of departure of twenty-one to thirty Jews.
- Green: Department of departure of ten to twenty Jews.
- Other: Department of departure of fewer than ten Jews.

There are striking parallels between the movement of the Jews from Eastern and Central Europe to France from 1933 to 1940 and the movement of the Jews *within* the country afterwards. These parallels are found not only in the reasons for fleeing one's original location but also in the patterns of the trajectories taken to arrive at one's final destination. Similarly to that which had provoked the westward movement of the Jews in Belgium and Luxembourg, the thing that set the majority of the Jews in the northern half of France in motion in May and June 1940 was the advance of the German Army. "I remember [that] the Germans start[ed] to approach Paris," explained Esther (Estelle) Sapir in her testimony for the Visual History Archive. "They took over France, and they start[ed] to approach Paris. And my father bought a car and took a chauffeur. [...] We did the exode [exodus] from Paris."¹⁹ Unable, for reasons that remain unclear, to reach their target destination of Nice, the family decided to settle in Bollène, a mid-sized town located fifty kilometres north of Avignon.

The Sapirs were far from the only Jews to flee their homes for the south during the invasion of France or in the early days of the Occupation. Nor did those who chose to flee only come from Paris. A report by the French General Intelligence Service (*Service des renseignements généraux*) dated December 18, 1943, indicates that, of the approximately 1,500 Jews residing in the Vaucluse at the time, "nearly 40% came [to the department] after the armistice, in large part from Paris and Alsace-Lorraine."²⁰ Another document, this one undated, reveals that the Jewish population of the department swelled by nearly one-third between the outbreak of hostilities in 1939-1940 and July 1941. "The increase," the document explains, "comes primarily from the refugees

¹⁹ Estelle Sapir, Interview 14244, VHA, USC Shoah Foundation, 1996, Part II: 8:37-9:26.

²⁰ National Police, General Intelligence Service (*Service des renseignements généraux*), Intelligence report for the week of December 12 to 18, 1943, December 18, 1943, ADV, 3W28.

having come from different regions [in France], in particular, of the north and of the east, during the exodus of June 1940.”²¹

The Meyer family from Mulhouse (Haut-Rhin) was one such group of “refugees.” “In Alsace, we were very scared [...],” recalled Danielle, the youngest of the Meyer children. “In [19]39, we left [Mulhouse] the day that the war was declared because we were maybe more scared in Alsace than anywhere else.”²² When asked by the interviewer to elaborate on the reasons that convinced her father of the need to leave and, specifically, whether the decision had had anything to do with the family being Jewish, Danielle replied:

The Jews [would suffer] as Jews and as Alsatians. [...] We did not want to find ourselves in the clutches of the Germans, especially since some German refugees, who had come... who had arrived in [19]33, [19]34, [19]36, and who had settled in Mulhouse, [...] would tell us about the lives that they had led in Germany [under the Nazis]. We therefore feared risking the same type of thing.²³

Thus, the Meyer family left Mulhouse and Alsace in order “to take shelter.”²⁴ They made their way to Seurre (Côte-d’Or) before continuing on to Apt.

The context in which the Jews left the northeast for the south varied considerably from family to family and from individual to individual. Unlike the Meyers, many Jews did not choose to leave. Rather, they were forced to do so. In events reminiscent of those that took place in Belgium and Luxembourg, massive roundups and expulsions of Jews occurred on French soil—from the departments in the northeast and, more specifically, from those comprising Alsace-Lorraine. Intimately tied to German geopolitical

²¹ Cabinet of the Prefect of Vaucluse “Constitution du fichier départemental—Département de Vaucluse,” Undated document (Posterior to August 1942), ADV, 238W6.

²² Danielle Herrmann, Interview 38199, VHA, USC Shoah Foundation, 1997, Part I: 10:44-11:03.

²³ *Ibid.*, Part I: 12:33-13:05.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, Part I: 12:11-12:12.

considerations, namely, the colonization of the departments that had been annexed to the Reich (Moselle, Haut-Rhin and Bas-Rhin), these expulsions displaced thousands of Jews from their homes in the summer and fall of 1940 and forced them to take up residence in the Unoccupied Zone, which was, at the time, under the jurisdiction of the Vichy government.²⁵ A slightly larger area, which included greater or lesser portions of nearly a dozen departments in the north and northeast, was labelled the “restricted zone.” Having also been earmarked for colonization, the “restricted zone” was off limits to the Jews who had fled the area before the advancing German Army. They were, in short, prohibited from returning.²⁶

In addition to presenting the evolution of the occupation zones in France over the course of the war, Map 7 identifies the departments that were annexed to the German Reich and the dozen or so that were included in the “restricted (or closed) zone.” As one can see, there are striking similarities between the departments highlighted on this map and those identified as the Jews’ initial point of departure (Map 6). Although the precise figure is unknown, the evidence suggests that a not insignificant number of Vauclusian Jews were forcibly expelled from the departments in the northeast by the Germans. Some sources, such as a police report concerning Joseph and Sabine Ismach (née Schwartz), two “Polish refugees,” are unambiguous in this regard: “This household, previously residing in Metz, was expelled from this locality by the occupying authorities.”²⁷ Other documents provide similar, if not always as explicit, information. For instance, through different sources, one discovers that Lucien and Marie-Thérèse

²⁵ Cohen, *Persécutions et sauvetages*, pp. 12-13; Klarsfeld, *Vichy-Auschwitz, 1942*, p. 31.

²⁶ Mariot and Zalc, *Face à la persécution*, pp. 38-39.

²⁷ Letter from the Police Commissioner in Bollène to the Prefect of Vaucluse, April 20, 1941, Ismach folder, ADV, 7W17.

Dreyfus (née Goldschmidt) were “expelled from Thann,” that Armand David Bloch was a “refugee from Mulhouse,” that Léon Weil’s family had been “evacuated from Strasbourg at the beginning of the hostilities” and that Charles Lévy had “withdrawn from Audincourt, [in the] restricted zone.”²⁸ As one can see from these examples, the terms used vary widely from case to case. It is, therefore, not always possible to discriminate between those who had been expelled and those who had left of their own volition. The overall impression is that the former scenario had been an all too common occurrence, but, again, the inconsistency of the language used in the sources makes the number of such cases difficult to estimate.

Map 7: Departments of the “Restricted Zone” and Those Annexed to the Reich.



Source: Wikipedia.org, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:France_map_Lambert-93_with_regions_and_departments-occupation.svg.

²⁸ Prefecture of Vaucluse, “État nominatif des Juifs français résidant en Vaucluse au 1^{er} juillet 1941,” July 1, 1941, ADV, 7W15; Prefecture of Vaucluse, “Liste des Juifs exerçant une des professions interdites par les articles 4 et 5 de la loi du 2 juin 1941,” Undated document (Probably June 1941), ADV, 7W16.

The trajectories taken by the Jews to arrive to the Vaucluse also followed a certain pattern and logic. Once again, the situation offers an interesting parallel with the movement of the Jews from Central and Eastern Europe to France between 1933 and 1940, insofar as the final destination seems to have rarely been reached directly. Like the many German, Austrian and Polish Jews who transited in Belgium or Luxembourg before moving on to France, the Jews who fled the north and the northeast often appear to have done so in a less than linear fashion. Indeed, having left their original location, many of them only made their way to the department of Vaucluse after having resided, for greater or shorter lengths of time, in other French communes, both north and south of the Demarcation Line.

But where did the Jews go? And why? Some, like the Meyer family from Mulhouse, fled their homes without even the faintest idea of where they were headed. “We left blindly,” explained Danielle:

and we stopped, I do not remember for what reason... we stopped in this little village [Seurre (Côte-d’Or)]. [...] I believe that we had friends that were there also. We found a place to stay and, well, there or anywhere. We did not have a particular destination. We did not have any reason to go there rather than someplace else.²⁹

Others knew precisely where they wished to go. “We left [Luxembourg] in January [19]41,” recalled Adolphe Waysenson. “[...] The voyage took us from Luxembourg to Metz, I believe. [...] Afterwards, we took a train [...] that brought us directly to Marseille, which was our destination.”³⁰

When, a little later in his interview, Adolphe pondered the reasons that led his family to relocate to France’s second most populated city, he explained the decision in

²⁹ Herrmann, VHA, Part I: 14:01-14:21.

³⁰ Adolphe Waysenson, Interview 32680, VHA, USC Shoah Foundation, 1997, Part II: 12:55-13:45.

the following way: “I think that [...] we must have been advised or oriented towards the Free Zone.”³¹ To be sure, the Waysensons were not the only ones to choose their destination based on the fact that it was located south of the Demarcation Line. “Southern France was not occupied really by the Germans yet [1942],” recalled Max Doktorczyk. “This is the reason we went to southern France, because it was not occupied. One part was occupied and the other, Marseille and southern France, was not.”³² Marie Wagmann, for her part, explained that, “Instead of going to my aunt[’s], who lived in [the] *département de Creuse*, my father decided to go to Marseille, where it was not occupied.”³³ In these cases, as in many others, the calculation was almost always the same: “That it was best not to stay in the Occupied Zone, [and] that it was better to leave for the Free Zone, [because] it will be a little more calm, [and] it will be a little less dangerous.”³⁴

But would just anyplace in the Unoccupied Zone do? Or were there preferred destinations? In other words, were the Jews merely content on leaving the Occupied Zone—and, by extension, the immediate threat represented by the Germans—behind them, irrespective of the place in which they ended up? Or were they drawn to particular cities, towns, villages or departments in the south? And, if so, why? As has been the case for most of the issues covered so far in this chapter, the results here are necessarily impressionistic and are, therefore, not meant to be taken as hard truths from which concrete generalizations can be made but, rather, as observable phenomena that seem to point to recurring trends and patterns. This, as previously mentioned, has much to do

³¹ *Ibid.*, Part III: 18:47-18:55.

³² Doktorczyk, VHA, Part II: 1:45-1:57.

³³ Nestelbaum, VHA, Part II: 4:59-5:10.

³⁴ Robert Chazine, Interview 17680, VHA, USC Shoah Foundation, 1996, Part II: 10:17-10:25.

with the limitations inherent in the sources used, which, unfortunately, often allow for only a partial reconstruction of the Jews' movements.

Indeed, of the 1,040 Jews whose initial point of departure (or “starting point”) in France is known, a mere 115 of them—or 11.1 percent—were identified as having resided in at least one other city prior to arriving in the Vaucluse. On their own, these numbers seem to suggest that nearly all of the Jews (or, at the very least, an overwhelming majority of them) made their way to the department directly from their original location. But was that really the case? There are reasons to be sceptical. For one, there are (as has already been pointed out) only a handful of sources that provide information—either directly or indirectly—on the Jews' whereabouts prior to their arrival in the department. Successfully identifying just one of the links in the trajectories taken by the Jews is thus, in itself, something of an accomplishment. Managing to pinpoint two or more is, consequently, not a very common occurrence. The fact that the point of departure—and nothing more—is known for nearly ninety percent of the Jews should, therefore, come as no surprise. But does that necessarily mean that all of them went from Point A to their final destination—i.e., the Vaucluse—directly? Hardly.

The best sources for reconstructing the individual movements of the Jews—that is, survivor testimonies—also tend to cast doubt on the idea that most of them travelled to the department directly from their initial point of departure. In fact, of the twenty-nine Vauclusian Jews whose interviews can be found in the Visual History Archive, only ten proceeded directly from their first place of residence to the Vaucluse.³⁵ Seventeen of

³⁵ There are, in fact, thirty-one testimonies that concern Jews having lived in the department of Vaucluse during the Second World War. Although their father briefly resided in Vacqueyras, Adolphe and Léon Waysenson (both of whom provided a testimony for the VHA) did not set foot in the Vaucluse between 1939 and 1944. They were, therefore, not counted towards the total in this particular instance.

them, on the other hand, describe having lived at two or more locations before finally settling in the department. (One of the twenty-nine had always lived in the Vaucluse and another could not recall the way in which their family had arrived in the department.) The initial impression conveyed by the figures provided above is thus almost certainly misleading, if not entirely erroneous.

In spite of the relatively small number of documented cases of Jews having transited in one or more cities while on their journey to the Vaucluse, patterns nevertheless emerge from their movements and, in particular, from the places in which they chose to find refuge. Indeed, prior to arriving in the department, the Jews generally seem to have perceived certain locations as being far more attractive destinations than others. Of the 115 Jews who are known to have reached the Vaucluse in a roundabout way, nearly half of them lived in just one of six cities in the period immediately preceding their arrival. These included, in order of importance: Marseille, Toulouse, Paris, Lyon, Nice and Cannes. To a large extent, these cities shared two important characteristics: they constituted (with the exception of Cannes) the most populated communes in the country, and all of them (save Paris) were located in the Unoccupied Zone.

Unfortunately, it is not always possible to determine the precise motives that enticed individuals to choose one location over another. Indeed, the sources are largely silent on this question, including the testimonies in the Visual History Archive. This is not all that surprising, however, seeing as most of those who were interviewed were children or teenagers at the time of the war and, thus, not necessarily privy to the details behind their parents' decisions. Nevertheless, for those who understood the motivations behind the choice in destination, one's safety and that of one's family seems to have

been the paramount concern. As the three passages quoted earlier make clear, the Waysenson, Doktorczyk and Wagmann families all chose to leave their respective residences for Marseille because, as they put it, the city was in the Unoccupied Zone and was, therefore, much more safe. Others chose slightly different locations but for nearly identical reasons. “In 1941, we took refuge [in] Nice, which was [...] occupied [...] by the Italians,” explained Maurice Asa. “But we knew that [that] was the last bastion. [...] If something happened, there was no other place to hide.”³⁶ Safety, it seems, was once again the foremost consideration in deciding on where to go.

It is highly probable, however, that other factors were taken into account when selecting a place in which to try and find refuge, even if, as has been mentioned, the sources remain relatively mute on this subject. The reasons for this are twofold. First, when the Jews began arriving in the Vaucluse, they did not always opt to settle in the cities, towns and villages that were perceived as offering the greatest degree of safety, by, for instance, being the furthest away from a Gestapo or German military outpost. Indeed, as shall be seen, there were several instances in which the safety offered by a particular locale was disregarded in favour of other, more immediate considerations. So why should it be any different in this instance? Surely some Jews must have chosen their place of residence based on criteria not having strictly to do with personal safety.

Second, if being out of harm’s way was really all that mattered, then would it not have been possible for the Jews to take refuge in any one of the thousands of communes located in the Unoccupied Zone, where they were free from German harassment? Instead, most of them congregated in the same handful of cities. But why? The answer seems to lie in certain characteristics shared by these cities, in particular, the fact that

³⁶ Asa, VHA, Part I: 1:00:35-1:00:55.

they were among the largest and most populated in the country. By virtue of their name recognition alone, Marseille, Nice, Toulouse and Lyon were natural destinations for people on the run, especially foreigners with little knowledge of the country and no contacts of which to speak. Larger and more populated urban areas also offered things that were either lacking or nonexistent in the countryside, especially in times of scarcity and war: employment opportunities, housing options and access to foodstuffs. Moreover, as cosmopolitan hubs, they were almost certainly more welcoming to foreigners and non-locals.

Of the aforementioned urban centres, Marseille appears to have been the destination of choice for the Jews looking to find refuge in the Unoccupied Zone. In fact, nearly as many Jews transited in Marseille on their way to the Vaucluse than the combined total of those who did so via Toulouse, Lyon and Nice. Indeed, it is probably for this reason that one Vichy official described the city as “the central hub [*plaque tournante*] of Jewry in the Unoccupied Zonne [*sic*].”³⁷

The thing that distinguished Marseille from the other cities south of the Demarcation Line was its access to a major port. In the eyes of many Jews, this distinctive feature offered the final chance at escaping France and, by extension, Nazi persecution, especially in the face of the ever-tightening Swiss and Spanish borders. Evidently, there can be no precise accounting of the Jews who went to Marseille deliberately in the hopes of using its port to flee the country. Evidence suggests, however, that this thought crossed the minds of more than a few of them. In fact, a number of Jewish families that eventually took up residence in the Vaucluse did so

³⁷ Chief of the *Police aux questions juives* for the region of Marseille to the Chief of the *Police aux questions juives* in the Unoccupied Zone, Report No. 2361, July 17, 1942, CDJC, CCXIII-42.

specifically because of the department's proximity to Marseille and, more precisely, its port. "It was said that the Germans were going to continue even further [south—i.e., occupy the southern zone]," recalled Samuel Moszkowitz. "I studied a map and decided to go to Avignon because it was ninety kilometres from Marseille, and I believed that, from Marseille, it would be possible to board a ship and escape."³⁸

Others also viewed Marseille as their best and only remaining hope for getting out of the country. In one instance, this calculation backfired, and the family in question was made to pay a heavy price. In her interview with the Shoah Foundation, Rachel Bobryker explained how her family, who was living in Entraigues, was patiently waiting for her uncle to send them papers that would allow them to go to the United States. In spite of the danger, the family remained at the same address, for fear of putting too much distance between themselves and their way out of France—the port of Marseille. "I think that's why we were still there, in Entraigues, when most of the Jews had already fled from there," explained Bobryker. "It was the Vichy government. And we stayed on so long, 'till we were caught [arrested], because I think she [my mother] was [hoping for those papers]... and being close to a port, the port of Marseille... I think that's why we were still there at that time."³⁹ The Bobrykers never reached Marseille—or America. On August 26, 1942, Rachel was arrested with her mother, Rivka, and her younger brother, Norbert. The children were released, but Rivka was not.⁴⁰ She was deported from Drancy to Auschwitz on September 16, aboard convoy 33.⁴¹ She never returned.

³⁸ Samuel Moszkowitz, Interview 32368, VHA, USC Shoah Foundation, 1997, Part II: 7:46-8:08.

³⁹ Rachel Roth, Interview 14039, VHA, USC Shoah Foundation, 1996, Part I: 9:06-9:28.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, Part I: 10:39-11:18 and 14:20-14:38.

⁴¹ Deportation list of convoy 33, CDJC, C33_40.

The fact that a large number of the Jews who travelled indirectly to the Vaucluse initially chose to find refuge in (or in the vicinity of) a handful of the most populated cities in the country had, irrespective of the basis for their decision, one unfortunate consequence: it conveniently served to kettle them all into relatively few locations—making them all the more vulnerable, when, in November 1942, the Germans occupied the formerly Free Zone. Some, like Joseph and Szayna Sapir (née Kligberg), sensed the danger early. “All of a sudden, in [19]41, my mother wanted to go back to Bollène,” remembered Esther, the eldest of the Sapir children.

[...] She was scared in Nice. She was scared that there [were] too many Jewish people. [...] She said, ‘Let’s go back to Bollène.’ [...] She was scared that there [were] too many Jewish people. [...] And they [had] a beautiful apartment in Nice [...] But she wanted to go back to Bollène. My father agreed. Why, he too, he saw it was too dangerous to live in Nice. [...] And Bollène was a quiet... very quiet life.⁴²

Others took a little while longer to come to terms with the dangerous situation in which they found themselves. And, unlike the Sapirs, this realization seldom had to do with the fact that, as one person noted, “There were quite a few Jews around.”⁴³ Indeed, it had everything to do with the new German presence in the south. “The beginning of the war, for me, [...] I did not find it especially dangerous,” explained Pinkus Holcman. “Not especially, as long as the Germans weren’t there [...]. I really began to feel a sense of apprehension, of fear, [...] when the Germans entered and occupied the southern zone. At that moment, I really became aware [of the danger].”⁴⁴ Another Jew described the situation thusly: “The climate [in the Free Zone] [...] was heightened from the

⁴² Sapir, VHA, Part II: 18:03-19:01.

⁴³ Ermantier, VHA, Part II: 4:13-4:14.

⁴⁴ Pinkus Holcman, Interview 31399, VHA, USC Shoah Foundation, 1997, Part II: 10:54-11:46.

moment the Germans invaded the southern zone. [...] That is when we began to feel that things could change and get worse [...].”⁴⁵

The sense of foreboding that accompanied the arrival of the Germans in the formerly Unoccupied Zone was sufficiently strong to push a number of Jews to leave their residences or current places of refuge for new ones. Some Jews (like the Israel family from Marseille) were, however, only spurred to gather their things and to flee once the massive roundups of Jews had begun in earnest.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, once the Jews were set in motion, many of them—regardless of where they came from or the reason for which they left—ended up in the same place: *le département de Vaucluse*.

LIFE IN THE DEPARTMENT

ARRIVALS, 1939-1944

A steady flow of Jews—French and foreign alike—entered the Vaucluse between 1939 and 1944. Upon their arrival, they settled in cities, towns and villages scattered throughout the department. The reasons for choosing one place of residence over another varied widely from individual to individual and from family to family. The decision was, however, often influenced by the events that were taking place on the ground. Thus, the timing of, and the context surrounding, one’s arrival in the department had some bearing on the locality in which one ultimately chose to find refuge.

⁴⁵ Elkoubi, VHA, Part I: 19:28-19:48.

⁴⁶ Lea Rosette Israel, Interview 27015, VHA, USC Shoah Foundation, 1997, Part I: 21:12-21:50.

Determining the exact date on which individual Jews arrived in the Vaucluse is not always possible, since none of the sources consistently and systematically provide this information. That is not to downplay the 355 cases in which this information is known but, rather, to underscore the several hundred instances in which it is not. Fortunately, there are a few methods that allow one to estimate (with a fair degree of certainty) the date of arrival of those for whom it was previously unknown. These methods are by no means perfect, and each has its own set of weaknesses. They complement one another, however, and, in so doing, allow for a more thorough, if still incomplete, reconstruction of a timeline of the Jewish arrivals in the department over the course of the war.

The first method consists in utilizing the information that, while not very precise, provides at least a general idea of the date on (or the period in) which the individual entered the department for the first time. For example, a report sent by the Prefect of Saône-et-Loire to the Prefect of Vaucluse indicates that Joseph Grunberg “left Paris about 6 months ago to take refuge in Avignon.”⁴⁷ Since the report is dated February 13, 1942, it seems logical to conclude that Grunberg probably arrived in the department in or around August 1941—that is, six months earlier. In another instance, one learns that Max Neumann, a German Jew born in Schöllkrippen, who “had taken refuge in France just before the hostilities of 1939,” “settled in Avignon in the months following the armistice.”⁴⁸ Thus, although it is not explicitly stated, it seems likely that Neumann arrived in the Vaucluse in the fall of 1940. What these examples show is that it is

⁴⁷ Report from the Prefect of Saône-et-Loire to the Prefect of Vaucluse, February 13, 1942, Grunberg folder, ADV, 7W17.

⁴⁸ Report from the Chief Commissioner of the General Intelligence Service to the Prefect of Vaucluse, July 8, 1943, Neumann folder, ADV, 7W17.

possible to estimate—with a certain degree of confidence—the dates on which certain Jews arrived in the department, even in instances when this information is not readily provided and has, therefore, to be inferred or deduced.

The second method by which it is possible to piece together a timeline of the arrivals of the Jews in the Vaucluse is to make use of the numerous lists and censuses found in the archives. Once the lists have been grouped according to the date on which they were produced, it is possible to identify newcomers by comparing the names that appear on each of them.⁴⁹ For instance, the Jews whose names do not appear on the lists from Time 1 but who are found on those from Time 2 are likely to have arrived in the department in the period between the production of these two groups of lists. There is, however, an obvious flaw to such a method: the lists only provide information on those who had been identified as Jews by the German and French authorities and, thus, nothing on those who had managed to remain undetected. Consequently, the fact that an individual's name does not appear on a particular list does not prove that they were not present at the time the list was drafted. In other words, "absence of evidence is not evidence of absence," as the saying goes. Though far from perfect, this approach—when used in conjunction with the first—likely provides a reasonably accurate picture of the overall trends in the arrival of the Jews in the Vaucluse during the war.

⁴⁹ The lists and censuses pertaining to roughly the same time period were grouped together. Although they were not all produced at precisely the same moment (the same day or month, for example), they were nevertheless sufficiently circumscribed in time—covering periods of no more than three months. The groupings, moreover, were a natural outgrowth of the types of lists found. The lists from January to March 1943, for example, almost exclusively concern the Jews who had received the "Jewish stamp" on their identification papers and ration cards. Those concerning the period between August and October 1943 are comprised of censuses conducted at the local level. Although they were produced at various times over a three-month period and even though their content is not identical in every instance, these lists are, for all intents and purposes, the same. Thus, it seemed logical to group them together.

Table 6 breaks down the date of arrival by year (or group of years) based on the information—whether explicit or not—that can be found in the sources. Table 7, for its part, deconstructs the number of Jewish newcomers to the department based on the appearance of their names on the groups of lists from four different periods: (1) June and July 1941, (2) January to March 1943, (3) August to October 1943 and (4) May 1944.

Table 6: Date of Arrival in the Vaucluse (by Year or Group of Years).

| Date of Arrival in the Vaucluse (Year or Group of Years) | Number of Jews Having Arrived in that Year (or Group of Years) |
|---|---|
| Prior to 1933 | 20 |
| 1933 to 1939 | 35 |
| 1940 | 175 |
| 1941 | 92 |
| 1942 | 85 |
| 1943 | 26 |
| Total | 433 |

The figures found in these two tables invite a number of observations. Looking at Table 7, one can see that, over the course of the war, the Jews arrived in the department of Vaucluse in several—rather unequal—waves. Taking place between 1939 and June and July 1941, the first saw the arrival of 568 Jews. That is truly remarkable, seeing as it represents more than one-third of the total number of Jews identified as living in the department at the time of the first census (July 1, 1941).⁵⁰ Although the date of arrival

⁵⁰ Prefecture of Vaucluse, “État nominatif des Juifs français résidant en Vaucluse au 1^{er} juillet 1941” and “État nominatif des Juifs de nationalité étrangère résidant en Vaucluse au 1^{er} juillet 1941,” July 1, 1941, ADV, 7W15.

for most of these Jews cannot be determined precisely, the evidence suggests that the majority of them arrived in 1940. Indeed, as can be seen in Table 6, thirty-eight percent more Jews arrived in the Vaucluse in 1940 alone than did so in the years 1933 to 1939 and 1941 combined. These numbers thus seem to corroborate that which was said earlier: that the Jews were, at least in the beginning, primarily put into motion by the advance of the German Army through the Low Countries and France in the summer of 1940.

*Table 7: Jewish Newcomers to the Vaucluse, 1939-1944
(Based on the Appearance of Their Names on Four Groups of Lists).⁵¹*

| Periods Concerned by the Groups of Lists | Number of Jewish Newcomers to the Vaucluse since the Previous Period |
|--|--|
| 1939 | Information Not Available |
| June and July 1941 | 568 |
| January to March 1943 | 837 |
| August to October 1943 | 152 |
| May 1944 | 39 |
| Total | 1,596 |

Interestingly, of the 568 Jews who arrived in the Vaucluse during the period in question, 400—or 70.4 percent—were French and 153—or 26.9 percent—were foreign (while fifteen—or 2.6 percent—had both “statuses”). French Jews thus accounted for the lion’s share of the newcomers to the department during the first wave of arrivals. As the war progressed, however, the trend continued in a downward fashion until, in 1944, the

⁵¹ The information concerning the Jews’ addresses in 1939 was almost exclusively found in the census of July 1, 1941. This information was used to identify the newcomers to the department in the period between 1939 and June and July 1941.

arrivals of foreign Jews outnumbered those of the French by a factor of twelve to one—an interesting development, to say the least.

The second and, indeed, most important wave of arrivals occurred in the period between June and July 1941 and January to March 1943. There were, as Table 7 indicates, just shy of 850 Jewish newcomers to the department during that time. In this particular instance, however, it is possible to narrow down the timeline of the individual arrivals even further, thanks to a list found in the departmental archives in Avignon, containing the names of 707 Jews.⁵² Although undated, this document appears to have been used to prepare the list of foreign Jews that were targeted for arrest during the large-scale roundup of August 26, 1942. Those whose names appear on the document were obviously present in the department at the time it was prepared, which was, in all likelihood, just days or weeks prior to the operation. This was the case for 235 of the 837 Jews who arrived in the Vaucluse between the summer of 1941 and the winter and spring of 1943. For the remaining 602 Jews having arrived during this period, it is impossible to be more precise. It would not be surprising, however, if the bulk of them had entered the department during or after the summer of 1942. After all, between August of that year and January/March 1943, two events took place that proved to be important catalysts behind the movement of the Jews: the massive raids and arrests of August and the German occupation of the Free Zone three months later.

The final observation to be made is that Jews continued to filter into the department of Vaucluse until the latest stages of the Occupation, albeit in significantly smaller numbers than before, as highlighted by the figures provided for the periods of

⁵² Prefecture of Vaucluse, “Liste nominative des Juifs étrangers,” Undated document (Probably August 1942), ADV, 7W16.

August to October 1943 and May 1944. This can partly be explained by the presence of the Italian-occupied zone until September 1943, which, as will be seen in the next chapter, offered a certain degree of protection from arrest and which, for this reason, drew in a number of Jews trying to find refuge. The drastic reduction in new arrivals from March 1943 onwards does, however, leave one slightly perplexed. Indeed, one wonders if there were really that many fewer Jews making their way into the department or, rather, if an increasing number of them were making more determined efforts to conceal themselves when doing so, by, for instance, taking on new identities and going underground. It is, unfortunately, a nearly impossible question to answer.

One thing that is possible to establish is the locations in which the Jews chose to settle upon arriving in the Vaucluse. The 643 individuals for whom this information is known took up residence in forty-seven of the department's 151 cities, towns and villages. In general, the distribution of the new arrivals was largely in line with the population of the different municipalities. Thus, in terms of gross figures, more Jews initially settled in larger cities like Avignon and Carpentras than in smaller villages like La Bastide-des-Jourdans and Les Taillades. There were, however, some notable exceptions. For example, Vaison-la-Romaine was the initial destination of a greater number of Jews than Cavaillon, a city with over four times as many people. In addition, more Jews settled in Villelaure than in Pertuis, even though the latter had a population that was five times greater.⁵³

In order to make sense of these anomalies, one must turn to the reasons that brought the Jews to the Vaucluse in the first place. Contrary to what one might expect,

⁵³ This is based on the population of these municipalities as recorded in August 1939. See "État comparatif des municipalités de Vaucluse," August 1939, ADV, 4W680.

an individual's arrival in the department was not always the product of free will and personal choice. Indeed, there were a number of instances in which certain (mostly foreign) Jews were made to settle in predetermined areas, through a policy known as *résidence forcée*—forced residence. Those who were subjected to this policy were assigned a place to live and were not, in theory, allowed to leave their new place of residence without first obtaining permission from the proper authorities. The goal behind the policy was to prevent the Jews from congregating in the same few cities (such as Avignon, Carpentras and Orange), all the while concentrating them in a handful of less densely populated areas—thereby facilitating the task of surveilling and controlling them.⁵⁴ In the department of Vaucluse, several municipalities were used to this effect, including the towns of Villelaure and Vaison-la-Romaine, which helps explain the fact that more Jews initially settled there than in cities with a greater number of inhabitants.⁵⁵

Of course, not all of the Jews had to be coerced into taking up residence in the Vaucluse. In fact, the majority did so entirely of their own volition. The motives for wanting to settle in the department did, however, vary significantly from person to person. They were not, moreover, always what one might expect. For instance, in a letter addressed to the Prefect of Vaucluse, dated November 13, 1942, Dora Wurghaft (née Wolf), a sixty-seven-year-old Russian Jew, begged to be allowed to join her son and her

⁵⁴ See letter from the Prefect of Vaucluse to the Chief of the *Police aux questions juives* in Marseille, April 16, 1942, CDJC, LXXII-17.

⁵⁵ In their interviews with the Shoah Foundation, several Jews recounted how they had been compelled by the authorities to take up residence in a predetermined location in the department. “We went [...] to the Côte d’Azur, [but] we couldn’t stay,” recalled Zenaida Keisermann. “And they assigned us a small place. It was *résidence forcée*, forced residence, in a very small place called Apt [...], near Avignon. So we went there... [We] went to this little place with these peasants and stayed there.” Manfred Kempowski, for his part, remembered it thusly: “The French authorities sent [us] on a moments’ notice, [a] twenty-four hour notice, [...] [in what was] called *résidence forcée*, forced residence, to another part of the province of Vaucluse, which is where we were. [...] They sent us to a small village, Vaison-la-Romaine. And there we had to live.” See Keiser, VHA, Part II: 5:24-6:01 and Kempowski, VHA, Part II: 20:53-21:40.

niece in Le Pontet. She wanted to leave Marseille, she explained, because she was deaf and, therefore, unable to hear the warning sirens each time the city was bombarded.⁵⁶ Thus, she hoped to take refuge from the bombings, while being closer to her family. Ultimately, her request was granted, and Dora was permitted to reside in the Vaucluse. In another case, the Goldfarb family expressed their desire to move from Saint-Girons (Ariège) to Sorgues for “health reasons.” Moszek Goldfarb, whose health was deteriorating, believed that he might recover more quickly if he were allowed to live in an area with a milder climate. He therefore hoped to obtain a “residency permit in a department of the Mediterranean region, preferably the Vaucluse or the Basses-Alpes.”⁵⁷ This time the request was denied.⁵⁸

The primary motivation guiding the Jews towards the Vaucluse was, nevertheless, the safety the department seemed to offer. There were, as has been seen, a number of reasons for this, namely, the department’s evolving geopolitical situation and its physical configuration. The verdict on which locations offered the greatest deal of safety was far from unanimous, however. Some, like Bernard Prierer, believed that cities offered the best protection. Having witnessed the arrival of the Germans in Nice, he and his cousin immediately set out for Avignon. “The reason I selected Avignon,” Prierer explained, “[was that] I felt the south was a little better than going toward [the] north or west or east. [Moreover,] I didn’t want to be in a small village. I wanted to be in a city, where I can blend [in] a little better.”⁵⁹ Robert Chazine was of the opposite opinion. When he and his wife fled the Occupied Zone for the south, they headed

⁵⁶ Letter from Dora Wurghaft (née Wolf) to the Prefect of Vaucluse, November 13, 1942, Wurghaft folder, ADV, 7W17.

⁵⁷ Letter from the Prefect of Ariège to the Prefect of Vaucluse, March 6, 1943 and Report sent by the Sub-Prefect of Saint-Girons to the Prefect of Ariège, January 23, 1943, ADV, 7W15.

⁵⁸ Letter from the Mayor of Sorgues to the Prefect of Vaucluse, March 19, 1943, ADV, 7W15.

⁵⁹ Bernard Prierer, Interview 10798, VHA, USC Shoah Foundation, 1996, Part II: 2:33-2:50.

directly for Saint-Saturnin-lès-Apt, a town with fifty times fewer people than Avignon. Having visited a local hostel in his youth, Chazine knew that, in this town, they were likely to find “abandoned farms” and that they would, at the very least, be “much more isolated.”⁶⁰ Finally, some Jews were somewhere in the middle of the spectrum, viewing the larger cities as being equally as safe as the smallest of villages. Isaac Lewendel, for example, described Carpentras—the Vaucluse’s second largest city—in the following words:

Carpentras had an air of lazy sleepiness typical of small provincial cities that have lost their importance. From Carpentras, one had easy access to Mont Ventoux [...]. Since the mountain area was sparsely populated, it did not require heavy military occupation. This made the town relatively safe for Jews.⁶¹

One wonders, though, if the Jews’ perception of the safety provided by certain locations changed over time or whether it remained consistent throughout the war. This is not a particularly easy question to answer. Nevertheless, the numbers allow for some tentative conclusions. For the Jews who arrived in the department of Vaucluse between 1939 and 1943, the place in which they initially settled is known in 396 cases. From these, certain trends can be observed. First, the number of Jews taking up residence in the larger cities, such as Avignon and Carpentras, tended to sharply increase between 1939 and 1940. Afterwards, however, there was a slow but consistent trend downwards through 1943. Thus, over time, the number of Jews arriving in the more populated cities tended to decrease. In the case of towns and villages, the situation seems to have been the exact opposite. Loriol-du-Comtat and Camaret-sur-Aigues, for example, saw incremental but steady increases in the number of their Jewish arrivals over the course of

⁶⁰ Chazine, VHA, Part II: 10:17-10:50.

⁶¹ Isaac Lewendel, *Not the Germans Alone: A Son’s Search for the Truth of Vichy* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2000 [1999]), p. 104.

the war. It would appear, then, that the Jews were increasingly drawn to the more rural and less densely populated areas of the department as the war went on.

FLUCTUATIONS OF THE JEWISH POPULATION OF THE CITIES, TOWNS AND VILLAGES OF THE VAUCLUSE, 1941-1944

With the steady stream of arrivals to (and departures from) the Vaucluse between 1939 and 1944, the Jewish population of the cities, towns and villages of the department continued to fluctuate. These fluctuations can be retraced by comparing the number of Jews living at a particular location at different points in time. Table 8 provides the total Jewish population of each commune of the Vaucluse at four different periods, the same ones as before: (1) June and July 1941, (2) January to March 1943, (3) August to October 1943 and (4) May 1944. This offers an opportunity to visualize the way in which the Jewish population of a given commune evolved from one period to another, as well as a chance to compare and contrast its fluctuation rate with that of the other cities, towns and villages of the department. Since, however, there is almost no limit to the number of observations that could be made from such a (necessarily) lengthy table, the following will be limited to only the most important conclusions that can be drawn from it.

Before analyzing and interpreting the numbers for any one city, town or village in particular, it is important to consider the overall trends with regards to the fluctuations of the Jewish population of the department as a whole. As one can see from the totals provided at the bottom of Table 8, the number of Jews residing in the Vaucluse from June and July 1941 to May 1944 fluctuated between 971 and 1,840—a variation of 869 individuals. One might be inclined to view this as proof that the Jewish population of the

department was, over the course of the war, prone to some rather dramatic swings. In reality, the situation was quite a bit different. When one compares the figures from the first, second and fourth periods, one realizes that the number of Jews living in the Vaucluse was relatively consistent over time. Indeed, if only these periods are taken into account, the influx or outflow of Jews does not exceed 350 persons, which is equal to an average gain or loss of about two Jews per city, town or village. With its very sharp decline, the period between August and October 1943 is thus something of an anomaly—an anomaly that, to a certain extent, can be explained.

*Table 8: Jewish Population of the Cities, Towns and Villages of the Vaucluse, 1941-1944.*⁶²

| Population of the City, Town or Village (1939) ⁶³ | City, Town or Village | Jewish Population of the City, Town or Village during the Period in Question | | | |
|--|-------------------------|--|--|---|---|
| | | June and July 1941 | January to March 1943 | August to October 1943 | May 1944 |
| Over 15,000 | Avignon (and Montfavet) | 831 (A: 810; M: 21) | 844 (A: 820; M: 24) (+13) (1.02) | 184 (A: 173; M: 11) (-660) (0.22) | 757 (A: 737; M: 20) (+573) (4.11) |
| 10,001 to 15,000 | Carpentras | 145 | 193 (+48) (1.33) | 176 (-17) (0.91) | 181 (+5) (1.03) |
| | Cavaillon | 49 | 95 (+46) (1.94) | 81 (-14) (0.85) | 90 (+9) (1.11) |
| | Orange | 138 | 138 (=) (1.00) | 92 (-46) (0.67) | 135 (+43) (1.47) |
| 5,001 to 10,000 | Apt | 23 | 60 (+37) (2.61) | 37 (-23) (0.62) | 51 (+14) (1.38) |
| | L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue | 14 | 11 (-3) (0.79) | 15 (+4) (1.36) | 9 (-6) (0.60) |

⁶² In order to make the table less cumbersome, only the communes with at least one Jewish resident were retained. Consequently, the names of seventy-seven of the department's 151 cities, towns and villages were not included in the table.

⁶³ "État comparatif des municipalités de Vaucluse," August 1939, ADV, 4W680.

| | | | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| | Pertuis | 18 | 73 (+55) (4.06) | 37 (-36) (0.51) | 53 (+16) (1.43) |
| | Sorgues | 9 | 30 (+21) (3.33) | 7 (-23) (0.23) | 20 (+13) (2.86) |
| 1,001 to 5,000 | Beaumes-de-Venise | 4 | 5 (+1) (1.25) | 12 (+7) (2.40) | 5 (-7) (0.42) |
| | Bédarrides | 1 | 1 (=) (1.00) | 4 (+3) (4.00) | 4 (=) (1.00) |
| | Bédoin | 0 | 3 (+3) (NA) | 2 (-1) (0.67) | 1 (-1) (0.50) |
| | Bollène | 34 | 38 (+4) (1.12) | 29 (-9) (0.76) | 39 (+10) (1.34) |
| | Bonnieux | 1 | 2 (+1) (2.00) | 1 (-1) (0.50) | 2 (+1) (2.00) |
| | Cadenet | 5 | 15 (+10) (3.00) | 1 (-14) (0.07) | 15 (+14) (15.00) |
| | Camaret-sur-Aigues | 1 | 4 (+3) (4.00) | 3 (-1) (0.75) | 4 (+1) (1.33) |
| | Caromb | 11 | 1 (-10) (0.09) | 1 (=) (1.00) | 3 (+2) (3.00) |
| | Châteauneuf-du-Pape | 3 | 3 (=) (1.00) | 2 (-1) (0.67) | 3 (+1) (1.5) |
| | Cheval-Blanc | 2 | 2 (=) (1.00) | 2 (=) (1.00) | 2 (=) (1.00) |
| | Courthézon | 2 | 6 (+4) (3.00) | 2 (-4) (0.33) | 4 (+2) (2.00) |
| | Entraigues-sur-la-Sorgue | 17 | 25 (+8) (1.47) | 13 (-12) (0.52) | 23 (+10) (1.77) |
| | Gordes | 3 | 4 (+1) (1.33) | 2 (-2) (0.50) | 3 (+1) (1.5) |
| | Goult | 0 | 6 (+6) (NA) | 6 (=) (1.00) | 6 (=) (1.00) |
| | Jonquières | 0 | 2 (+2) (NA) | 9 (+7) (4.5) | 6 (-3) (0.67) |
| Lapalud | 1 | 0 (-1) (0.00) | 5 (+5) (NA) | 2 (-3) (0.40) | |

| | | | | |
|------------------------|----|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Lauris | 2 | 1 (-1) (0.50) | 2 (+1) (2.00) | 2 (=) (1.00) |
| Malaucène | 3 | 5 (+2) (1.67) | 4 (-1) (0.80) | 4 (=) (1.00) |
| Mazan | 0 | 8 (+8) (NA) | 9 (+1) (1.13) | 4 (-5) (0.44) |
| Mondragon | 1 | 1 (=) (1.00) | 3 (+2) (3.00) | 0 (-3) (0.00) |
| Monteux | 12 | 15 (+3) (1.25) | 11 (-4) (0.73) | 12 (+1) (1.09) |
| Pernes-les-Fontaines | 1 | 7 (+6) (7.00) | 0 (-7) (0.00) | 2 (+2) (NA) |
| Piolenc | 2 | 2 (=) (1.00) | 1 (-1) (0.50) | 2 (+1) (2.00) |
| Le Pontet | 7 | 44 (+37) (6.29) | 2 (-42) (0.05) | 32 (+30) (16.00) |
| Robion | 6 | 2 (-4) (0.33) | 3 (+1) (1.50) | 3 (=) (1.00) |
| Saint-Saturnin-lès-Apt | 1 | 4 (+3) (4.00) | 3 (-1) (0.75) | 2 (-1) (0.67) |
| Sarrians | 0 | 1 (+1) (NA) | 2 (+1) (2.00) | 2 (=) (1.00) |
| Sault | 2 | 9 (+7) (4.5) | 18 (+9) (2.00) | 19 (+1) (1.06) |
| Le Thor | 2 | 1 (-1) (0.50) | 0 (-1) (0.00) | 4 (+4) (NA) |
| La Tour-d'Aigues | 5 | 6 (+1) (1.2) | 2 (-4) (0.33) | 5 (+3) (2.5) |
| Vaison-la-Romaine | 23 | 51 (+28) (2.22) | 35 (-16) (0.69) | 35 (=) (1.00) |
| Valréas | 15 | 42 (+27) (2.8) | 39 (-3) (0.93) | 39 (=) (1.00) |
| Vedène | 8 | 11 (+3) (1.38) | 14 (+3) (1.27) | 11 (-3) (0.79) |
| Velleron | 0 | 1 (+1) (NA) | 1 (=) (1.00) | 1 (=) (1.00) |

| | | | | | |
|--------------|------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| | Villelaure | 25 | 9 (-16) (0.36) | 16 (+7) (1.78) | 12 (-4) (0.75) |
| 501 to 1,000 | Ansouis | 10 | 9 (-1) (0.90) | 10 (+1) (1.11) | 9 (-1) (0.90) |
| | Beaumont-de-Pertuis | 11 | 0 (-11) (0.00) | 0 (=) (NA) | 1 (+1) (NA) |
| | Châteauneuf-de-Gadagne | 4 | 2 (-2) (0.50) | 0 (-2) (0.00) | 2 (+2) (NA) |
| | Entrechaux | 0 | 2 (+2) (NA) | 2 (=) (1.00) | 2 (=) (1.00) |
| | Gigondas | 1 | 4 (+3) (4.00) | 0 (-4) (0.00) | 0 (=) (NA) |
| | Lagnes | 1 | 1 (=) (1.00) | 0 (-1) (0.00) | 1 (+1) (NA) |
| | Lourmarin | 2 | 1 (-1) (0.5) | 3 (+2) (3.00) | 5 (+2) (1.67) |
| | Malemort-du-Comtat | 0 | 5 (+5) (NA) | 5 (=) (1.00) | 6 (+1) (1.20) |
| | Mérindol | 6 | 2 (-4) (0.33) | 3 (+1) (1.5) | 2 (-1) (0.67) |
| | Mormoiron | 4 | 3 (-1) (0.75) | 3 (=) (1.00) | 3 (=) (1.00) |
| | Mornas | 0 | 2 (+2) (NA) | 2 (=) (1.00) | 2 (=) (1.00) |
| | Oppède | 0 | 0 (=) (NA) | 7 (+7) (NA) | 2 (-5) (0.29) |
| | Roussillon | 0 | 3 (+3) (NA) | 3 (=) (1.00) | 2 (-1) (0.67) |
| | Sabliet | 2 | 0 (-2) (0.00) | 0 (=) (NA) | 0 (=) (NA) |
| | Saignon | 0 | 0 (=) (NA) | 4 (+4) (NA) | 0 (-4) (0.00) |
| | Saint-Didier | 0 | 0 (=) (NA) | 4 (+4) (NA) | 1 (-3) (0.25) |
| Vacqueyras | 3 | 3 (=) (1.00) | 3 (=) (1.00) | 2 (-1) (0.67) | |

| | | | | | |
|------------|--------------------------|-------|------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| | Villes-sur-Auzon | 0 | 4 (+4) (NA) | 10 (+6) (2.5) | 4 (-6) (0.40) |
| | Violès | 0 | 0 (=) (NA) | 2 (+2) (NA) | 0 (-2) (0.00) |
| 251 to 500 | La Bastide-des-Jourdans | 0 | 1 (+1) (NA) | 4 (+3) (4.00) | 1 (-3) (0.25) |
| | Crestet | 0 | 0 (=) (NA) | 0 (=) (NA) | 1 (+1) (NA) |
| | Grambois | 1 | 0 (-1) (0.00) | 0 (=) (NA) | 0 (=) (NA) |
| | Maubec | 9 | 4 (-5) (0.44) | 4 (=) (1.00) | 3 (-1) (0.75) |
| | Puyméras | 0 | 0 (=) (NA) | 0 (=) (NA) | 4 (+4) (NA) |
| | Saint-Romain-en-Viennois | 0 | 0 (=) (NA) | 3 (+3) (NA) | 3 (=) (1.00) |
| | Les Taillades | 2 | 2 (=) (1.00) | 4 (+2) (2.00) | 3 (-1) (0.75) |
| | Venasque | 1 | 3 (+2) (3.00) | 2 (-1) (0.67) | 3 (+1) (1.5) |
| 1 to 250 | Buisson | 0 | 0 (=) (NA) | 1 (+1) (NA) | 0 (-1) (0.00) |
| | Buoux | 1 | 2 (+1) (2.00) | 0 (-2) (0.00) | 3 (+3) (NA) |
| | Faucon | 0 | 2 (+2) (NA) | 0 (-2) (0.00) | 0 (=) (NA) |
| | Puget | 5 | 4 (-1) (0.80) | 4 (=) (1.00) | 4 (=) (1.00) |
| Total | | 1,490 | 1,840 (+350) (1.24) | 971 (-869) (0.53) | 1,678 (+707) (1.73) |

The significant drop in the Jewish population of the department at that time is largely attributable to the very feeble numbers having been reported by the authorities in Avignon. In a list drawn up on October 15, 1943, the Central Police Commissariat

indicated that there were only 182 Jews remaining in the city.⁶⁴ That represented a nearly seventy-eight percent decrease from the previous period. If these numbers are accurate, then the Jewish community in Avignon had all but disappeared within a five to nine-month period. There are a number of things that make such a scenario highly improbable, however, not the least of which is the number of Jews (757) living in the city in May 1944. Of course, that is not to suggest that the Jewish population of the department's capital city did not undergo an important decline between the periods of January to March and August to October 1943. It most certainly did, and for one principal reason: the arrests of April and May. Indeed, a report by the General Intelligence Service, dated May 8, 1943, indicated the following:

In the wake of the numerous arrests operated by the German authorities against the Jews [in the Vaucluse], the apprehension of the latter has not diminished. [...] Many Jews have left the city of Avignon or the department, preferring the zones occupied by the Italian troupes.⁶⁵

Thus, there is very little doubt that some Jews, and perhaps even a large number of them, fled Avignon for other, more secure locations—both within and outside the department—in and around that time. But the idea that nearly three-quarters of them did so almost defies logic, for reasons that will be discussed shortly.

There is another factor that helps account for the significantly lower number of Jews identified as living in the Vaucluse in the period from August to October 1943: missing lists. Although it is not possible to determine precisely how many local censuses

⁶⁴ Central Police Commissariat in Avignon, “Liste alphabétique des Juifs français et étrangers actuellement en résidence à Avignon,” October 15, 1943, ADV, 7W15. Two other Jews were recorded as living in Avignon on lists from other communes. See, for example, the information concerning Yvonne Yenni (née Garson) on the census from Sault. Mayor’s Office in Sault, “État des Israélites—Commune de Sault,” September 16, 1943, ADV, 7W15.

⁶⁵ National Police, General Intelligence Service, Intelligence report for the week of May 2 to 8, 1943, May 8, 1943, ADV, 3W28.

concerning this period are missing from the archives, it is certainly the case for some of the smaller communes. In his book titled *Not the Germans Alone: A Son's Search for the Truth of Vichy*, Isaac Lewendel spoke at length about a document that he had found while conducting research in Avignon. Dated October 2, 1943 and signed by a certain Bérard, the document in question is a list containing the names of ten Jews from Le Pontet, the town in which Isaac and his mother, Sarah, lived during the war.⁶⁶ It constitutes, without a doubt, one of the many *État des Israélites* that were conducted at the municipal level in the summer and spring of 1943.⁶⁷ And yet, this particular list could not be found in the archives, its fate being anybody's guess.⁶⁸ Again, it is rather difficult to say just how exceptional this case is. There are reasons to believe that it is not an isolated one, however. In fact, for five other communes (Pernes-les-Fontaines, Le Thor, Châteauneuf-de-Gadagne, Lagnes and Buoux), the Jewish population is known for every time period except for that between August and October 1943. Are these lists also missing from the archives? Who knows? One thing is certain, however. Without them, the total Jewish population of the Vaucluse during the period in question appears to be smaller than it probably was in actuality.

Regardless of the credence one gives to the number of Jews recorded as living in the Vaucluse between August and October 1943, the Jewish population of the

⁶⁶ See Lewendel, *Not the Germans Alone*, pp. 268-269.

⁶⁷ In fact, Lewendel provided a digitized copy of this list on the website that he and several colleagues created to tell the story of the Jews of the Vaucluse during the Second World War. It was not of sufficiently good quality to be used, however. See http://www.not-the-germans-alone.org/Hiver/html/mesures_3.html.

⁶⁸ Even though the list concerning Le Pontet could not be found in the archives, two Jews were nevertheless identified as living in the town during the period from August to October 1943. Both of them (Anton Spitzer and Abraham Zilbermann) were found on lists from other cities, which indicated that they were “foreign worker[s] detached to the camp in Le Pontet.” Mayor’s Office in Beaumont-de-Pertuis, “État des Israélites—Commune de Beaumont-de-Pertuis,” September 1, 1943 and Police Commissariat in Orange, “État des Israélites—Commune d’Orange” (specifically the section concerning the Jews “who were no longer in Orange at the time of the present census”), September 13, 1943, ADV, 7W15.

department reached its peak during the second period, that is, between January and March 1943. Thereafter, it slowly and gradually declined. Interestingly, however, there were more Jews living in the department in May 1944 than there had been in June and July 1941, in spite of the hundreds of arrests that had taken place up until that point. This is almost certainly a testament to the perception that many Jews had of the Vaucluse—namely, as a place offering safety and refuge. It also serves to highlight the importance of the department's geographical location in the fate of the Jews. Unlike the Vaucluse, whose cities, towns and villages tended to increase from 1941 to 1944, there were many other locations—in particular, in the northern half of the country—where the trend was the exact opposite. In Lens (Pas-de-Calais), for example, the thriving Jewish community of nearly 1,000 strong (in 1939) had, as a result of flights and arrests, virtually ceased to exist by October 1942.⁶⁹ Geography, it seems, was of critical importance.

Thus far, the discussion has centred on the overall trends in the fluctuations of the Jewish population of the department as a whole between 1941 and 1944. But, one might ask, how did these fluctuations manifest themselves at the communal level? Table 8 reveals that, in the period between June and July 1941 and January to March 1943, the communes that saw the greatest influx of Jews in terms of percentages—and, occasionally, even in hard numbers—were those with a population between 5,001 and 10,000 and a select few of those with a population ranging from 1,001 to 5,000. Medium to larger-sized towns—including Apt, Pertuis, Sorgues, Le Pontet and Vaison-la-Romaine—witnessed an explosion of their Jewish population, with an increase ranging from two, three, four and, in one case, even six hundred percent. In terms of percentages, that is significantly greater than the increases seen by the department's most populated

⁶⁹ Mariot and Zalc, *Face à la persécution*, pp. 121 and 247.

cities (Avignon, Carpentras, Cavaillon and Orange), whose Jewish population did not even double. Moreover, the numerical increases of some of the lesser-populated communes kept up with and, indeed, occasionally surpassed that of the largest cities of the Vaucluse. Apt, Pertuis and Le Pontet, for example, saw their numbers grow by thirty-seven, fifty-five and thirty-seven Jews, respectively. The Jewish population of Avignon, Carpentras and Cavaillon, on the other hand, increased by thirteen, forty-eight and forty-six persons, while the number of Jews living in Orange remained exactly the same.

But why was this the case? Why did Jews seem to shun the more populated cities of the department? The answer has already been hinted at, and it had little to do with the Jews' preferences. As previously mentioned, there was an attempt on the part of the authorities to disperse the Jews from the more densely populated communes and to relocate them to ones that were more remote. This was accomplished in one of two ways: by coopting them into a foreign labour battalion or by forcing them to reside in a predetermined location, through the policy of forced residence.

In a letter to the Chief of the *Police aux questions juives* in Marseille, dated April 16, 1942, the Prefect of Vaucluse lamented that the relocation of the Jews was proving to be more difficult than it had initially been thought. "The availabilities, as reported by the gendarmerie, currently seem to be insufficient," wrote the prefect. "They do not allow [...] for the dispersal of the surplus [Jewish] population for which there is a pressing need to drive away from the particularly overpopulated agglomerations of Avignon, Orange and Carpentras." It was imperative that they be dispersed, he argued,

because their “presence [...] constitutes a real danger to security and public hygiene.”⁷⁰ Indeed, this had been the impetus for the recent relocation of some twenty-nine Jewish families from Avignon to Sorgues and Vaison-la-Romaine and the invitation, extended to twenty-five other families, to leave Orange for a number of smaller communes within the department.⁷¹ Thus, Jews—especially foreign ones—were not always free to choose their place of residence. In many instances, they were simply assigned a commune in which to live. Evidently, this had an impact on the fluctuations of the Jewish population of cities, towns and villages throughout the Vaucluse. It also helps explain how, in the period between June and July 1941 and January to March 1943, the greatest influx of Jews—percentages-wise and, occasionally, numbers-wise—had been seen not by the major cities of the department but by those that, on the population ladder, were on the third and fourth rungs.

The towns and villages on the latter half of the population ladder—those with fewer than 1,000 inhabitants—tended to experience an influx of Jews but only later on. Indeed, of the thirty-one locations fitting this population profile (and having had a Jewish presence at some point during the war), fifteen—or half—of them had no Jewish residents in June and July 1941. Of these fifteen towns and villages, six had Jews living within their communal boundaries by January to March 1943. Seven others recorded having Jewish residents—for the first time—in the period from August to October 1943, while the final two did so in May 1944. This stands in rather sharp contrast with the very

⁷⁰ Letter from the Prefect of Vaucluse to the Chief of the *Police aux questions juives* in Marseille, April 16, 1942, CDJC, LXXII-17.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

small number of communes (six out of forty-three) that, while having a population of more than 1,000, had no Jewish residents in June and July 1941.⁷²

This was not, however, the sole thing that distinguished the towns and villages from the cities, both large and small. In fact, the patterns behind the fluctuations of the Jewish population of these different locales between January to March 1943 and May 1944 varied considerably.⁷³ The towns and villages with fewer than 1,000 inhabitants generally saw an increase in their Jewish population in the period from January to March 1943 and August to October 1943. Thereafter, the number of Jews typically declined through May 1944. For the cities and towns with populations over 1,000, the trend was, more often than not, the exact opposite—a drop in the number of Jews living in the commune was followed by a period of gains. Thus, there appears to have been a movement of Jews from the larger cities of the department to the smaller towns and villages during the period between January to March 1943 and August to October 1943, that is, right around the time that the Germans occupied the Italian zone in southeast France, following Italy's exit from the Second World War. What the numbers also suggest is that this outflow of Jews from the Vaucluse's most populated cities was—within seven months—followed by an influx of returnees. Clearly, something was drawing the Jews back towards the larger cities and towns.⁷⁴ But what was it?

⁷² All six of these communes recorded having Jewish residents by January to March 1943.

⁷³ The fluctuations between these periods had nine possible permutations, with the Jewish population either increasing (+), decreasing (-) or remaining the same (=).

⁷⁴ The number of cities, towns and villages of the Vaucluse having had Jewish residents between 1941 and 1944 seems to underscore the Jews' preference for the more populated municipalities (see Table 9).

*Table 9: Cities, Towns and Villages of the Vaucluse Having Had at Least One Jewish Resident, 1941-1944.*⁷⁵

| Population of the Cities, Towns and Villages of the Vaucluse (1939) | Number of Communes of that Population Profile | Number of Communes Having Had at Least One Jewish Resident from 1941 to 1944 |
|---|---|--|
| Over 15,000 | 1 | 1 |
| 10,001 to 15,000 | 3 | 3 |
| 5,001 to 10,000 | 4 | 4 |
| 1,001 to 5,000 | 42 | 35 |
| 501 to 1,000 | 32 | 19 |
| 251 to 500 | 31 | 8 |
| 1 to 250 | 38 | 4 |
| Total | 151 | 74 |

Were the more populated communes favoured because they appeared to provide better conditions in which to hide, by, as Bernard Prieuer noted, allowing one to “blend [in] a little better?”⁷⁶ That was perhaps part of it. But if cities had truly been viewed as being that much safer than towns and villages, then why had so many Jews been compelled to flee them—for precisely these smaller municipalities—in the wake of the German occupation of the former Italian zone? The situation is all the more perplexing when one considers that, by heading to one of the more populated cities of the department, the Jews made themselves easier targets for arrest, since roundups were more frequently conducted in the areas with the heaviest concentrations of Jews, because of the greater potential for victims.

What if, on the other hand, the decision to make one’s way from a town or village to a city had been made *not* because of the potential for protection and safety—but in spite of it? To some, this may seem like an absurd proposition. Surely, some

⁷⁵ Seventy-seven of the department’s 151 cities, towns and villages never recorded having Jewish residents from June and July 1941 to May 1944.

⁷⁶ Prieuer, VHA, Part II: 2:43-2:50.

might object, the Jews' personal safety and survival must have been the paramount concern behind most—if not all—of their decisions, including those concerning their place of residence. Looking back on the tragedy that was the Holocaust with the benefit of hindsight, one understands the instinct to view things in such a way. But doing so obscures the fact that, in order to survive the war, the Jews first needed to “survive” day-to-day. Their short-term and long-term survival were, however, sometimes at odds with each other.

Even though the larger cities of the department were more often the objects of roundups and mass arrests, they did offer something that the towns and villages frequently did not—something that, as numerous Jews pointed out, was critical to their everyday existence: possibilities of employment. Pinkus Holcman, whose family had fled Paris in June 1940 and had transited in Toulouse on their way to the Vaucluse, explained the situation thusly: “[Upon arriving in the department,] we were given housing accommodations in a little village called Bédoin and, thereafter, in another village called Caromb. We stayed there, I believe, for at least one year, until we were able to obtain the authorisation to reside in Avignon. [...] We needed to move to a big city,” Holcman stressed, “because it was necessary to work. And in the small villages, there wasn’t any work.”⁷⁷

The decision to separate the family (following the German occupation of the southern zone) and the way in which this separation was done are also telling. “Once the southern zone was occupied, things really changed,” explained Holcman. “As soon as the Germans entered, [...] there began to be rumours [...] that they were going to roundup the Jews [and] that it was necessary to hide. So, at that moment, my parents

⁷⁷ Holcman, VHA, Part II: 9:16-9:40.

decided to disperse all of the children [...].”⁷⁸ Two of Pinkus’ sisters were sent to a cloister in Tarascon-sur-Ariège (Ariège); another, in a cloister in the department of Ardèche. The remaining children were dispersed throughout the Vaucluse.⁷⁹ Thus, Herszek and Chaja, the heads of the Holcman household, sent their children to some of the most rural and isolated parts of France—almost certainly because they deemed them to be more safe. But where did they, themselves, choose to go? “My parents [...] were still in Avignon,” recalled Pinkus.

And after [...] they had dispersed the children, they left for Grenoble, which was in the Italian zone. And in the Italian zone, there were many more opportunities for the Jews to hide than in the German zone. Avignon was occupied by the Germans. Therefore, they left.⁸⁰

One suspects, however, that there was probably more to the choice of Grenoble than the fact that the city found itself within the Italian occupation zone. As has already been mentioned, Avignon was the only commune of the Vaucluse that, from November 1942 to September 1943, lay outside of this zone. Thus, if their only concern had been to flee the territories under German control, then the Holcmans could have chosen to find refuge in any one of the remaining 150 cities, towns and villages of the department. But they did not. Instead of moving to a neighbouring municipality, they opted to settle in a commune nearly 250 kilometres away from the capital of Vaucluse. When one recalls the motive that had pushed them to leave the towns of Bédoin and Caromb for Avignon in the first place, it seems likely that the same consideration would have also influenced their choice this time around. Thus, the Holcmans almost certainly chose Grenoble not only because the city was located in the Italian occupation zone but also—and more

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, Part II: 12:17-12:41.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, Part II: 14:33-15:01 and 16:21-16:38.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, Part II: 17:09-17:32.

importantly—because, as a commune with a population more than double that of Avignon, it offered much better prospects for employment and, therefore, subsistence than the small towns and villages of the department of Vaucluse.

Implicit in the Holcman case is the recognition on the part of some Jews that smaller communes were likely to be more safe than the larger, more heavily populated cities and towns. Why else would Herszek and Chaja have dispersed their children to some of the most rural and isolated parts of the country? But safety, as this case highlights, was not—and could not be—the sole consideration when deciding on where to reside. Indeed, a commune perceived as providing a certain degree of safety and protection was an attractive option only insofar as it also offered possibilities of employment and, by extension, means of subsistence—things that were more frequently available in larger cities. Due to their heavier Jewish presence, the latter were, however, more often the objects of roundups and large-scale arrests. Thus, the situation represented something of a paradox: the locations that could best provide for one's everyday existence and immediate survival were also the most dangerous in the long-term.

Of course, not all Jews were required to make that trade-off. Those of means could afford to reside in a small commune where the danger was less omnipresent, even if it offered fewer opportunities for employment. And this is, indeed, what many of them did. “The majority of the Israelites are trying to go unnoticed,” indicates a report by the General Intelligence Service, dated June 26, 1943. “Those for whom their financial situation permits have left the large centres and have taken refuge in the small

communes, where they are less well-known.”⁸¹ Consequently, one’s desire to hide and to make oneself as invisible as possible to the French and German authorities was insufficient. One also needed the means to do so—a privilege had by only a minority of Jews. There was, thus, a clear hierarchy within the Jewish population. Whether it was a hierarchy of persecution or one of privilege depended, in this instance, on one’s place on the economic and social ladder.

INTRA-DEPARTMENTAL MOVEMENT OF THE JEWS, 1941-1944

The fluctuations of the Jewish population are, it should be pointed out, an imperfect means of gauging the movement of the Jews within the department, because one can never be certain whether these were the result of new arrivals or of movements of individuals already residing within the Vaucluse’s territorial limits. The many lists and censuses found in the local archives in Avignon do, however, present one with a rather unique opportunity. Providing, as they do, the addresses of individual Jews at various points in time from June and July 1941 to May 1944, these lists enable one to piece together and to reconstruct the movements of the Jews over the course of the war.

As always, this is not without certain caveats. In some instances, Jews were recorded as living at a particular address even though they had already been arrested and deported. Alexandre and Fernande Jablonski (née Liwarek), for example, were identified on the census of May 13, 1944, as living in the town of Valréas.⁸² The author of the list in question evidently did not know that the couple, originally from Paris, had been

⁸¹ National Police, General Intelligence Service, Intelligence report for the week of June 20 to 26, 1943, June 26, 1943, ADV, 3W28.

⁸² Prefecture of Vaucluse, “Liste nominative des Juifs français (13 mai 1944),” May 13, 1944, ADV, 7W15.

deported to Auschwitz via Drancy more than two months earlier, aboard convoy 69.⁸³ What is more, certain lists are occasionally at odds with one another, providing, at times, contradictory and, indeed, erroneous information. Both the census of July 1, 1941 and that of May 13, 1944, indicated that the Bomsel family (comprised of Jean Gustave, Yvonne, and their daughter, Lise Charlotte) resided at 8 Rue Saint-Jean in Orange.⁸⁴ It comes as something of a surprise, then, to read the following passage in the local census of September 1943, conducted by the Police Commissariat in Orange: Jean and Yvonne Bomsel (née Geismar) “left Orange many months ago without signalling their departure to my services. They would currently be in Switzerland without a known address.”⁸⁵ The Bomsel family had indeed made their way to Switzerland, having crossed the border illegally on January 17, 1943, at Ville-la-Grand, near Annemasse.⁸⁶ In spite of their occasional shortcomings, the censuses conducted in the department of Vaucluse between 1941 and 1944 provide, when compared between themselves, an overall picture of the movement of the Jews during the war years—albeit, admittedly, an imperfect one.

There are sixteen permutations to the appearances of names of individual Jews on the groups of lists from the four periods identified earlier, which, as will be recalled, were the following: (1) June and July 1941, (2) January to March 1943, (3) August to October 1943 and (4) May 1944. Indeed, an individual’s name could appear on any one,

⁸³ Deportation list of convoy 69, CDJC, C69_25. Interestingly, upon his arrival at Drancy, Alexandre received a receipt for the items that he had been made to turn over, which indicated that he had been living (presumably, with his wife) at “2 Bd Joseph Vallier, Grenoble”—thus, outside the Vaucluse—prior to his arrest and internment. See Drancy receipts issued to Alexandre Jablonski, March 4 and 5, 1944, CDJC, CF104_275 and CF105_313.

⁸⁴ Prefecture of Vaucluse, “État nominatif des Juifs français résidant en Vaucluse au 1^{er} juillet 1941,” July 1, 1941 and Prefecture of Vaucluse, “Liste nominative des Juifs français (13 mai 1944),” May 13, 1944, ADV, 7W15.

⁸⁵ Police Commissariat in Orange, “État des Israélites—Commune d’Orange,” September 13, 1943, ADV, 7W15.

⁸⁶ Questionnaire by Jean Bomsel, January 25, 1943, Swiss National Archives (hereafter SNA), Series N, Record Group E 4264-1985/196, Jewish refugee file number 8191. Digitized copy found at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (hereafter USHMM), RG-58.001M, Reel 181, File number 8191.

two or three lists—just as it could appear on all or, conversely, none of them. The sixteen permutations can, however, be further condensed, if one operates on the assumption that an individual was probably in the department in an intermediary period (even if their name did not appear on a list from that period), as long as their name appeared on a list from a later date. For example, if a Jew’s name appeared on the census of July 1, 1941 and that of May 13, 1944, one might infer that they were most likely present in the department from January to March 1943 and August to October 1943, even if their name did not appear on the lists from these two intermediary periods. In this case, the number of possible permutations would be reduced to eleven. Table 10 provides a breakdown of the number and percentage of cases represented by the different permutations, which, for clarity, have been condensed as per the method outlined above.

Table 10: Permutations of the Appearances of Names of Individual Jews on the Groups of Lists from June and July 1941 to May 1944.

| Permutations of the Appearances of Names of Individual Jews on the Groups of Lists from June and July 1941 to May 1944 | Number of Cases | Percentage of Cases |
|--|-----------------|---------------------|
| No Lists | 287 | 10.2 % |
| JJ-1941 | 479 | 16.9 % |
| JM-1943 | 137 | 4.8 % |
| AO-1943 | 118 | 4.2 % |
| M-1944 | 39 | 1.4 % |
| JJ-1941 and JM-1943 | 68 | 2.4 % |
| JM-1943 and AO-1943 | 18 | 0.6 % |

| | | |
|---|-------|---------|
| AO-1943 and M-1944 | 34 | 1.2 % |
| JJ-1941 to AO-1943: | 37 | 1.3 % |
| <i>Condensed from:</i> | | |
| - <i>JJ-1941 and AO-1943</i> | 21 | 0.7 % |
| - <i>JJ-1941, JM-1943 and AO-1943</i> | 16 | 0.6 % |
| JM-1943 to M-1944: | 682 | 24.1 % |
| <i>Condensed from:</i> | | |
| - <i>JM-1943 and M-1944</i> | 377 | 13.3 % |
| - <i>JM-1943, AO-1943 and M-1944</i> | 305 | 10.8 % |
| JJ-1941 to M-1944: | 927 | 32.8 % |
| <i>Condensed from:</i> | | |
| - <i>JJ-1941 and M-1944</i> | 16 | 0.6 % |
| - <i>JJ-1941, JM-1943 and M-1944</i> | 415 | 14.7 % |
| - <i>JJ-1941, AO-1943 and M-1944</i> | 11 | 0.4 % |
| - <i>Every List: JJ-1941, JM-1943, AO-1943 and M-1944</i> | 485 | 17.2 % |
| Total | 2,826 | 100.0 % |

Legend:

- JJ-1941: June and July 1941.
- JM-1943: January to March 1943.
- AO-1943: August to October 1943.
- M-1944: May 1944.

A number of things jump out from Table 10. The first is the number of Jews (287) whose names never appeared on any of the lists from the period in question. This figure—which represents over 10.0 percent of the entire Jewish population of the Vaucluse during the war—probably helps explain the fact that so many previously unidentified Jews were found via other sources, including survivor testimonies in the Visual History Archive.

The thing that is perhaps the most unexpected is the number of Jews who remained in the department for the long haul. In fact, 927—or one-third—of them are

recorded as having lived in the Vaucluse throughout the period between June and July 1941 and May 1944. What is more, an additional 682 Jews—or 24.1 percent—resided in the department between January to March 1943 and May 1944. What these numbers seem to suggest is that, once Jews settled in the department of Vaucluse, they tended, more often than not, to remain. But, one might ask, did they reside at the same address the entire time or did they move about—either from location to location within the department or within the city, town or village in which they had originally taken up residence? The results are rather surprising.

In the database upon which the present research rests, a number of key elements concerning the movements of the individual Jews were recorded: (1) the “type” of movement observed—that is, whether the move had taken place within one’s city, town or village of residence or, rather, within (or without) the department; (2) the moment at which the move occurred—between, for instance, June and July 1941 and January to March 1943 or August to October 1943 and May 1944; and (3) the distinguishing feature of the move—whether, for example, one had moved from a city to a village or from a village to a town. In order not to overburden the reader, only one of the tables will be reproduced here—the one concerning the types of movements observed (see Table 11).

One is immediately struck by the large number of Jews (841) having remained at the same address during their stay in the Vaucluse, which did not necessarily span the period from June and July 1941 to May 1944. This figure is all the more impressive when one considers the methodology used to count the instances in which individual Jews actually moved—corresponding to the bottom four “types of movements” in Table 11. Indeed, multiple moves were recorded individually. Thus, if an individual moved

within the same city or village twice, then the move was registered two times. The same logic applied to the other types of movements. If a Jew moved within the department only to flee it at a later date, they were counted both as having “moved within the department” and as having “left the department.” By definition, however, Jews who remained at the same address could only be counted once. The large number of such cases is, thus, highly surprising and suggests that there was perhaps less movement within the Jewish population of the department than one might have initially expected. But what do the other numbers show?

Table 11: Types of Individual Movements Observed between June and July 1941 and May 1944.⁸⁷

| Types of Movements Observed | Number of Times Movement Observed |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| No Traceable Movements <i>(Individual's Name Does Not Appear on Any of the Lists)</i> | 286 |
| Uncertain Movements <i>(Individual's Name Appears on List from Only One Period)</i> | 749 |
| Unknown <i>(Information on the Individual's Location Was Not Provided)</i> | 13 |
| Remained at the Same Address | 841 |
| Remained in the Same City, Town or Village | 541 |
| Moved Within the City, Town or Village | 410 |
| Moved Within the Department | 147 |

⁸⁷ There are a greater number of movements observed (3,030) than there were of individual Jews having lived in the department (2,826), because some individuals were identified as having undertaken more than one type of movement—having, for example, moved within the city and, subsequently, within the department—and were, thus, counted in each of the applicable categories.

| | |
|---|-------|
| Left the Department | 27 |
| Destination Unknown, But Recorded as Having Moved | 16 |
| Total | 3,030 |

In total, six hundred movements by 396 Jews were recorded as having taken place between June and July 1941 and May 1944. (Thus, half of those having changed residences did so more than once.) As one can see, these numbers are considerably lower than that of those who were identified as having remained at the same address, which again suggests that remaining in one location was perhaps more common than moving about. This impression needs to be heavily qualified, however. The primary reason is that the total number of recorded movements could—and probably should—be significantly higher, because it currently excludes, on the basis of missing information, individuals that may have moved and others that almost certainly had. For instance, the 286 Jews whose names did not appear on any of the lists from the four periods concerned were counted as having “no traceable movements.” Had they moved around at some point in time, either within the commune in which they had taken up residence or within the department? Perhaps, but it is impossible to say for certain. Consider another example. The information pertaining to the 541 Jews who “remained in the same city, town or village” was, with regards to one’s place of residence, often limited to the name of the municipality, with the full address seldom being provided. Consequently, any changes of residence, if there had been any, would have gone unnoticed and, thus, remained uncounted.⁸⁸ Finally, there were, as has already been noted, instances in which

⁸⁸ There were other instances in which missing information prevented the identification of Jews who had moved. See Table 11, categories labelled “Uncertain Movements” (749) and “Unknown” (13).

individuals were identified as residing at the same address as an earlier period, even though they were no longer living there.

When Jews did move, however, they did so mostly within their respective municipalities. As Table 11 indicates, 410 Jews moved within the city, town or village in which they resided, while only 147 of them relocated to another commune within the department, with fewer still having left the Vaucluse altogether (27). The numbers thus suggest that there was a stronger intra—rather than inter—municipal movement of Jews in the department of Vaucluse from 1941 to 1944. (But this, too, needs to be qualified—for reasons similar to those discussed above.) Also noteworthy is the fact that there does not appear to have been a “preferred” time to move, with the recorded movements having been almost perfectly consistent between each of the four time periods. One possible explanation is that each one of these periods witnessed an event that enticed a certain number of Jews to move: the roundups of August 1942, the German occupation of the southern zone in November of the same year, the departure of the Italians from southeast France in September 1943 and the roundups of 1943 and 1944.

Although they were less frequent, the movements between the different communes of the department followed recurring patterns. More often than not, the Jews moved to smaller, less populated cities, towns and villages than the ones in which they had been residing—although, as has previously been mentioned, there were multiple instances of individuals returning to the larger cities, especially in the period preceding May 1944. The most popular destinations were the towns with populations ranging from 1,001 to 5,000 people. These, it seems, *appeared* to offer the best of both worlds: somewhat better opportunities for employment (and, thus, means of subsistence) than the smaller towns and villages, and slightly more protection from arrest, since one could

“blend in” a little better in communes of this size than in the smaller ones, all while being less exposed to the roundups and raids more often targeting the larger cities.

Another common feature of the movements having taken place within the department was that, unlike what one might expect, the Jews often found refuge in communes that were not all that far from the ones they had left. The case of the Meyer family (comprised of Marcel, Yvonne, and their three children, Nelly, Gilbert and Danielle⁸⁹) is an example of one such move. “We stayed [in Apt] until September 1943,” recalled Danielle in her testimony for the Visual History Archive. “[...] Then, we moved and went to Oppède,” which, she pointed out, was “a few kilometres from there.”⁹⁰ Oppède is, in fact, twenty-four kilometres away from Apt—a rather short distance, when one considers that Lapalud and Beaumont-de-Pertuis (the two communes of the Vaucluse furthest from each other) are 131 kilometres apart. In spite of the towns’ relative proximity to one another, Danielle added the following remark: “Once there [in Oppède], well, we went deep underground, [...] as we were trying our best to remain undetected.”⁹¹ The Meyers thus believed that their best chance of avoiding detection was to take refuge in a commune that was a mere stone’s throw away from the one they had left. They were far from alone in this regard.

The Ickowiczs from Carpentras, for example, fled the commune once it was discovered that bureaucrats at the prefecture had come to realize that they had failed to declare themselves as Jews. Rather than register with the proper authorities, the family left the department’s second city for “an isolated farm in the countryside,” ironically

⁸⁹ Neither Marcel nor Yvonne was the biological parent of all the children. Nelly, whose surname was Dreyfus, was Yvonne’s daughter. Gilbert and Danielle were, on the other hand, Marcel’s children.

⁹⁰ Herrmann, VHA, Part II: 3:18-3:32. See also Part I: 23:44-23:48.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, Part II: 3:32-3:40.

named “Worry-Free Farm” (“*Ferme Sans Souci*”), that was owned by Pinchos Estry, a family friend, who also happened to be Jewish. The farm was located in the “small, little village” of Mazan, “six kilometres from Carpentras.” Unlike the Meyers, who had taken on new identities in order to better conceal themselves, the Ickowiczs were “half hidden, half there.”⁹²

One understands what was probably the Jews’ desire to remain near the place they called home or, in the case of those who had come from outside the department, the now-familiar environment in which they were trying to build as normal a life as possible. But, one wonders, how could they expect to be safe in a commune that, for the most part, happened to be right next door to the one in which they had been living, especially for those who, like the Ickowiczs, took fewer precautions than others (the Meyers, for example) to mask their identity? For one thing, many Jews believed—rightly, in many cases—that, by simply putting a little distance between themselves and their former place of residence (even if only a few kilometres), they would make their whereabouts more difficult to ascertain, thus removing them from the immediate crosshairs of the local authorities.

The events surrounding the departure of the Kempowskis from Avignon is emblematic of this thought process. Having arrived in the department from Germany via Annemasse in 1940, the Kempowski family (comprised of Léo, Claire, and their son, Manfred) fled the Vaucluse’s capital city for Montfavet⁹³ after having been informed by a friendly police officer that their hideout had been discovered and that “it would be

⁹² Ickowicz, VHA, Part II: 4:01-6:35, 9:23-9:24 and 15:08-15:10.

⁹³ Montfavet is, in fact, technically part of the commune of Avignon. It is, however, located several kilometres outside of the city centre and maintains a rather unique administrative relationship with the capital city.

better if [they] got out of there one way or the other.” Luckily, the Kempowskis had endeared themselves to a couple of Gentile peasants that owned a farmhouse “in the country.” “When I say the country,” Manfred explained in his interview, “it’s only three kilometres [...] from Avignon. But,” he insisted, “that’s [the] countryside.” The couple had apparently made his parents the following proposition: ““Why don’t you hide in our house for as long as you can? And then at least you won’t be so in view to the population and to the police.”” The Kempowskis took them up on their offer. “They [the French couple] gave us a room, [a] small room, [...] my father, my mother and me. [...] We hid there, in the countryside.”⁹⁴ And there they remained for the next few months, nearly within eyesight of their previous residence in Avignon but, importantly, out of sight of the German and French authorities. Their whereabouts were, at least for the time being, unknown.

The sense that safety and security for oneself and for one’s family might be found in a neighbouring commune—even one no more than a few kilometres away—was heightened by one’s perception of geography and distance, a perception unlikely to be shared by the current, contemporary reader. Quite simply, the world does not appear as vast today as it did eighty years ago. Rachel Bobryker, who, for a certain time, lived in Entraigues-sur-la-Sorgue with her parents and younger brother, admitted as much during her interview with the Shoah Foundation in 1996: “Avignon [...] was the large city not far from Entraigues. Very close, as it seems, but, at the time, it didn’t feel [like it].”⁹⁵ The town of Entraigues is indeed “very close” to the Vauclisian capital—exactly fourteen kilometres away.

⁹⁴ Kempowski, VHA, Part III: 5:30-7:27.

⁹⁵ Roth, VHA, Part I: 7:28-7:36.

The sensation that distances were greater than they were in actuality was probably the result of the fact that, at the time, means of transportation were less ubiquitous and readily available than they are today. The shortages on this front during the war⁹⁶, which were exacerbated by wartime exigencies, may have given some Jews the impression that, by putting a little distance between themselves and their former place of residence, they would be less within the reach of the authorities. The relatively few means of transportation available may, on the other hand, have prevented some Jews from going further than they otherwise would have wished and might also help account for the large number of Jews who, from 1941 to 1944, remained at the same address or who only moved within their municipality.

Whatever the reason, moving to another commune within the department—even one that was right next door—could prove to be a saving grace. Indeed, none of the Jews discussed above—neither the Meyers, the Ickowiczs nor the Kempowskis—were arrested after having relocated to a neighbouring town. Indeed, the former two families

⁹⁶ The chronic shortages in means of transportation were a real source of irritation for members of the administration tasked with locating and identifying the Jews. In a report dated April 1, 1943, Jean Lebon, the chief inspector of the *Service d'enquête et de contrôle* (SEC) in the department of Vaucluse, lamented that “the rarefaction of means of transportation and the disappearance of some of these from certain localities” were making his job “particularly difficult.” A month earlier, he had complained to his superior in Marseille that “certain localities of the department are totally deprived of modes of locomotion,” which was, again, making his tasks all the more difficult to accomplish. Lebon also provided an example of the difficulties that he was encountering.

Having to conduct an investigation in Ménerbes, the method by which I arrive is as follows:

Train from Avignon to Cavaillon at 5:15. Arriving [in] Cavaillon [at] 6:25, I am required to wait until 9:00, that is, the time at which the offices of the Police Commissariat open, so that I may obtain a bicycle. Ménerbes is located 15 kms away from the latter locality, and the location of my investigation is 4 kms from there.

So, in order to conduct my one-hour investigation, the entire day is lost. Finishing [my day], I return to Avignon at 21:15.

In order to remedy the current situation, I would ask that a motorcycle, type: moped, be given to me for the execution of my duties. [Emphasis in original]

See Jean Lebon to the Prefect of Vaucluse, Activity Report No. 4 (Period from March 1 to 31, 1943), April 1, 1943 and Jean Lebon to the Regional Director of the SEC in Marseille, Activity Report No. 3 (Period from February 1 to 28, 1943), AN, AJ³⁸ 3806.

would not even find it necessary to move again, remaining, respectively, in Oppède and Mazan until the Liberation.⁹⁷

Of course, not all Jews remained in the department until war's end. Indeed, a number of them left and never looked back. The Ehrlichmans (Mordechai, Chaya, and their two children, Édouard and Betty), for example, fled the Vaucluse in October 1943, after having resided in Avignon for nearly eighteen months.⁹⁸ The family took refuge in Mézérac (Haute-Loire), “a tiny village... a backwater, as they say,” located in “the furthest depths of *la France profonde*.”⁹⁹ Returning to Table 11, the Ehrlichman case appears to have been a rather exceptional one, since only a handful of other Jewish families (a total of twenty-seven individuals) were identified as having “left the department” on the groups of lists and censuses produced between June and July 1941 and May 1944. In this particular instance, however, the numbers must be taken with a grain of salt. The primary reason is that the sources are often vague and uncertain with regards to the Jews who had abandoned their place of residence, offering slight variations of the same refrain: “left Malaucène without leaving an address,” “left six days ago, destination unknown” or “left Orange at an unknown date for an unknown destination.”¹⁰⁰ Without proof that the Jews in question had actually left the Vaucluse (something that these short passages suggest but do not confirm), they could in no way be counted as having done so, even though there were some among them that almost certainly had. In the end, identifying the individuals who fled and reconstructing the

⁹⁷ Herrmann, VHA, Part II: 5:28-5:34.

⁹⁸ Ermantier, VHA, Part II: 1:15-1:18.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, Part II: 17:10-17:23.

¹⁰⁰ National Gendarmerie, Malaucène Brigade, “Liste des personnes d’origine juive résidant actuellement dans la circonscription de la brigade [de Malaucène],” March 10, 1943, ADV, 7W15; National Gendarmerie, Vaucluse Company, Avignon Section, List concerning “persons that left without leaving an address,” August 26, 1942, ADV, 7W16; Police Commissariat in Orange, “État des Israélites—Commune d’Orange,” September 13, 1943, ADV, 7W15.

trajectories they took following their departure is, with the exception of those who testified after the war, nearly impossible. Most disappear from the documents, never to reappear—their movements forever remaining unknown.

CHAPTER 3

ARRESTS, 1942-1944¹

AN EVER-CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF PERSECUTION

Hundreds of Jews, who eventually came to reside in the Vaucluse, travelled from Central and Eastern Europe to France in the period between 1933 and 1942. Prior to their arrival, however, many had been arrested in their home country and had had to endure the rigours of the German concentration camp system. Leopold Hahn, an Austrian Jew born in 1902, was, for instance, apprehended in Vienna during *Kristallnacht* and sent to Dachau, where he remained until his release in July 1939.² Gustav Rottenberg, another Austrian native, was arrested and interned in the same camp as Hahn on June 3, 1938.³ From Dachau, he was transferred to Buchenwald, where he spent the following eight months. He was released on May 5, 1939 and immigrated to France the following spring.⁴ Unlike his compatriot from Vienna, Rottenberg would, in

¹ A portion of this chapter was presented as a paper at the Lessons and Legacies Conference at Claremont McKenna College in November 2016 and will be part of the upcoming Lessons and Legacies volume. See Adrien Dallaire, “A Different Approach to Microhistory: The Arrests of the Jews of the Vaucluse as Seen through Quantitative Prosopography,” in *Lessons and Legacies XIV: The Holocaust in the 21st Century: Relevance and Challenges in the Digital Age*, edited by Tim Cole and Simone Gigliotti (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, Forthcoming).

² Dachau Entry Register, International Tracing Service (hereafter ITS), GCC 3/61 IA/2, USHMM; International Committee of the Red Cross, Certificate of Incarceration (No. 83019) for Leopold Hahn, ITS, T/D 653 835, USHMM.

³ Dachau Entry Register, ITS, GCC 3/61 IA/2, USHMM.

⁴ Dachau Transfer List, ITS, GCC 3/95 IIG/2, USHMM; “Israélites étrangers âgés de 18 à 40 ans visés par la circulaire télégraphique de M. le Ministre Secrétaire d’État à l’Intérieur No. 12524 – Pol 9 du 18 août 1942,” Undated document (Probably August 1942), ADV, 7W16.

just a few years, find himself once again in a German concentration camp.⁵ But first, he would—as hundreds of other Jews, both French and foreign—be arrested in the place in which he had found refuge: the department of Vaucluse.

ARRESTS, 1942

On August 5, 1942, Henri Cado, the Director General of the National Police, sent the regional prefects in the Unoccupied Zone instructions that, he insisted, were “strictly confidential.” He informed them that Jews of certain nationalities—German, Austrian, Czechoslovak, Polish, Estonian, Lithuanian, Latvian, Russian and a handful of others—who “had entered France after January 1, 1936,” were to be arrested and “transported to the Occupied Zone before September 15. [emphasis in original]” There were, however, to be eleven exceptions: (1) Elderly individuals over sixty years of age; (2) Unaccompanied children under the age of eighteen; (3) Individuals who had served in the French Army or that of an ex-ally; (4) Those having a French spouse or child; (5) Those having a spouse of a nationality other than the ones enumerated above; (6) Those incapable of being transported; (7) Pregnant women; (8) Parents with a child under the age of five; (9) Those whose names appeared on a specific group of lists; (10) Those, whether incorporated into a foreign labour battalion or not, whose departure from their place of employment would gravely prejudice the national economy; and, finally, (11) Those who had distinguished themselves through their artistic, literary or scientific work, or who had rendered some other exceptional service to France. With that, Cado ordered the prefects to provide him (before August 16) two copies of an

⁵ Buchenwald Entry Register, ITS, GCC 2/175 IA/1, USHMM; International Refugee Organization of the ITS, Certificate of Incarceration (No. 14347) for Gustav Rottenberg, ITS, T/D 126 171, USHMM.

alphabetical list of the Jews residing in the regions under their jurisdiction, which should include the individual's date and place of birth, nationality, marital status, profession and address.⁶

Fearing that the directives of August 5 exempted too many Jews from the roundup that was being prepared and that this might, in turn, limit its eventual success, the Vichy government subsequently revised its instructions to the prefects, by narrowing the list of Jews who could benefit from an exemption and by expanding the categories of those to be targeted. The Jews of the previously identified nationalities—and belonging to the following categories—would henceforth be subject to arrest:

A - HAVING ENTERED FRANCE AFTER JANUARY 1, 1936

ALL, except:

- a) The elderly over 60 years of age. (Their family members are to be regrouped; they may opt to follow them.)
- b) Those incapable of being transported. (Their family members are to be regrouped; they are not permitted to opt [to follow them].)
- c) Women who are visibly pregnant. (Their spouse and children under the age of 16 are not to be regrouped.)
- d) Fathers and mothers of children under the age of 2. (Their children under the age of 16 are not to be regrouped. Those over 16 are [to be regrouped].)
- e) Those whose spouse or child is French. (The family is not to be regrouped.)
- f) Those whose spouse and children are Aryan.
- g) Unaccompanied children under the age of 16.
- h) Those whose name appears on the list, annexed to the C.M., of January 20, 1941, and complementary lists, for whom leaving the territory is prohibited.

[...] Are to be regrouped:

- Those who have served under our flag or that of an ex-ally [...].
- Those who claim to be Catholics or Protestants but who are Jews according to the terms set out by the law of June 2, 1941.
- Holders of entry visas for receiving countries.

⁶ Director General of the National Police to the Regional Prefect of Marseille, August 5, 1942, ADV, 7W16.

- Those whose spouse is of a nationality other than the ones previously listed. The latter may opt to follow them. In that case, their children are also to be regrouped.

B - HAVING ENTERED FRANCE BETWEEN JANUARY 1, 1933
AND JANUARY 1, 1936

- Those who have been assigned a residence [forced residence] and their family.
- Those belonging to a foreign labour battalion and their families.
- Those who are in reception and internment camps and their families.
- Those who crossed the demarcation line illegally.
- Those who are single and the family members that wish to join them.

C – REGARDLESS OF THE DATE OF ENTRY IN FRANCE

- Those who have been prosecuted or who have been subject to administrative measures for black market [activities]. [...]
- Those deemed to be undesirable.

The exemptions provided for category A) are evidently applicable to categories B) and C). [...]⁷

In the days leading up to the roundup, even more precise instructions were passed down to the prefects that would be responsible for overseeing the operation, which had been set for Wednesday, August 26. One telegram indicated that the individual prefects should “set the hour at which the operations are to be initiated,” although it was recommended that they “take place at dawn, preferably around four or five o’clock,”⁸ to ensure, one assumes, that the victims would be at home asleep in their beds and, therefore, less likely to evade capture, as well as to guarantee that there would be the fewest possible number of Gentile onlookers, so as to not stir the emotions of the population. Further instructions were also given. The arrested individuals were to be “led under escort [...] to camp des Milles near Aix-en-Provence over the course of the

⁷ Regional Prefect of Marseille to the Prefects of the Region of Marseille, August 24, 1942, ADV, 7W16.

⁸ National Police, Ninth Office to the Regional and Departmental Prefects of the Unoccupied Zone, August 24, 1942, ADV, 7W16.

day.”⁹ In preparation, the Prefect of Vaucluse wrote to the head of the Corps of Engineers of Bridges and Roads and asked that “2 autocars capable of transporting approximately 50 people each” be put “at the disposal of the commander of the gendarmerie.” These vehicles, the prefect insisted, “should be filled with fuel beforehand, so that they might travel the respective distances of 200 and 300 kilometres, and should be delivered, Wednesday, the 26th, at 7 o’clock sharp, in front of the city hall of Avignon.”¹⁰ And thus, slowly but surely, the stage was being set—both in the Vaucluse and in the other departments south of the Demarcation Line—for the massive raid whose stated goal was to “totally liberate” the Unoccupied Zone “of all the foreign Jews whose roundup is planned [...]”¹¹

Early in the morning on August 26, 1942, multiple teams of two or more French gendarmes were dispatched throughout the department of Vaucluse. Their mission was clear: visit the domiciles of—and, ultimately, apprehend—the 111 foreign Jews who had been singled out for arrest by the prefecture, by way of a list prepared specifically for the occasion.¹² The number of those targeted by the arrest measures fell far short of the total number of foreign Jews recorded as living in the department in the census of July 1, 1941 (460) and that of those on a list that, although undated, appears to have been prepared in the days or weeks preceding the raid (707).¹³ Indeed, in spite of the revisions

⁹ Regional Prefect of Marseille to the Prefect of Marseille, August 24, 1942, ADV, 7W16.

¹⁰ Prefect of Vaucluse to the Chief of the Corps of Engineers of Bridges and Roads, August 24, 1942, ADV, 7W16.

¹¹ Copy of a telegram sent from the Office of the Cabinet of the National Police to the Regional Prefects of the Unoccupied Zone, August 22, 1942, ADV, 7W16.

¹² Prefecture of Vaucluse, “Liste des Israélites étrangers entrés en France depuis le 1^{er} janvier 1936 qui doivent faire l’objet des mesures prévues par les instructions de M. le Ministre Secrétaire d’État à l’Intérieur en date des 5 et 15 août 1942,” Undated document (Probably August 1942), ADV, 7W16.

¹³ Prefecture of Vaucluse, “État nominatif des Juifs de nationalité étrangère résidant en Vaucluse au 1^{er} juillet 1941,” July 1, 1941, ADV, 7W15; Prefecture of Vaucluse, “Liste nominative des Juifs étrangers,” Undated document (Probably August 1942), ADV, 7W16.

that had been made to the initial directives issued by Vichy (revisions that had sought to expand the number of Jews eligible for arrest), the names of hundreds of foreign Jewish nationals residing in the department—benefiting, presumably, from one exemption or another—were left off the list of those to be targeted. They were, technically, and for the time being, supposed to be safe from arrest—something that, in the end, was more true in theory than in practice.

The context surrounding the arrests themselves is known primarily from two sources: the police reports issued by the gendarmes tasked with apprehending the targeted individuals and the postwar testimonies of those who were taken into custody on that fateful day in August 1942. The procedure was almost always the same. The gendarmes would present themselves at the homes of the Jews in question. The latter were told that they were being placed under arrest and given a few minutes to prepare a small piece of hand luggage with basic essentials.¹⁴ Their remaining belongings, they were informed, were to be left with a friend or family member or, barring that, would remain in the care of the gendarmerie. Then, depending on the size of the village or town in which they resided, the Jews were transported to a larger municipality and, from there, transferred to Les Milles via the two buses that had been reserved for that purpose.¹⁵

¹⁴ In a select few cases, Jewish families were given up to three hours to prepare their bags before officially being placed under arrest. Incidentally, in each of these cases, the male head of household had been arrested in the days leading up to the roundup and was working in a foreign labour battalion when the gendarmes arrived to take their wife and child (or children) away. The French authorities probably believed—rightly, as it turns out—that these families did not represent much of a flight risk, seeing as all of them had recently arrived in France, had few (if any) contacts in the country and had very little knowledge of the French language. See the following *procès-verbaux*: (No. 331) of the arrest of Abraham, Golda and Liwcia (Idesa) Ajgengold; (No. 332) of the arrest of Jacques, Bertha, Rachel and Laja Becher; and (No. 333) of the arrest of Isaac and Sime (Julie) Strummer, August, 26, 1942, ADV, 7W16.

¹⁵ See, for example, the following *procès-verbaux*: (No. 610) of the arrest of Anna Rochwerger (née Bornstein); (No. 271) of the arrest of Bertha Eisemann (née Kahn); and (No. 1026) of the arrest of Guillaume Ermann, August, 26, 1942, ADV, 7W16.

Rachel Bobryker, who fled Vienna with her parents and younger brother and entered France by way of Belgium sometime after 1936, was one month shy of her eighth birthday when the gendarmes came knocking on the door of her family's apartment on Route d'Avignon in Entraigues-sur-la-Sorgue.¹⁶ In the testimony that she provided for the Visual History Archive, Rachel recalled the episode thusly:

In August [19]42, two French gendarmes came to the door. [...] My mother answered the door, and they asked where my father was. [...] She said that he had gone on business to Marseille or somewhere. And, actually, he was hiding under the bed, which seems so ludicrous. Right there. They didn't come in, and they just deported [*sic*] [arrested] my mother, my brother and I. And the next thing [we knew], we were at the town hall, *la mairie* in French, being interviewed there. And, from there, we went to a transit camp.¹⁷

Even though she was only seven years old when the roundup took place and her testimony was not given until five decades later, Rachel remembered her family's arrest more clearly and vividly than just about any other of her wartime experiences. Her account, moreover, can be corroborated with other contemporary documentation. The police report made of the arrest indicates that the Bobryker residence had indeed been visited by two gendarmes (Victorin Fargier and Jean Vidier) on the morning of August 26, and that they had "only found [the] wife and [the] two children [present]," that is, Rachel, her mother, Rivka, and her brother, Norbert.¹⁸ The officers also appear to have believed the lie concerning her father's whereabouts. In another report (concerning the arrests having taken place in the arrondissement of Carpentras), one reads the following: "Only one [Jew] was absent [during the raid]: the Israelite Bobryker, Joseph, of

¹⁶ Roth, VHA, Part I: 4:58-5:14; Prefecture of Vaucluse, "État nominatif des Juifs de nationalité étrangère résidant en Vaucluse au 1^{er} juillet 1941," July 1, 1941, ADV, 7W15.

¹⁷ Roth, VHA, Part I: 10:39-11:18.

¹⁸ *Procès-verbal* (No. 383) of the arrest of Norbert, Rachel and Rivka Bobryker, August 26, 1942, ADV, 7W16.

Entraigues. The latter had gone to the American Consulate in Marseille. He was scheduled to return to Entraigues in the evening of August 26, 1942.”¹⁹ As Rachel’s testimony makes clear, Joseph had not, in fact, gone to Marseille but had been hiding in the apartment the entire time. Likely believing that no harm would come to women and children, he allowed his wife, daughter and son to be arrested without protest. Sadly, however, at that particular moment in time, none of them met the criteria that would have allowed them to be exempt from the arrest measures. Ultimately, this had tragic consequences. Rivka was deported to Auschwitz three weeks after her arrest, never again to be reunited with her husband and two children.²⁰

Perhaps the most striking feature of the roundup of August 26, 1942, was the degree to which, in the department of Vaucluse, the criteria determining who should be apprehended—and, conversely, who should be exempt from arrest—were faithfully and stringently applied. Targeting, as they did, some Jews and not others, the arrests of that summer must have appeared wholly arbitrary and probably caused considerable confusion and panic among the department’s foreign Jewish population. It is also perhaps for that reason that so many Jews ultimately attributed their survival to something resembling luck or chance. As previously mentioned, Jews being placed under arrest were asked to bring a few personal items with them but were told to leave everything else behind, confided to a friend, a family member or a neighbour. In some instances, one’s belongings were entrusted to another *foreign* Jew—one that, by all appearances, seemed in no way different than the individual being apprehended. The

¹⁹ Report by Lieutenant Bouvier to the Squadron Leader of the Company of the Gendarmerie of Vaucluse, August 26, 1942, ADV, 7W16.

²⁰ Deportation list of convoy 33, CDJC, C33_40.

case of Léopold and Clara Schoenfeld (discussed at length in the introduction) would be an example of such an instance. But consider another.

At five o'clock on the morning of the raid, two gendarmes (Auguste Not and Marcel Binaut) visited the residence of Pinchos Estryin in Mazan, a town located seven kilometres east of Carpentras. True to form, Estryin was made to find someone that could watch over his things while in his absence. Thus, he turned to his friend and neighbour, Chaim Lejb Ickowicz—another foreign Jew.²¹ Ickowicz dutifully signed a statement declaring that he “accepted to conserve, watch over and maintain in proper order, the real and personal property, dead and livestock, standing or harvested crops, etc., belonging to Estryin, Pinchos.”²² Aside from the fact that one was married with children and the other was a childless bachelor, the two men were not all that dissimilar: both were born in Poland, both had Polish citizenship and both were viewed by the authorities as foreign Jews.²³ Why, then, was one taken into custody and not the other?

The thing that seems to have differentiated these two in the eyes of the authorities was their respective dates of entry in France. Having found work for a French mining company, Chaim immigrated to France in the late 1920s and, after having managed to put down roots, was joined by his wife, Chaja, in Paris in 1931.²⁴ Pinchos Estryin, on the other hand, did not leave Poland for France until a few years later—1934, to be exact.²⁵ The four-year discrepancy in the dates of arrival of these otherwise similar men proved, however, to be sufficient a motive to target one with—and to exempt the

²¹ *Procès-verbal* (No. 487) of the arrest of Pinchos Estryin, August 26, 1942, ADV, 7W16.

²² Signed declaration made by Chaim Lejb Ickowicz and appended to the *procès-verbal* (No. 487) of the arrest of Pinchos Estryin, August 26, 1942, ADV, 7W16.

²³ Mayor's Office in Mazan, “État des Israélites—Commune de Mazan,” August 31, 1943, ADV, 7W15.

²⁴ Ickowicz, VHA, Part I: 2:39-3:28.

²⁵ “Israélites étrangers âgés de 18 à 40 ans visés par la circulaire télégraphique de M. le Ministre Secrétaire d'État à l'Intérieur No. 12524 – Pol. 9 du 18 août 1942,” Undated document (Probably August 1942), ADV, 7W16.

other from—the arrest measures. Interestingly, Estryn was not initially supposed to be included on the list of those to apprehend. Indeed, his name was only added following the issuance of the revised orders by Vichy—orders that, as has been seen, were expanded to include (among others) foreign Jews “having entered France between January 1, 1933 and January 1, 1936.”²⁶ Thus, his name was added alongside that of two other Jews, Erich Meyer and Max Stark, who had also moved to France within that three-year period.²⁷

One thus begins to understand how arrests in general—and those of August 1942 in particular—could have appeared entirely arbitrary to many Jews. One minute, an individual was ostensibly safe; the other, they were not. And why? Because the categories of those to be arrested (or of those to be exempt from arrest) had changed—at times, ever so slightly. Not being privy to the criteria decided upon by the authorities, the Jews—the foreign ones, at this particular juncture—would never have known whether they were safe or not. And, even if they had, who was to say that the criteria delimiting the pool of possible arrestees would not change the very next day? There was thus a clear hierarchy *within* the foreign Jewish population of the department of Vaucluse at this time, but one that was difficultly understood by the Jews on the ground. It was, moreover, a hierarchy that, as shall be seen, continued to change and evolve, which made it all the more difficult for the Jews to know precisely where they stood in relation to it at any given moment.

²⁶ Regional Prefect of Marseille to the Prefects of the Region of Marseille, August 24, 1942, ADV, 7W16.

²⁷ Meyer arrived in France on July 5, 1934, while Stark did so on March 31, 1933. See “Israélites étrangers âgés de 18 à 40 ans visés par la circulaire télégraphique de M. le Ministre Secrétaire d’État à l’Intérieur No. 12524 – Pol. 9 du 18 août 1942,” Undated document (Probably August 1942), ADV, 7W16.

One wonders, however, whether the gendarmes conducting the arrests were aware of the (seemingly arbitrary) criteria condemning some but sparing others, and, if they were, whether they ever shared that information with the Jews that were taken into custody or those that were allowed to go about their lives unencumbered? The available evidence seems to point to the affirmative in both cases. Consider the following example. Fleeing before the advancing German Army, Samuel Moszkowitz and his wife, Kitty, entered France on May 14, 1940 and, after a roundabout journey through the country, eventually settled in Avignon.²⁸ Although one was born in Lvov and the other in Amsterdam, both were considered Polish Jews—the first, by birth; the second, by marriage.²⁹ In theory, both spouses should have been targeted for arrest in August 1942. But they were not. The “motive” for their exemption, reads one document, was the following: “1 child under the age of 2.”³⁰ A few months prior to the roundup, Kitty had indeed given birth to their eldest daughter, Janine. (Their youngest child, Lillian, was born in a refugee camp in Switzerland.)³¹ The Moszkowitzs were, therefore, able to benefit from the exemption sparing “fathers and mothers of children under 2 years of age.”³² Remarkably, when recalling that fateful day in the summer of 1942 in his testimony for the Visual History Archive, Samuel understood perfectly well why, unlike so many other foreign Jews, neither he nor his wife had been rounded up: “Thanks to

²⁸ Prefecture of Vaucluse, “Exécution des prescriptions de la circulaire télégraphique de M. le Ministre Secrétaire d’État à l’Intérieur No. 214 S Pol 9 du 18 août 1942,” Undated document (Probably August 1942), ADV, 7W16; Moszkowitz, VHA, Part II: 0:16-8:30.

²⁹ Prefecture of Vaucluse, “État nominatif des Juifs de nationalité étrangère résidant en Vaucluse au 1^{er} juillet 1941,” July 1, 1941, ADV, 7W15.

³⁰ “Liste des Israélites exemptés,” August 24, 1942, ADV, 7W16.

³¹ Moszkowitz, VHA, Part II: 11:04-11:15 and Part III: 15:30-15:50. See also SNA, Series N, Record Group E 4264-1985/196, Jewish refugee file number 5537. Digitized copy found at the USHMM, RG 58.001M, Reel 92, File number 5537.

³² Regional Prefect of Marseille to the Prefects of the Region of Marseille, August 24, 1942, ADV, 7W16.

God, thanks to this baby, we were saved.”³³ It is difficult to see how Samuel would have come about this knowledge without someone (i.e., a gendarme) telling him. Perhaps they did so when they proceeded to arrest his neighbours on the morning of the 26th: two—Chaindla Chait (née Goldman) and Sarah Niedzwiecki (née Chait)—resided in the same building as the Moszkowitzs (at 50 Quai de la Ligne, in Avignon), and three others—Cipa Zeidelman (née Luft) and her two sons, Maurice and Israel—lived right next door.³⁴

By eleven o’clock in the morning, the operation had ended in the department of Vaucluse. But just how “successful” had it been? At first glance, the numbers seem to suggest that it had been a moderate “success” overall. Out of 111 foreign Jews targeted for arrest, seventy-six were apprehended and successfully transferred to camp des Milles³⁵—a sixty-eight percent conversion rate, in other words. It should be noted, however, that not all of these Jews were taken into custody on the morning of the 26th. Indeed, twenty-six of them (male Jews of a certain age, recently coopted into one of the foreign labour battalions operating in the Vaucluse) had been transferred to Les Milles between August 23 and 25. Thus, only fifty of the seventy-six Jews were captured during the roundup that began at daybreak on August 26, 1942.³⁶

A report sent by the Prefect of Vaucluse to the Minister of the Interior (and also communicated to the Regional Prefect of Marseille) on September 12, 1942, provides a detailed summary and a precise accounting of the operation. Through it, the prefect

³³ Moszkowitz, VHA, Part III: 15:17-15:22.

³⁴ Prefecture of Vaucluse, “Liste des Juifs étrangers ayant fait l’objet des mesures de regroupement prévues par les instructions de M. le Ministre Secrétaire d’État à l’Intérieur en date des 5 et 15 août 1942 et ayant rejoint effectivement le camp des Milles (B.D.R.) du 23 au 26 août 1942,” Undated document (Probably August 1942), ADV, 7W16.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

attempted to explain why the prefecture, assisted by the gendarmerie, had fallen short of the initial goal of 111 Jews. At the same time, he tried to paint the operation as having been more successful than it was in reality. Subtracting the twenty-six men that had come from the labour battalions (and one woman that had been exempted because she was pregnant) from the original target number, the prefect argued that no more than eighty-four Jews could have been captured during the roundup. He explained that, of these, fifty-one³⁷ were apprehended on the morning of the 26th, while thirty-three were not—for various reasons (and through no fault of the prefecture or the gendarmerie)—subjected to the arrest measures. Four Jews, the report explained, had voluntarily made their way to camp des Milles the night before, so as to be with family members who were already interned. Six others were deemed too ill to be transported and were, therefore, exempted from the measures. Another, the authorities had learned, had passed away in Nice a few weeks prior. Consequently, of the thirty-three Jews not having been arrested on August 26, eleven had had a “legitimate” excuse. Thus, twenty-two individuals—representing less than twenty percent of the initial target number—still needed to be located and apprehended.³⁸

In this same report, the prefect assured his superiors that he was doing all that he could to track down those that had evaded capture. He had, for example, “ordered active searches” and “identity checks in every location where Israelites might be found,” especially “in Avignon, [...] where, more easily than in smaller municipalities, certain fugitives may have provisionally found refuge.” And even though “numerous hotels,

³⁷ There is a discrepancy between the two sources (the list of those arrested and transferred to Les Milles and the prefect’s report concerning the roundup) with regards to the number of Jews having been apprehended on August 26, 1942.

³⁸ Report by the Prefect of Vaucluse to the Minister of the Interior (also communicated to the Regional Prefect of Marseille), September 12, 1942, ADV, 7W16.

cafés and boarding houses” had been thoroughly searched and “systematic identity checks” had been conducted on the principal roadways leading into the city, these operations “ha[d] not yet led to the discovery of any of the 22 [missing] individuals.”³⁹ The prefect vowed to continue pursuing them, nonetheless.

Evidently, the prefect and others within the department’s administrative apparatus were not entirely satisfied with the results of the roundup. At an evasion rate of slightly less than twenty percent, it is, however, difficult to see how the operation could have been viewed as anything but a “success” (if not, at the very least, a moderate one), especially when one considers that, for the entirety of the Unoccupied Zone, there had been a “significant discrepancy between [the] number of foreign Israelites censused and [the] number [of those] arrested.”⁴⁰ Would twenty percent have qualified as a “significant discrepancy?” Probably not. Unless, of course, there was more to the story—which, indeed, there was.

When one compares the list of Jews targeted for arrest and that of those apprehended and transferred to Les Milles with the prefect’s report, a number of discrepancies come to light—discrepancies that, by and large, appear to do one thing: obscure the fact that the roundup had been far less “successful” than reported. According to the prefect, the seventy-six individuals that were directed to camp des Milles had all figured on the list of those to be targeted by the arrest measures, including the twenty-six men that had come from the labour battalions.⁴¹ He was, moreover, explicit on this point. But had that, indeed, been the case? Had the names of each one of these twenty-six Jews

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Telegram from the National Police to the Regional Prefects and the Departmental Prefects in the Unoccupied Zone, August 30, 1942, ADV, 7W16.

⁴¹ Report by the Prefect of Vaucluse to the Minister of the Interior (also communicated to the Regional Prefect of Marseille), September 12, 1942, ADV, 7W16.

appeared on the list of those originally singled out for arrest? The answer is *no*. In fact, more than half of them—fifteen, to be precise—had *not* initially been targeted by the measures. They were, nevertheless, and for reasons unknown, transferred to Les Milles in the days preceding the roundup. Evidently, by counting these Jews as if they had been singled out for arrest from the very beginning, the prefect was able to artificially inflate his numbers and, in so doing, conceal the fact that there had been an even greater discrepancy between the number of those targeted and those arrested. Indeed, over and above those he had identified in his report, a minimum of fifteen additional Jews had evaded capture on the morning of the 26th.

In the end, fifty of the 111 foreign Jews originally targeted for arrest—or 45.0 percent—were not apprehended during the roundup. Some had, of course, benefited from an exemption. Others could not, for a variety of reasons, have been taken into custody by the authorities. All of this was painstakingly laid out in the prefect's report. Interestingly, for all his effort at explaining why the prefecture and the gendarmerie had fallen short of their initial victim target, he seems to have forgotten a couple of important cases. For instance, Alfred Epstein, whose wife, Charlotte, had been exempted because she was pregnant (mentioned in the report), was also granted an exemption.⁴² Eight-year-old Bernard Rochwerger was, for reasons that remain unclear, permitted to go live with his cousin, Pauline Appy (née Hirszberg), rather than being arrested and interned alongside his mother, Anna.⁴³ Finally, a handful of Jews (Pinchos Estry, Erich

⁴² Epstein was, according to one document, exempted for the following motive: "pregnant wife." This was, of course, in line with the orders having been handed down to the prefects by Vichy, which exempted women who were visibly pregnant from arrest, as well as their spouse and children under the age of sixteen. See "Liste des Israélites exemptés," August 24, 1942 and Regional Prefect of Marseille to the Prefects of the Region of Marseille, August 24, 1942, ADV, 7W16.

⁴³ *Procès-verbal* (No. 610) of the arrest of Anna Rochwerger (née Bornstein), August 26, 1942, ADV, 7W16.

Meyer and Abraham Zeidelman) were both targeted and arrested, even if their names failed to appear on the list of those transferred to Les Milles.⁴⁴ Thus, the prefect had, in certain respects, done slightly “better” than even he had originally thought.

ARRESTS, 1943-1944

Proponents of the “shield thesis” have frequently cited the roundup of August 26, 1942, as evidence that, in France, the Jews of foreign extraction were deliberately sacrificed in order to protect those of French origin. In light of what has been discussed, this interpretation appears to have some merit, even if it lumps together very different individuals under the catchall banner of “foreign Jews,” thereby obscuring the hierarchy within this group. After all, the arrests that took place in the Unoccupied Zone in the summer and fall of 1942 were planned, prepared and executed by French bureaucrats and gendarmes and were directed specifically towards this “category” of Jews, albeit with a few exceptions. But just how long did the “shield” ostensibly protecting the French Jews hold up? Not that long, as it turns out. Following the German invasion of the southern half of the country in November 1942, the persecution landscape changed dramatically. From this point forward, every Jew would have reason to fear.

In the department of Vaucluse, the years 1943 and 1944 were marked by an important decline in the role played by the French administration in the arrests of the Jews. Sure, the prefecture (with the help of the municipalities) continued to update the

⁴⁴ *Procès-verbal* (No. 487) of the arrest of Pinchos Estryng and *procès-verbal* (No. 396) of the arrest of Erich Meyer, August 26, 1942, ADV, 7W16; Untitled list sent by Captain Bognel to the Squadron Leader of the Company of the Gendarmerie of Vaucluse, August 26, 1942, ADV, 7W16.

lists and censuses of the Jews residing in the department⁴⁵—lists that almost certainly fell into the hands of the Germans, making the job of locating their Jewish victims all the more easy.⁴⁶ In general, however, the departmental administration receded into the background on this particular file. Indeed, the roundup of August 1942—orchestrated by the prefecture and carried out by the local gendarmeries—was the first and last of its kind. From the occupation of the southern zone onwards, the arrests of the Jews fell primarily to the German authorities, namely, the *Sicherheitspolizei-Sicherheitsdienst* (SiPo-SD) and the *Geheime Staatspolizei* (Gestapo), and to their French collaborators, including members of far-right political and paramilitary groups like the *Milice française*. Individuals of dubious moral character, plucked from the French underworld, were also recruited to participate in actions against the Jews.⁴⁷ Recruitment of these French auxiliaries was, in many ways, a tacit admission on the part of the Germans that

⁴⁵ In fact, the prefecture continued to churn out lists and censuses of the Jews almost until the Liberation of France. Indeed, the final census was dated May 13, 1944, though a corrective followed shortly thereafter. See Prefecture of Vaucluse, “Liste nominative des Juifs français (13 mai 1944),” “Liste nominative des Juifs étrangers en résidence dans le département de Vaucluse à la date du 13 mai 1944” and “Liste complémentaire des Israélites étrangers résidant en Vaucluse à la date du 13 mai 1944,” May 13, 1944 and “Liste supplémentaire des Juifs étrangers en résidence dans le département de Vaucluse à la date du 26 mai 1944,” May 26, 1944, ADV, 7W15.

⁴⁶ It is unclear whether the prefecture ever forwarded the various lists in its possession to the German authorities, although it seems highly probable. Which lists would have been transmitted (and when) and which would have been withheld is also unknown. To its credit, the prefecture began to drag its feet in this regard as early as February 1943. On February 12, the SD in Avignon asked that “The Prefecture in Avignon [...] transmit [...] a nominal list of all the Jews residing in the department of Vaucluse [...] to the Kommandantur in Avignon”—a list that, the letter states, should contain “their surname and given names, as well as their date of birth and address.” The prefect’s response was probably unexpected and unwelcome: “I must inform you that the regional prefects are the only ones able to provide you with information of that nature.” Although it is not clear whether the desired list was ultimately sent to the office of the SD in Avignon, the prefecture appears to have been increasingly unwilling to provide the Germans with the lists and censuses in its possession. See letter from the SD in Avignon to the Prefecture of Vaucluse, February 12, 1943 and letter from the Prefect of Vaucluse to the Chief of the SD in Avignon, Undated document (Posterior to February 16, 1943), ADV, 7W15.

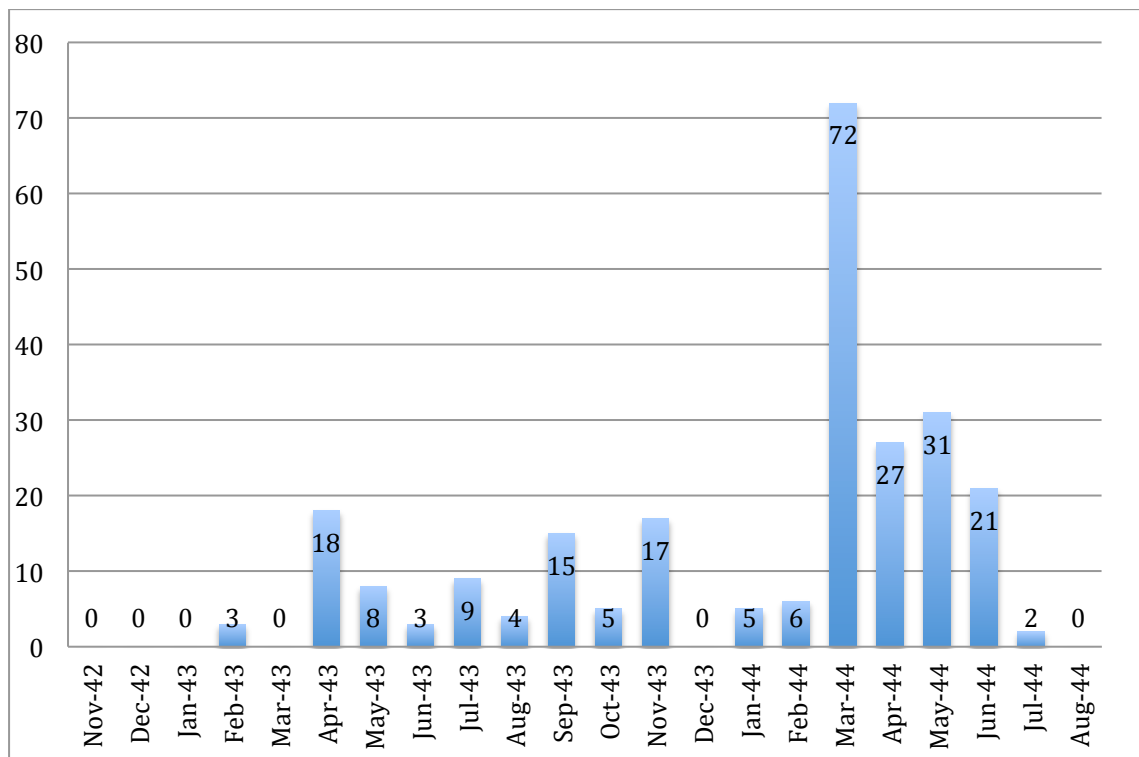
⁴⁷ These individuals, who operated in the Vaucluse more or less with impunity, are the focus of the collaborative book by Isaac Lewendel and Bernard Weisz. See Isaac Lewendel and Bernard Weisz, *Vichy, les Nazis et les voyous : La traque des Juifs en Provence* (Paris: Nouveau Monde, 2013).

they were too few in number to sufficiently carry out the arrests themselves, a fact compounded by their lack of familiarity with the local terrain and populace.

With new actors coming to the fore, the methods used to apprehend the Jews changed as well. Instead of large-scale roundups, smaller raids and individual arrests were employed. The reason for this was simple: the Germans and their accomplices simply did not have the resources and the wherewithal to do otherwise. But, one might ask, did this necessary change in tactics have an impact—whether “positive” or “negative”—on the results of these operations? It certainly appears that way. After all, outside of March 1944, no one-month even came close to witnessing the same number of arrests (81) as August 1942—arrests that, it should be remembered, were planned and executed by French bureaucrats and gendarmes. Indeed, it took the German authorities and their helpers an entire year—1943—to match the results of that single operation.

The year 1944 did, however, register a significant uptick in the number of Jews arrested—matching those of 1942 and 1943 combined. Sporadic raids and individual arrests thus appear to have been no less effective than larger operations in terms of the number of individuals apprehended but only in terms of the time necessary to reach these numbers. That is, of course, a significant difference, for had the German authorities and their French auxiliaries been as effective at rounding-up the Jews as the departmental administration had been in August 1942, it would have required fewer than two dozen raids to empty the Vaucluse of its Jewish residents (numbering, at any given moment, between 1,500 and 1,800 persons). It is clear, therefore, that the shortage of manpower on the ground had a slowing effect on the arrest process, even if, admittedly, it did not bring it to a complete halt. But were other factors also at play?

Graph 4: Number of Jews Arrested in the Department of Vaucluse Month-Over-Month between November 1942 and August 1944.⁴⁸



Did, for instance, the Italian occupation zone act as a countervailing force against the arrests of Jews from late 1942 to the fall of 1943—a factor that might help account for the relatively small number of arrests having been registered in the Vaucluse during this period? And was it truly “an inviolable sanctuary for the Jews,” as one author has claimed (and many others have suggested)?⁴⁹ The short answers to these questions are *yes*, to a certain extent—and *no*, not entirely. Between November 11, 1942 and September 8, 1943⁵⁰, fifty Jews were arrested in the Vaucluse—nineteen (or 38.0 percent) of whom were apprehended in the Italian zone (which, as will be recalled,

⁴⁸ The figures include only the Jews who were arrested in the department of Vaucluse and whose precise date of arrest was known. The arrest, moreover, had to have occurred between November 1942 and August 1944, that is, between the German occupation of the southern zone and the Liberation of France.

⁴⁹ Hilberg, *La destruction des Juifs d'Europe, Volume II*, p. 1200.

⁵⁰ The period of the Italian occupation zone in southeast France.

included every commune of the department except Avignon).⁵¹ Even though Italy's official policy was to not turn over Jews (of any nationality) to the German authorities⁵², the country's representatives in southeast France were not always in a position to prevent them from arresting the Jews themselves. The reason lay primarily in the porousness of their zone of occupation. In addition to the one stationed in Avignon, German garrisons were posted in several cities and towns of the department, including Orange, Carpentras, Bollène, Pertuis and Apt—all located in the Italian zone.⁵³ From these outposts, the Germans would occasionally conduct small-scale raids—raids that, although not specifically targeting the Jews, often ensnared one or more Jewish victims.⁵⁴ Incapable of intervening on every occasion (and, perhaps, sometimes unwilling to do so), the Italian authorities were not always successful in obtaining the release of those that had been captured.

The Italian occupation zone was, therefore, far from a perfect refuge. But did it provide a certain degree of safety nonetheless? It seems so. For one thing, all of the arrests were carried out in, or in proximity to, communes having a German military outpost. In fact, of the nineteen Jews having been apprehended in the Italian zone, all but one of them were captured within a few kilometres of just one of these military installations—the one in Carpentras (see Map 8). Although Italy's "sovereignty" did not

⁵¹ During the period in question, twenty-seven Jews were arrested in Avignon. Four other Jews are known to have been apprehended in the department, but the precise location of their arrest could not be determined.

⁵² Carpi, *Between Mussolini and Hitler*, pp. 191-192.

⁵³ Aimé Autrand, Map titled "Internés, déportés, fusillés, victimes civiles du Vaucluse," ADV, 2J4.

⁵⁴ The raid conducted by German military personnel in Pertuis on the morning of May 30, 1943, is an example of such a case. During the operation, three soldiers, accompanied by a female civilian, proceeded to arrest five individuals. Among them was a Jew by the name of Emil H \ddot{o} chster, a "political refugee of German nationality, who, before the rise to power of Chancellor [Adolf] Hitler, had written a book against the latter." H \ddot{o} chster was deported from Drancy to Auschwitz nearly seven months later. He was never heard of again. Letter from the Sub-Prefect of Apt to the Prefect of Vaucluse, June 2, 1943, ADV, 6W37; Deportation list of convoy 63, CDJC, C63_16.

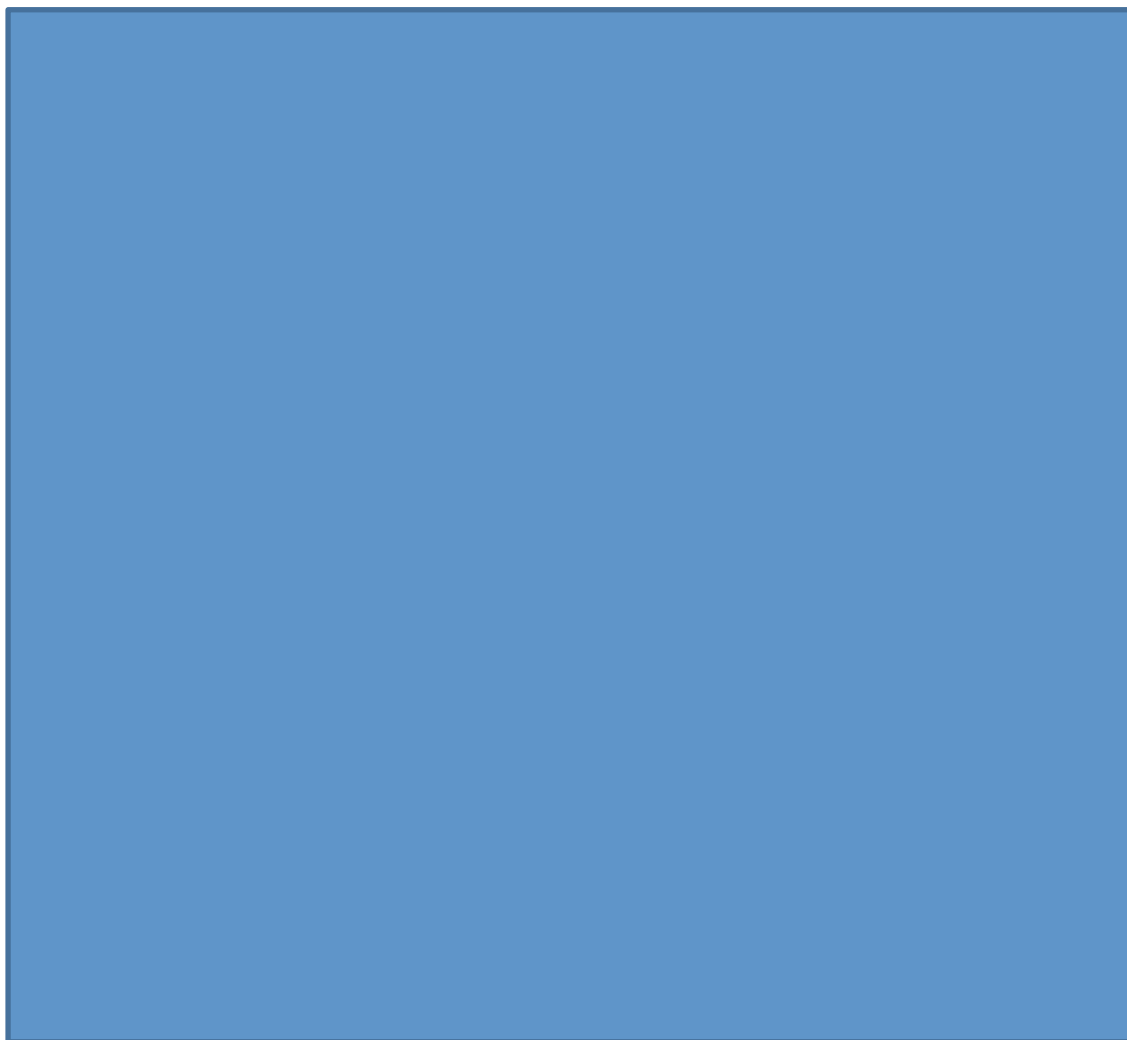
go completely unchallenged in this particular sector of its zone of occupation, its policy regarding the Jews appears to have been largely respected in the other parts of the Vaucluse. Indeed, it is noteworthy that, in contrast to Carpentras, three other communes (Orange, Bollène and Apt)—each with a sizeable Jewish population and each with a heavy German presence—did not register a single arrest during the entire period known as the “Italian interlude.”⁵⁵ Was this solely, or even primarily, the result of actions taken by the Italian authorities on behalf of the Jews? It is difficult to say. One thing is certain, however: the further away one was from a German outpost and the deeper one was in Italian-held territory, the less likely one was to be apprehended. Thus, although the Italian zone was not the “inviolable sanctuary” some authors have made it out to be, it nevertheless appears to have provided a certain degree of protection to the Jews living within it.

The final feature of the arrests of 1943 and 1944—one underscored by those carried out in the Italian-occupied zone—was how little protection French citizenship seemed to confer. Indeed, of the nineteen Jews apprehended in the Italian zone, more than half of them—ten, to be precise—had been born in France and were full French citizens. Their arrest thus marked a clear departure from the preceding period (1942), when only foreign Jews fitting very specific criteria were targeted by the authorities. This was, moreover, part of a larger trend, in that the exemptions of before were now seldom, if ever, applied. The German authorities and their auxiliaries were, to put it mildly, much less selective than their French counterparts at the prefecture with regards to who should—and who should not—be eligible for arrest. The case of the Benyacar

⁵⁵ Poznanski, *Les Juifs en France pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale*, p. 469.

family is an illustrative one, especially when it is juxtaposed with others already having been discussed.

Map 8: Arrests in the Vaucluse between November 11, 1942 and September 8, 1943.⁵⁶



Source (Map of the Vaucluse): Anonymes, Justes et persécutés durant la période nazie, <http://www.ajpn.org/imag-departem/84.png>.

Legend:

- Black rectangles: Locations with a German military outpost.
- Red dots: Locations in which Jews were arrested.

⁵⁶ The breakdown of the nineteen arrests having been carried out in the Italian zone is as follows: Caromb (1), Carpentras (9), Le Thor (2), Mormoiron (4), Pernes-les-Fontaines (2) and Pertuis (1).

On June 6, 1944, Moise and Lisette Benyacar were, along with their son, Sylvain, arrested at their home in Le Pontet by members of the Gestapo.⁵⁷ Sent to the Saint-Anne prison in Avignon and then transferred to Marseille, the Benyacars arrived at Drancy exactly one week after their arrest.⁵⁸ All three were deported to Auschwitz on the 30th, aboard convoy 76.⁵⁹ Only Moise survived.⁶⁰

At first glance, the Benyacars' arrest seems fairly "standard." Jews were taken into custody and, subsequently, deported: end of story. There were, however, significant differences between this particular case and others that had come before. Of the Benyacar family, only Moise was considered a foreign Jew. His wife and child had both been born in France and were French citizens.⁶¹ None of this seemed to matter, however, for all of them were rounded-up. Interestingly, his son's young age also appears to have been a matter of indifference. Born on January 15, 1944, Sylvain was not even five months old when the family was arrested.⁶² The times had, quite visibly, changed. Two years earlier, Samuel and Kitty Moszkowitz were, it will be recalled, exempted from the roundup of August 1942, because of an exemption offered to parents of children under the age of two. That both of them were foreigners having entered the country only in the summer of 1940 did not matter. They had a young daughter, and that was sufficient: they would not be arrested. Ultimately, they made their way to Switzerland and awaited the end of the war.

⁵⁷ Division Commissioner and District Chief of Police in Avignon, "Liste des personnes arrêtées pour des raisons politiques par les services de police allemands," November 24, 1944, ADV, 6W37.

⁵⁸ Individual deportation sheet for Maurice Benyacar, Undated postwar document, ADV, 2J1; Drancy receipt issued to Moise Benyacar, June 13, 1944, CDJC, CF148_5624.

⁵⁹ Deportation list of convoy 76, CDJC, C76_8.

⁶⁰ Berliner Kartei for Moise Maurice Beniacar/Benyacar, ITS, USHMM.

⁶¹ Prefecture of Vaucluse "Liste complémentaire des Israélites étrangers résidant en Vaucluse à la date du 13 mai 1944" and "Liste nominative des Juifs français (13 mai 1944)," May 13, 1944, ADV, 7W15.

⁶² Division Commissioner and District Chief of Police in Avignon, "Liste des personnes arrêtées pour des raisons politiques par les services de police allemands," November 24, 1944, ADV, 6W37.

The events surrounding the arrest of the Benyacars and the non-arrest of the Moszkowitzs thus stand in sharp contrast to one another. One thing in particular served to separate them: time. Although the Moszkowitzs had been the beneficiaries of the hierarchy of privilege in the summer of 1942, the criteria underpinning it had completely changed by 1944. Indeed, beginning shortly after the German occupation of the southern zone, the danger of arrest broadened—“gradually, unofficially, and almost imperceptibly”⁶³—to include Jews of every age, gender and nationality. Even though all Jews would now be eligible for arrest, they would not face these measures on an equal footing—nor would they all be targeted equally.

THE “HIERARCHY OF PERSECUTION”—OR “OF PRIVILEGE”—AND THE ARRESTS OF THE JEWS

Fleshing out the hierarchy of persecution (or of privilege) in a concrete and definitive way is no easy task. The challenge stems from the fact that the criteria underpinning it continued to evolve and change and, thus, never remained the same. Indeed, as the examples of the Benyacar and Moszkowitz families illustrate, Jews could go from benefitting from an exemption to being on the receiving end of arrest measures in a matter of months, weeks or even days—simply because of a slight change to the criteria at the basis of the hierarchy. Timing, in other words, was everything. That said, is it at all possible to identify the “categories” of Jews who were the most (or, conversely, the least) vulnerable to arrest over the course of the war, thereby making

⁶³ Zuccotti, *The Holocaust, the French, and the Jews*, p. 173.

abstraction of the criteria in use at any one particular moment? It is, indeed. And the conclusion to be drawn is clear: the French-foreign dichotomy—a recurring theme in the historiography—only goes so far in explaining the fate of the Jews in France during the Second World War.

A HIERARCHY BASED ON PERSONAL FACTORS

On the afternoon of March 13, 1944, Ginette Cherkasky and three of her relatives were arrested at her family’s residence at 72 Rue Joseph Vernet in Avignon. Recalling the event many years later, Ginette believed that the operation had been a targeted one—but not in the conventional sense of the word. The Gestapo, it seemed to her, had not set out to arrest specific Jews but, rather, specific “types” of Jews.

I returned home [after lunch]. When I entered, the Gestapo was in the hallway. And they were asking my father, “Are you a Jew?” So, I said to them, “They are not Jews. Leave them alone!” [...] My father, my brother and my nephew were made to take off their pants in the kitchen. They were not even given the opportunity to show their [fake] orthodox or protestant baptismal certificates. Perhaps if I had not said anything... Because my mother was home, a cousin was home [...] and her daughter [was as well] [...], and they were not arrested. [...] *They* [the Germans] *had come to take the men*. I was there, and I opened my mouth, so they [probably] told themselves, “Well, it’s only one more [person]. That’s not a problem.” If I had not said anything, maybe [I would not have been arrested]... But, in the end, [...] who knows. [emphasis added]⁶⁴

Thus, out of at least seven Jews present, only four were taken into custody. All of them were French citizens and all of them (with the exception of Ginette) were “men,” although not of military age. Ginette’s father, Léon, was sixty years old at the time. Her

⁶⁴ Kolinka, VHA, Part II: 18:08-19:08.

younger brother, Gilbert, was twelve, and her nephew, Georges Marcou, was fourteen.⁶⁵ All four were taken to the local prison in Avignon and transferred to Les Baumettes in Marseille two days later. From there, they were sent to Drancy.⁶⁶ Exactly one month after their arrest, the extended Cherkasky family was deported to Auschwitz, aboard convoy 71.⁶⁷ Only Ginette returned.

Raids of this nature were more commonplace than one might believe, as the following example shows. Having been separated from their children for several months, Joseph (Szloma) Waysenson and his wife, Yenta, managed to reunite the family in the winter of 1943 in a small village named Goudargues, located about fifty kilometres northwest of Avignon.⁶⁸ “In [this] village of [the department of] Gard,” recalled their second eldest son, Adolphe, “we had the impression that the war would end and that we will have survived.”⁶⁹ Sadly, however, that was not to be the case for all of them. Joseph was arrested on March 9, 1944 and was deported to Kaunas/Reval a few weeks later.⁷⁰ Neither his wife nor his children “ever saw him again. Never again.”⁷¹

The context surrounding Joseph’s arrest is known through the testimonies of two of his sons, Adolphe and Léon, who were eleven and fifteen years old, respectively, when their father was apprehended. Although they had both been eyewitnesses to the event, the two men do not describe it in exactly the same way. In one account, Joseph was home when a single German officer arrived to arrest him. Given a few minutes to

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, Part II: 20:16-20:20.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, Part II: 19:32-19:46, 20:55-21:04 and 24:03-24:11.

⁶⁷ Deportation list of convoy 71, CDJC, C71_10 and C71_36.

⁶⁸ A. Waysenson, VHA, Part III: 22:24-23:46.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, Part V: 16:41-16:47.

⁷⁰ Deportation list of convoy 73, CDJC, C73_34.

⁷¹ A. Waysenson, VHA, Part V: 23:46-23:49.

pack a small piece of luggage, he was forced onto a truck and was taken away.⁷² According to the second, one or two German officers, accompanied by several soldiers, presented themselves at the Waysenson residence. Informed by Yenta that Joseph was not home but at work, the Germans proceeded to arrest him there instead.⁷³ Though the two accounts differ in a number of ways (proving, if proof were needed, that memory is a fickle thing), they come together in their observation that only one “category” of Jews had been targeted by the operation: adult males. “Other men had been rounded-up in the village,” remembered Adolphe. “[...] He [the German officer] said [...], ‘Today, we come for the men. [...] Later, we will come for you. So do not leave.’ [...] They never did come back to get us.”⁷⁴ Thus, like the roundup of the Cherkasky family four days later, the arrest of Joseph Waysenson was another instance in which a male Jew of a certain age was singled out by the authorities and apprehended, while their younger or female relatives were not.

But, one might ask, was there truly a link between a Jew’s age and gender and whether or not they were arrested, as the examples presented above seem to suggest? In order to answer this question, two Chi-square (χ^2) tests of independence⁷⁵ were

⁷² *Ibid.*, Part V: 21:25-23:41.

⁷³ Léon Waysenson, Interview 32673, VHA, USC Shoah Foundation, 1997, Part IV: 9:45-14:09.

⁷⁴ A. Waysenson, VHA, Part V: 23:09-25:01. Léon, for his part, remembered overhearing one of the German officers telling the Mayor of Goudargues that “‘We no longer have room on the trucks. You are responsible for the [Waysenson] family. We will come back soon to pick up the rest of the family.’” L. Waysenson, VHA, Part IV: 10:36-10:47.

⁷⁵ The Chi-square (χ^2) test is used to examine the relationship between two variables. Specifically, it allows one to determine whether there is a statistically significant association between them, with the null hypothesis being that they are independent of one another. Michael W. Kearney explained it clearly and succinctly: “In chi-square analysis, expected frequencies are generated following the null hypothesis and compared against the observed frequencies. [...] If the fit is good—that is, if the difference between the expected frequencies and the observed frequencies is small—the chi-square statistic will be small and one would conclude that the two variables are independent. Conversely, a poor fit yields a large chi-square statistic and rejection of the null hypothesis, and suggests that the two variables are related.” Once the Chi-square test has been performed, a significance level is calculated to determine the probability of finding the observed results. A statistically significant result is one where the “*p*-value” (or probability

performed to assess the relationship between the fact of—or of not—having been arrested and one’s gender and date of birth. In both cases, the analyses revealed that the relationship was statistically significant. For each of these variables, moreover, there was only a 0.1 percent (or a one in one thousand) chance that the results that were obtained could be attributable to chance. (This was determined by way of the “*p*-value” [or probability value], which, in both cases, was smaller than 0.001.) Consequently, being arrested was not independent of one’s age and gender. This is not to suggest, however, that the association between the independent variables (“date of birth” and “gender”) and the dependent variable (“arrest”) was a strong one. Indeed, when the Cramer’s V measure (which is similar to a correlation coefficient) was taken into account, it was observed that both had only a very weak effect on the variable “arrest.”⁷⁶ A weak—and even a very weak—effect is an effect, nonetheless.

When one takes a closer look at the numbers, it appears that male Jews between the ages of thirty-five and sixty-five were, if ever so slightly, more vulnerable to arrest than others (see Tables 12 and 13). Of the 527 Vauclusian Jews arrested, 332—or 63.0 percent—were male and 192—or 36.4 percent—were female.⁷⁷ From these figures, one might be tempted to conclude that men were much more likely than women to be

value) is smaller than 0.05 ($p < .05$), meaning that there is a 5.0 percent chance that the result that was obtained could be attributable to chance (for other *p*-values, see footnote 79). Neither the Chi-square nor the *p*-value provides an indication as to the strength of the association between the two variables, however. In order to measure the strength of this association, one must use either the Phi or Cramer’s V measures, depending on the size of the contingency (or cross tabulation) table. Similar to correlation coefficients, the Phi and Cramer’s V measures range from 0 to 1, with a higher value indicating a stronger association between the variables. Michael W. Kearney, “Cramer’s V,” in *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Communication Research Methods*, edited by Mike Allen (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2017), p. 289. See also Barbara G. Tabachnick and Linda S. Fidell, *Using Multivariate Statistics* (Sixth Edition) (Boston, MA: Pearson Education, 2013), pp. 58-59.

⁷⁶ The Phi measure was used in the few instances in which the contingency (or cross tabulation) table was a simple binary, such as it was for the variable “gender.” In every other instance (thus, in the overwhelming majority of cases), the Cramer’s V measure was used instead.

⁷⁷ The gender of three arrestees—or 0.6 percent of the total—could not be determined.

apprehended. It is, however, important to consider the number of males and females arrested in relation to the total number of those of each gender. Numbering 1,475 and 1,311, respectively, male and female Jews were (in terms of gender) arrested along the following ratios: 22.5 percent and 14.6 percent. Thus, Jewish men were not only arrested in greater numbers than their female counterparts but were also apprehended in larger proportions to their share of the total Jewish population than women.

*Table 12: Arrests According to Gender.*⁷⁸

| Gender (χ^2 ***) ⁷⁹ | Arrested | Not Arrested | Total |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Male | 332 (22.5 %) | 1,143 (77.5 %) | 1,475 (100.0 %) |
| Female | 192 (14.6 %) | 1,119 (85.4 %) | 1,311 (100.0 %) |
| Total | 524 (18.8 %) | 2,262 (81.2 %) | 2,786 (100.0 %) |

Interpreting the statistics concerning the Jews' age is considerably more difficult, because the contingency (or cross tabulation) table pertaining to this variable is, unlike the one for the variable "gender," not a simple binary. Though the Jews were either male or female, they could be of a multitude of different ages. From a statistical point of view, it was thus necessary to group these into several smaller categories or age groups. This,

⁷⁸ In order not to skew the statistics or to distort the conclusions drawn from them, all those whose gender remained unknown were excluded from the table and from the statistics relating to it. The same logic was applied to each of the other variables discussed in this section. If the information pertaining to the variable under discussion was not known, it was not included in the analyses.

⁷⁹ *** indicates that the relationship between the variables was significant and that the "p-value" (or probability value) was smaller than 0.001 ($p < .001$), meaning that there was a 0.1 percent (or a one in one thousand) chance that the results that were obtained could be attributable to chance; ** indicates that the relationship was significant and that $p < .01$, meaning that there was a 1.0 percent chance that the results that were obtained could be attributable to chance; * indicates that the relationship was significant and that $p < .05$, meaning that there was a 5.0 percent chance that the results that were obtained could be attributable to chance.

however, made interpreting the data much more difficult and also increased the risk of error when doing so. The numbers nevertheless point to a few general trends, even if, once again, the association between the two variables (“date of birth” and “arrest”) was a very weak one. Looking at Table 13, one notices that—both in terms of hard numbers and in terms of ratios—the Jews born between 1880 and 1909 were slightly more vulnerable to arrest than those from the other age groups, while those born before 1880 or between 1940 and 1944 appear to have been the least vulnerable.⁸⁰

Table 13: Arrests According to Date of Birth.

| Date of Birth (χ^2 ***) | Arrested | Not Arrested | Total |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1940 to 1944 | 5 (9.4 %) | 48 (90.6 %) | 53 (100.0 %) |
| 1930 to 1939 | 32 (13.7 %) | 202 (86.3 %) | 234 (100.0 %) |
| 1920 to 1929 | 71 (17.7 %) | 330 (82.3 %) | 401 (100.0 %) |
| 1910 to 1919 | 76 (18.7 %) | 330 (81.3 %) | 406 (100.0 %) |
| 1900 to 1909 | 135 (23.8 %) | 432 (76.2 %) | 567 (100.0 %) |
| 1890 to 1899 | 107 (24.0 %) | 339 (76.0 %) | 446 (100.0 %) |
| 1880 to 1889 | 66 (21.4 %) | 243 (78.6 %) | 309 (100.0 %) |
| Before 1880 | 33 (9.6 %) | 310 (90.4 %) | 343 (100.0 %) |
| Total | 525 (19.0 %) | 2,234 (81.0 %) | 2,759 (100.0 %) |

⁸⁰ The eldest and youngest Jews may have been the least vulnerable to arrest because they were often the least mobile of all of them. As seen previously, reduced mobility could be sufficient a motive to exempt a particular individual from arrest measures.

But could this truly have been the case? Could middle-aged Jews—that is, individuals who were between thirty-five and sixty-five years old at the time the arrests took place—have been more vulnerable than younger and, likely, more physically capable Jews, especially those of military age, who represented a greater danger to the German occupation authorities? As counterintuitive as it may seem, it must be remembered that Léon Cherkasky and Joseph Waysenson were both within this age group at the time of their arrest, at sixty and forty-eight years old, respectively. The two men shared common features in addition to their age. Both of them were married and both were arrested while in the presence of their wife and children, who, for the most part, were not apprehended alongside them.

One wonders, therefore, if factors such as marital status and familial situation hold the key to explaining the greater vulnerability of the Jews within this particular age group? It certainly seems to be part of the explanation. When Chi-square tests were performed to assess the relationship between the variables “marital status” and “number of children” and the variable “arrest,” the analyses revealed that the relationship was once again statistically significant.⁸¹ Married Jews were, for instance, arrested nearly one-and-a-half times more frequently than their single counterparts. In addition, parents with a greater number of children appear to have been more vulnerable than those with fewer of them in their care.⁸² Is it possible that the sheer size of certain families hindered their mobility and thus their ability to hide (as Nicolas Mariot and Claire Zalc suggested

⁸¹ The *p*-value of the analyses performed for the variable “marital status” was smaller than 0.001. Based on the Phi measure obtained, the strength of the association between the variables “marital status” and “arrest” was a very weak one. With regards to the variable “number of children,” the *p*-value was smaller than 0.01. The Cramer’s V measure indicated that the strength of the association between the variables “number of children” and “arrest” was a weak one.

⁸² Parents having five or more children were the most vulnerable to arrest, while those having just one or two were the least vulnerable. Those having three or four children in their care were, for their part, in the middle of the vulnerability spectrum.

in their study of Lens⁸³), thereby making certain members of these households—and, in particular, the patriarchs—even more vulnerable to arrest measures? It is a distinct possibility.

Missing from the discussion thus far is an analysis of the relationship between the Jews' arrest and their "status," i.e., whether they were viewed as French or foreign by the German and Vichy authorities. As has previously been pointed out, the French-foreign dichotomy—a central pillar of the "shield thesis"—has held and, indeed, continues to hold a rather predominant position in the historiography. But is this justified? Indeed, is the French-foreign distinction really as important in explaining the fate of the Jews in France during the war as it has generally been made out to be? Or does it bring together very different individuals into two artificially homogeneous groups, thereby obscuring other, possibly more important differences between them?

These questions are not intended to suggest that French and foreign Jews were equally vulnerable to arrest. They were not. Even to the naked eye, the numbers would seem to indicate that one group had especially found itself in the authorities' crosshairs: the foreign Jews (see Graph 5). But what do the statistics say? The analyses once again revealed that there was a statistically significant relationship between the two variables ("status" and "arrest"). This time, however, the association between them was considerably stronger than it had been for the variables "gender" and "date of birth."

⁸³ In their study of the Jews of Lens, Nicolas Mariot and Claire Zalc found that the most important factor determining whether Jews remained at their place of residence or fled was not their age, nor their nationality, nor their perception of danger—but the size of their family. The individuals who had children were more likely to stay, while those who were single or married but without children left in greater numbers. Moreover, the more children one had, the more likely they were to remain. "The increase in the number of persons in a family," wrote Mariot and Zalc, "considerably reduced the mobility of each of its members." Mariot and Zalc, *Face à la persécution*, pp. 126-128. See also Claire Zalc (in conversation with Emmanuelle Saada), "What Happened to the 991 Jews in Lens? A Microhistorical Approach to the Holocaust," Columbia Maison Française, May 3, 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZHOo_Y3OFkQ: 37:13-38:55.

Rather than being very weak, the strength of the association was, in this instance, moderate. And since the contingency table is a relatively small one (three-by-two), it is not very difficult to see why (see Table 14). The rates of arrest between the two categories of Jews are particularly instructive: 262 (of 949) foreign Jews—or 27.6 percent—were arrested, while that was the case for only 165 (of 1,492) French Jews—or 11.1 percent. Thus, foreign Jews were apprehended nearly two-and-a-half times more frequently than their French counterparts.

Graph 5: Arrests According to Status.

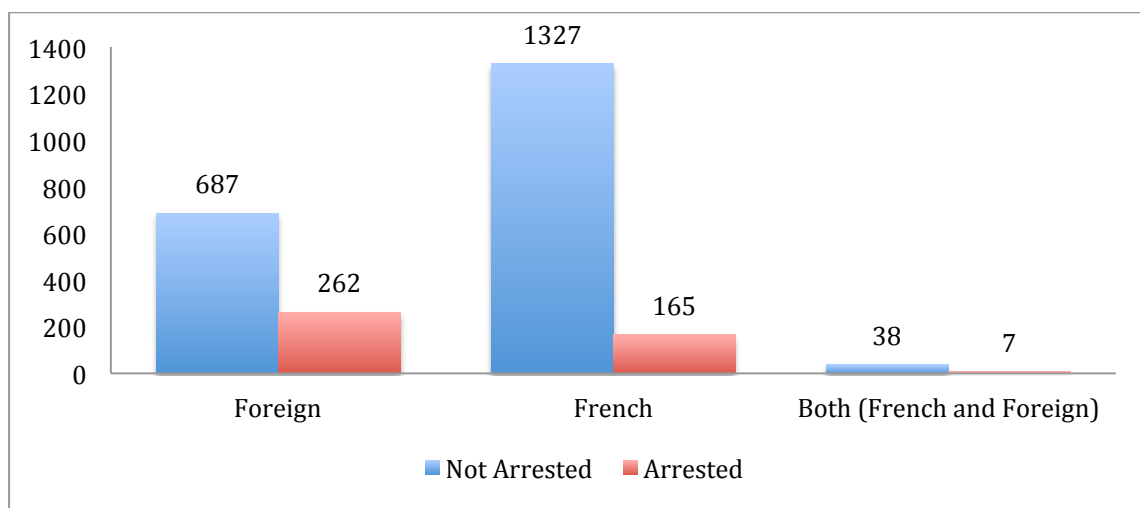


Table 14: Arrests According to Status.

| Status (χ^2 ***) | Arrested | Not Arrested | Total |
|------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| French | 165 (11.1 %) | 1,327 (88.9 %) | 1,492 (100.0 %) |
| Foreign | 262 (27.6 %) | 687 (72.4 %) | 949 (100.0 %) |
| Both | 7 (15.6 %) | 38 (84.4 %) | 45 (100.0 %) |
| Total | 434 (17.5 %) | 2,052 (82.5 %) | 2,486 (100.0 %) |

But was “status” truly the decisive factor when it came to arrests? In other words, did one’s fate hinge on a couple of labels—“French” and “foreign”—more than anything else? Or was there more at play? In addition to the analyses performed on the variable “status,” others were conducted on the variables “nationality” and “country of origin”—variables that, at first glance, appear to be quite similar. They are not the same, however, nor do they provide identical results. Both point to the same conclusion, nonetheless: that the French-foreign dichotomy is rather too simplistic for understanding why certain Jews were arrested, while others were not.

Much as it had been for the Jews’ date of birth, it was necessary to group the variables “nationality” and “country of origin” into fewer categories.⁸⁴ These variables were, moreover, coded in a couple of different ways, in order to allow for a multilayered analysis of the data. The first method was to group the countries of origin into three categories based on their geopolitical situation during the war: (1) France or Country of French North Africa; (2) German-Occupied or German-Allied Country; and (3) Enemy or Neutral Country. Thus, if a Jew had been born in Switzerland, their “country of origin” was coded as “Enemy or Neutral Country.” If, on the other hand, they had been born in Tunisia, they were included in the category “France or Country of French North Africa.” The same logic applied to the Jews’ nationality. If, for example, one was a Belgian national, they were counted as a “Citizen of a German-Occupied or German-Allied Country.” If, however, they were British, they were considered a “Citizen of an Enemy or a Neutral Country.” Coding the variables in such a way allowed for the

⁸⁴ The reason for this should be fairly evident: the Vauclusian Jews, it will be recalled, were a group comprised of individuals of thirty nationalities, having been born in thirty-seven different countries (based on a map of 1939). Further complicating the situation was the fact that, in many instances, there were only a handful of Jews (often three or fewer) belonging to a certain nationality or having been born in a particular country. In order not to violate the assumptions of the Chi-square test, however, no more than twenty percent of the cells of the contingency table can have a count less than five.

grouping of nationalities and countries of origin that, although different, were, for all intents and purposes, the same. This approach offered the possibility of observing trends that would have remained imperceptible had the numerous nationalities and countries of origin only been considered in isolation.

The analyses revealed that there was a statistically significant relationship between the variables “country of origin” and “arrest,” even if the strength of the association between them was a weak one. In many ways, the numbers seem to confirm what was found with the analyses concerning the variable “status,” namely, that Jews born in France or in French North Africa were less vulnerable to arrest than others. There is, however, a distinction to be made between those that were born in countries that were occupied by, or allied to, Germany and those that were not, with the former being more vulnerable to arrest than the latter (see Table 15). There was thus, quite visibly, a hierarchy within the group commonly referred to in the historiography by the generic term “foreign Jews”—a fact that, in and of itself, suggests that the traditional framework (i.e., the French-foreign dichotomy) for understanding the fate of the Jews in France during the Holocaust should perhaps be reassessed. This is all the more evident when the Jews’ nationalities are taken into account.

Table 15: Arrests According to Country of Origin.

| Country of Origin (χ^2 ***) | Arrested | Not Arrested | Total |
|--|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| France or Country of French North Africa | 192 (12.9 %) | 1,293 (87.1 %) | 1,485 (100.0 %) |
| German-Occupied or German-Allied Country | 272 (29.2 %) | 660 (70.8 %) | 932 (100.0 %) |
| Enemy or Neutral Country | 57 (21.6 %) | 207 (78.4 %) | 264 (100.0 %) |

| | | | |
|-------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Total | 521 (19.4 %) | 2,160 (80.6 %) | 2,681 (100.0 %) |
|-------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|

With another Chi-square test, it was observed that a statistically significant relationship existed between the variables “arrest” and “nationality,” when the latter was coded along the same lines as the variable “country of origin.” The difference, in this instance, was that the association between them was a moderate—rather than a weak—one. Initially, the results did not appear all that different from those that had been obtained from the previous analyses. In terms of their vulnerability to arrest, French Jews (and those that were citizens of a country of French North Africa) seemed to have had the upper hand over those of foreign nationalities. Upon closer examination, however, it was discovered that the category “Citizen of an Enemy or a Neutral Country” contained an unrepresentative sub-group with the numerical strength to distort the conclusions drawn. Indeed, of the thirty-five Jews of this category to have been apprehended, thirty—or 85.7 percent—of them were Turks. In the presence of such a sub-group, it was decided to re-run the analyses while excluding the Turkish Jews. The results were fascinating.

Looking at Table 16, one can see that the Jewish citizens of an enemy or a neutral country were *less* vulnerable to arrest than those of France or of a country of French North Africa, with both groups being considerably less vulnerable than those with the citizenship of a German-occupied or German-allied country. Thus, contrary to what is generally believed, it was preferable to be a *foreign* Jew in France during the Second World War, *provided* that one was of the “correct” nationality. Indeed, it was best to be a citizen of a country that was at war with the Third Reich or that had chosen to remain neutral (with one exception: Turkey). The Jews in the greatest danger were, on

the other hand, those of a nationality of a country that was occupied by, or allied to, Germany. Even here, however, there were certain gradations.

Table 16: Arrests According to Nationality.

| Nationality (χ^2 ***) | Arrested | Not Arrested | Total |
|--|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Citizen of France or of a Country of French North Africa | 197 (11.7 %) | 1,492 (88.3 %) | 1,689 (100.0 %) |
| Citizen of a German-Occupied or German-Allied Country | 238 (30.4 %) | 545 (69.6 %) | 783 (100.0 %) |
| Citizen of an Enemy or a Neutral Country (Including Turkey) | 35 (19.0 %) | 149 (81.0 %) | 184 (100.0 %) |
| <i>Citizen of an Enemy or a Neutral Country (Excluding Turkey)</i> | 5 (6.2 %) | 75 (93.8 %) | 80 (100.0 %) |
| Total (Including Turkey) | 470 (17.7 %) | 2,186 (82.3 %) | 2,656 (100.0 %) |
| <i>Total (Excluding Turkey)</i> | 440 (17.2 %) | 2,112 (82.8 %) | 2,552 (100.0 %) |

As has been mentioned, the variable “nationality” was grouped and coded in a number of different ways. Although it had been useful to group the different nationalities based on the corresponding nations’ geopolitical situation during the war, it was also deemed necessary to consider them individually. This was not initially possible, however, because the number of nationalities represented by only a handful of Jews prevented any attempts at statistical analysis. Thus, the choice was made to include only the nationalities that, numerically, were above a certain threshold. The threshold was set at twenty-seven Jews—or (when rounded) 1.0 percent of the total Jewish population of the Vaucluse.

Statistically significant, the relationship between the individual nationalities and

the variable “arrest” was the strongest one yet, at moderately strong. (In fact, the Cramer’s V measure indicated that the strength of the association between the variables was just shy of being outrightly strong, rather than only moderately so.) Although many observations could be made from these analyses, only the most important will be discussed here. Of the nine nationalities having met the established threshold, two had been significantly more vulnerable to arrest than the others—German and Austrian Jews (see Table 17). In fact, more than half of the Vauclisian Jews of these nationalities were ultimately arrested. It was, thus, an arrest ratio far exceeding that of the seven other nationalities. Indeed, the runners-up on the vulnerability ladder were the Romanians, at an arrest rate just below 30.0 percent, with three more (the Turks, the Greeks and the Poles) not far behind.

Table 17: Arrests According to Nationality (2).

| Nationality (χ^2 ***) | Arrested | Not Arrested | Total |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| French | 197 (11.7 %) | 1,491 (88.3 %) | 1,688 (100.0 %) |
| Belgian | 4 (14.8 %) | 23 (85.2 %) | 27 (100.0 %) |
| German | 65 (52.4 %) | 59 (47.6 %) | 124 (100.0 %) |
| Austrian | 25 (52.1 %) | 23 (47.9 %) | 48 (100.0 %) |
| Polish | 99 (25.0 %) | 297 (75.0 %) | 396 (100.0 %) |
| Russian | 2 (3.9 %) | 49 (96.1 %) | 51 (100.0 %) |
| Romanian | 12 (29.3 %) | 29 (70.7 %) | 41 (100.0 %) |

| | | | |
|---------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Turkish | 30 (28.8 %) | 74 (71.2 %) | 104 (100.0 %) |
| Greek | 12 (25.5 %) | 35 (74.5 %) | 47 (100.0 %) |
| Total | 446 (17.7 %) | 2,080 (82.3 %) | 2,526 (100.0 %) |

But what could account for such a large disparity? Part of the explanation seems to lie in the various policies that the countries occupied by—and, more importantly, allied to—Germany had towards their Jewish nationals living abroad: policies that, in many instances, changed on account of the evolving military and geopolitical situation. Take Romania, for example. Although the country’s Jews were eligible for arrest and deportation through the year 1942, they were declared off limits as of April 1943, a fact that spared a certain number of them living in France.⁸⁵ Other governments were also occasionally successful in protecting, if only for a certain period of time, their Jewish citizens from arrest and deportation. In the case of the German and Austrian Jews, however, there was no one to mitigate their destruction. Thus, although it is difficult to say for certain, it seems likely that this fact helps explain the rather lopsided arrest ratios of the Jews of these two nationalities in particular.

The variable “nationality” was not the only one to have had a moderately strong (and, indeed, borderline strong) effect on the variable “arrest,” however. One’s date of arrival in France also appears to have been important. As can be seen from Table 18, Jews who arrived in the country in the post-1933 period were considerably more vulnerable to arrest than those who had immigrated prior to that time. The numbers

⁸⁵ Georges Wellers, *L'étoile jaune à l'heure de Vichy : De Drancy à Auschwitz* (Paris: Fayard, 1973), pp. 75-76.

pertaining to the Austrian and German Jews are emblematic of this fact. Of the forty-three of them who were arrested and whose date of arrival in the country is known, only one had immigrated to France prior to 1933. Five had entered the country between 1933 and 1935, while the remaining thirty-seven had done so after 1936.

To a certain extent, this can be explained by the massive roundup having taken place throughout the Unoccupied Zone in August 1942—a roundup that, it will be recalled, had initially targeted the foreign Jews who had entered France after January 1, 1936, but that was subsequently extended to include certain categories of those who had done so between 1933 and 1935.⁸⁶ Since this operation alone netted over 15.0 percent of all the Vauclusian Jews arrested during the war, it is perhaps not that surprising that the criteria that had underpinned it would have had a certain influence on the variable “arrest.” What all of this suggests is that, for the Jews of Germany at least, there really had not been a “right time” to flee the country following Hitler’s rise to power. Whether one had left for France in the wake of the “anti-Jewish demonstrations of 1933” (like the Franck family) or whether one had only been prompted to do so following *Kristallnacht* in November 1938 (like the Eichbergs and the Kempowskis) mattered very little.⁸⁷ Both groups were at a greater risk of arrest than those who had made the journey westwards prior to the advent of the Nazis: Jews who, in the words of Susan Zuccotti, “had had more time and opportunity to put down roots, learn the language and customs, and make the local contacts indispensable for survival.”⁸⁸

⁸⁶ See Director General of the National Police to the Regional Prefect of Marseille, August 5, 1942 and Regional Prefect of Marseille to the Prefects of the Region of Marseille, August 24, 1942, ADV, 7W16.

⁸⁷ Letter from Friedel Franck to the Prefect of Vaucluse, August 26, 1940, ADV, 3W265; Osborne, VHA, Part I: 6:49-11:43; Kempowski, VHA, Part I: 18:41-26:11.

⁸⁸ Zuccotti, *The Holocaust, the French, and the Jews*, p. 284.

Table 18: Arrests According to Date of Arrival in France.

| Date of Arrival in France (χ^2 ***) | Arrested | Not Arrested | Total |
|---|-----------------|----------------|------------------|
| Prior to 1933 | 19 (33.3 %) | 38 (66.7 %) | 57 (100.0 %) |
| Between 1933 and 1935 | 8 (80.0 %) | 2 (20.0 %) | 10 (100.0 %) |
| 1936 or Later | 116 (66.3 %) | 59 (33.7 %) | 175 (100.0 %) |
| Total | 143 (59.1 %) | 99 (40.9 %) | 242 (100.0 %) |

In the final analysis, it would appear that the French-foreign dichotomy, which continues to pervade the historiography, is too narrow a framework for understanding the fate of the Jews in France during the war. When it came to arrests, other factors (including one's age, gender, nationality and date of arrival in France) were equally as important as—if not more important than—one's "status." The analyses performed do not, however, enable one to determine precisely which of these had had the greatest influence on the variable "arrest." Indeed, even if the present statistics provide a means for determining the strength of the association between different variables, they do not allow one to compare the degrees of association between themselves. Nor do they indicate which factor prevailed at any one given moment, as the case of the De Ciavès family illustrates.

Although none of them were born in the Netherlands, Moïse and Rachel De Ciavès, and their son, Elie Lucien, were considered foreign Jews of Dutch nationality by the German and Vichy authorities.⁸⁹ Of the three, only one—Moïse—was arrested and

⁸⁹ Prefecture of Vaucluse, "État nominatif des Juifs de nationalité étrangère résidant en Vaucluse au 1^{er} juillet 1941," July 1, 1941, ADV, 7W15.

deported.⁹⁰ The question is why? Was he singled out because of his age and gender, much like Joseph Waysenson had been? And why were Rachel and Elie Lucien allowed to walk free? Was it because the former was a woman and the latter was a young child? Or did it have more to do with their countries of origin? After all, Moïse was born in Turkey, while his wife and son were, respectively, born in the United Kingdom and France, making them, in theory, less vulnerable to arrest.⁹¹ Was one of these factors primarily responsible for the differences in fate? Or did each of them play a role? It is, in truth, anybody's guess.

A HIERARCHY BASED ON GEOGRAPHICAL FACTORS

The hierarchy of persecution (or of privilege) also rested on geographical factors. These, however, appear to have been linked with personal ones, though to a degree that is difficult to evaluate. The challenge stems from the fact that the personal factors in question are not as easy to quantify as those discussed previously (age, gender, nationality and so on), because they had more to do with an individual's socio-economic situation, something that the sources seldom allow one to assess with any degree of confidence.⁹² The conclusions, therefore, are necessarily more suggestive than definitive.

Of the 527 Vauclusian Jews arrested during the Second World War, 369 of them were taken into custody within the territorial limits of the department.⁹³ The arrests were fairly circumscribed geographically, having taken place in only forty-one of the

⁹⁰ Deportation list of convoy 76, CDJC, C76_18_19.

⁹¹ Prefecture of Vaucluse, "État nominatif des Juifs de nationalité étrangère résidant en Vaucluse au 1^{er} juillet 1941," July 1, 1941, ADV, 7W15.

⁹² From the "aryanization files" found at the National Archives in Paris, it is, however, possible to get a sense of the wealth of individual Jewish business owners. For the "aryanization files" concerning the region of Marseille (which includes the department of Vaucluse), see AN, AJ³⁸ 3637 to 3799.

⁹³ With an additional four Jews having *probably* been arrested in the Vaucluse.

Vaucluse's 151 communes. They were, however, even more concentrated than this number suggests. Indeed, 198—or 53.7 percent—of these arrests took place in just four communes: Avignon, Carpentras, Cavaillon and Orange.⁹⁴ These were, of course, the largest and most heavily populated cities of the department and those with the greatest number of Jewish residents. In fact, when one compares the number of arrests having been carried out in the different communes with their respective populations, it appears that those with the greatest number of residents were also the most dangerous places for the Jews to be—with one exception: the towns with a population ranging from 1,001 to 5,000, who, collectively, registered more arrests than those with populations several times greater (see Table 19). Initially, these facts seem to contradict one another. Upon closer examination, however, one realizes that they actually point to the same conclusion: it was neither the size nor the population of a particular commune that made its Jewish residents more vulnerable to arrest but, rather, the concentration of Jews living within its borders.

Part of the reason that more arrests were carried out in the towns on the fourth rung of the population ladder (i.e., those having between 1,001 and 5,000 residents) than in those on the second and third rungs can be attributed to their numerical superiority. Indeed, there were forty-two communes with this population profile (thirty-five of which are known to have had Jewish residents), while only seven had between 5,001 and 15,000 inhabitants.⁹⁵ But numerical superiority alone does not explain the greater number of arrests. If that had been the case, then the (combined) 101 villages on the fifth

⁹⁴ Avignon accounted for the lion's share of these arrests, at 142—or 38.5 percent of all those having been carried out in the department.

⁹⁵ For the number of communes of each population profile and a breakdown of those who are known to have had Jewish residents, see "Table 9: Cities, Towns and Villages of the Vaucluse Having Had at Least One Jewish Resident, 1941-1944," p. 113.

through seventh rungs of the population ladder could have been expected to register an even greater number of arrests than the twenty-six that were ultimately recorded. Numerical superiority had, moreover, little to do with the fact that only a handful of communes—Bollène, Le Pontet, Vaison-la-Romaine and Villelaure—accounted for the majority of the arrests carried out in the towns of the population profile in question.⁹⁶ Interestingly, these four municipalities were (with Avignon) among those with the highest number of Jewish residents per capita, each with a Jewish population rivalling, and occasionally surpassing, those of larger cities and towns. This, however, made the Jews residing within them all the more vulnerable to arrest, since, as discussed previously, the authorities tended to focus their arrest operations against the areas with the heaviest concentrations of Jews, because of the greater potential for victims. The geographical location of one's place of residence could, therefore, render one more—or less—vulnerable to arrest.

But, one might ask, was there truly a personal element underpinning this geographically based hierarchy? The answer, it seems, is *yes*—to a certain extent. Part of the explanation lies in the primary reason for the strong concentration of Jews in these particular Vauclusian towns: Le Pontet was the site of the largest foreign labour battalion in the department, while Bollène, Villelaure and Vaison-la-Romaine were each used as locales for forced residence. Labour battalions and forced residences were two of the methods used by the authorities to concentrate Jews in a handful of smaller, more remote locations, in order to facilitate the task of surveilling and controlling them (as

⁹⁶ These four communes accounted for fifty-four—or 55.7 percent—of the arrests having taken place in the towns with their population profile.

well as to prevent them from overcrowding the same few cities).⁹⁷ Although most of the individuals that were subjected to these policies were foreigners, one thing in particular united them: they were often unemployed and had few—if any—financial resources.⁹⁸ Individuals with limited means were thus, as a result of their precarious socio-economic situation, sometimes made to reside in communes with the highest concentrations of Jews—a fact that, as has been seen, rendered them all the more vulnerable to arrest. Wealthy Jews were, therefore, better off from a personal safety standpoint than their less fortunate counterparts.

Table 19: Arrests Carried Out in the Communes of the Vaucluse (by Population).

| Population of the Commune | Number of Jews Arrested | Percentage of Arrests |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Over 15,000 | 142 | 38.5 % |
| 10,001 to 15,000 | 56 | 15.2 % |
| 5,001 to 10,000 | 35 | 9.5 % |
| 1,001 to 5,000 | 97 | 26.3 % |
| 501 to 1,000 | 24 | 6.5 % |
| 251 to 500 | 1 | 0.3 % |
| 1 to 250 | 1 | 0.3 % |
| Unknown | 13 | 3.5 % |
| Total | 369 | 100.0 % |

The heavy concentration of Jews residing in certain locations set off alarm bells for certain Jewish heads of household. Indeed, some believed that the large number of their fellow coreligionists living in their midst might bring them some unwanted attention from the authorities, thereby endangering them and their loved ones. Take, for example, the case of the Sapir family. In 1941, Joseph and Szayna Sapir returned to the Vaucluse with their children after having spent some time in the French Riviera, because

⁹⁷ See letter from the Prefect of Vaucluse to the Chief of the *Police aux questions juives* in Marseille, April 16, 1942, CDJC, LXXII-17.

⁹⁸ Hilberg, *La destruction des Juifs d'Europe, Volume II*, pp. 1156-1157.

they “[were] scared in Nice,” “scared that there [were] too many Jewish people” and that it was thus “too dangerous to live in Nice.”⁹⁹ Many individuals living in the most populated cities of the Vaucluse, where the concentration of Jews was often the greatest, viewed things in very much the same way. Most, however, were not in a position to do anything about it. “The majority of the Israelites [of the department] are trying to go unnoticed,” reads an already-cited report by the General Intelligence Service, dated June 26, 1943. “Those for whom their financial situation permits have left the large centres and have taken refuge in the small communes, where they are less well-known.”¹⁰⁰

But who, precisely, were these Jews with the wherewithal to pick up and leave? Two reports by the same service help shed some light on this question. “Over the last few days,” indicates the first report, dated April 1, 1944, “numerous arrests have been conducted in the Jewish *milieux* of Avignon. A number of them [Israelites] have left their domicile, often accompanied by their family, to evade the searches of which they are the object. *Most are merchants or traders* [...]. [emphasis added]”¹⁰¹ The second report, from one month later, is almost identical in content:

Following an operation conducted by the German police in Avignon towards the end of March [1944] (an operation in which a certain number of foreign nationals of the Jewish race were arrested), most Israelites in Avignon have adopted a very withdrawn attitude. The majority of the merchants who conducted their business on Place Pie have ceased their economic activity. Some have even left the city for a residence where they will be more secure.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Sapir, VHA, Part II: 18:03-18:51.

¹⁰⁰ National Police, General Intelligence Service, Intelligence report for the week of June 20 to 26, 1943, June 26, 1943, ADV, 3W28.

¹⁰¹ *Id.*, Intelligence report for the week of March 26 to April 1, 1944, April 1, 1944, ADV, 3W28.

¹⁰² *Id.*, Intelligence report for the week of April 30 to May 6, 1944, May 6, 1944, ADV, 3W28.

The hierarchy of persecution (or of privilege) was, thus, felt here as well. Although Jewish merchants, traders and businesspeople were evidently not all wealthy, they generally appear to have been among those with the financial resources needed to flee the larger, more populated cities of the department for the smaller towns and villages, which, by virtue of their lower concentration of Jews, were considerably more safe. Others, however, found themselves in the exact opposite position. Unable to find work in the countryside and not having the financial means of sustaining themselves otherwise, they had no choice but to take up residence in a larger city, where the danger of arrest was significantly greater. The case of the Holcman family is illustrative. In an already-cited passage from his interview with the Shoah Foundation, Pinkus, who was about fifteen years old at the time, explained that, “[Upon arriving in the Vaucluse,] we were given housing accommodations in a little village called Bédoin and, thereafter, in another village called Caromb. We stayed there, I believe, for at least one year, until we were able to obtain the authorisation to reside in Avignon. [...] We needed to move to a big city,” Holcman stressed, “because it was necessary to work. And in the small villages, there wasn’t any work.”¹⁰³ Echoing Pinkus’ statement, Maud Bloch framed the predicament thusly: “It is difficult to live [...] without being able to work. [...] One truly needs substantial [financial] resources to live without needing to work.”¹⁰⁴

Thus, financial considerations pushed the Holcman family to leave two of the safest towns in the department of Vaucluse for the most dangerous one of all—Avignon. In fact, between the two of them, Caromb and Bédoin recorded only a single arrest during the entire war. Interestingly, both had a population of approximately 1,600, thus

¹⁰³ Holcman, VHA, Part II: 9:16-9:40.

¹⁰⁴ Maud Bloch, Interview 5484, VHA, USC Shoah Foundation, 1995, Part I: 16:30-16:39.

placing them in the same category as Bollène, Villelaure, Vaison-la-Romaine and Le Pontet.¹⁰⁵ Contrary to the latter, however, the towns in which the Holcman family resided prior to arriving in Avignon had an almost nonexistent Jewish population. Bédoin, for example, never recorded having more than three Jewish residents, while Caromb had, at its peak, only eleven of them. That these towns registered only one arrest, while others (of a similar population profile) with a greater number of Jewish residents recorded a much higher number, seems to suggest that the concentration of Jews living in a particular area could, indeed, increase (or, conversely, decrease) one's vulnerability to arrest.

The Holcman case was not the only instance in which one's short-term survival endangered them in the long-term, with economic concerns (often stemming from an inability to find employment) compelling certain individuals to take up residence in a larger, more populated city, where—because of the greater concentration of Jews—the danger of arrest was heightened. This phenomenon was not only observed within the Vaucluse itself but also outside of it, which might help explain why, out of the ninety-five Vauclusian Jews arrested elsewhere in France, forty-three (or nearly half) of them were apprehended in just one of five cities: Marseille, Paris, Nice, Lyon and Grenoble.

Consider the following example. Having immigrated to metropolitan France from Algeria in 1936, the El Koubi family (composed of Ichoa, Rachel, and their eight children) immediately settled in Marseille. And there they lived until May 1943, when Rachel was arrested at the offices of the *Union générale des Israélites de France* (UGIF). Fearing for the safety of his children, Ichoa dispatched them throughout southern France. Some were sent to live in Lourdes (Hautes-Pyrénées); others, in

¹⁰⁵ See "État comparatif des municipalités de Vaucluse," August 1939, ADV, 4W680.

Aubagne (Bouches-du-Rhône). Two (Marie and Alfred) decided to remain in Marseille with their father.¹⁰⁶ Eventually, the danger became too great, and Alfred “was placed as an attendant on a farm near the Mont Ventoux. In Saint-Didier, to be precise.”¹⁰⁷ In the testimony that he provided fifty years after the war, Alfred remembered the several months that he spent in the Vaucluse with great fondness.

The farmer who took me in [...] was incredibly kind and so was his elderly mother, and I was truly [...] considered to be part of the family while I was there. I was never made to feel bad about anything. I was better fed than almost anybody, and we ate very well, because there was everything on the farm.¹⁰⁸

There came a time, however, when he “could no longer leave [his] father and [his] sister in Marseille.” Alfred explained the situation in the following way: “I was no longer bringing in money. I was not working. My father was not working because he was ill, and my younger sister was only thirteen or fourteen years old. [So] I decided to return to Marseille.”¹⁰⁹ Thus, as the Holcmans had done when relocating to Avignon, Alfred left the safety of his rural refuge in the Vaucluse (where not a single Jew was apprehended) for a big city, where employment opportunities—and the danger of arrest—were in greater supply. In perhaps the greatest (and darkest) of ironies, on May 2, 1944, Alfred El Koubi was arrested at his place of work.¹¹⁰ He was deported but ultimately survived the war.¹¹¹

In the end, the hierarchy of persecution (or of privilege) also rested on geographical factors, which, in turn, appear to have been linked with personal ones, namely, one’s socio-economic situation. Indeed, Jews of little financial means were,

¹⁰⁶ Elkoubi, VHA, Part I: 2:18-3:03 and 25:36-26:41; Part II: 0:58-3:21.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, Part II: 3:28-3:37.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, Part II: 6:08-6:33.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, Part II: 4:25-4:37.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Part II: 12:35-14:12.

¹¹¹ Deportation list of convoy 74, CDJC, C74_15.

contrary to their wealthier counterparts, often made to reside (sometimes, by choice; at other times, by design) in cities and towns with the greatest concentrations of Jews. These, however, were—precisely because of their elevated concentration of Jewish residents—often the most dangerous in which to live. One’s socio-economic situation was, therefore, yet another element of the hierarchy dividing the Jews. But, one might ask, did one’s wealth (or lack thereof)—or any of the other factors discussed in the previous pages—matter when it came to the Jews’ deportation, as it had with regards to their arrest? That is, in fact, the subject of the following chapter.

CHAPTER 4

DEPORTATIONS, 1942-1944

THE NON-DEPORTED

“The link between arrests and deportations [was] very strong,” wrote Georges Wellers in his well-known work, *L'étoile jaune à l'heure de Vichy*.

For the Germans, every arrested Jew [was] destined for deportation. [...] A Jew belonging to a category exempt, for whatever reason, from deportation [was], as a rule, not arrested: What good [was] it to encumber oneself with non-deportable Jews! For the Vichy authorities, the link between arrest and deportation [was] much less clear [...]. In general, for the Germans, all Jews [...] in France [were] to be deported without exception. Vichy never decided to officially consent to the global deportation of the French Jews [...].¹

The proof, for Wellers, was in the pudding: although “numerous roundups took place in which French Jews were indiscriminately arrested alongside foreign or stateless [Jews,] [...] the fact remains that, among the Jewish deportees from France, the French represented a minority.”²

Echoing the French-foreign dichotomy, Wellers’ argument can be summarized in the following way: *every* arrested Jew—with the exception of those of French origin—was destined for deportation. But was that, indeed, the case? The answer, quite simply, is *no*. Of the 527 Vauclusian Jews arrested, “only” 399 (or 75.7 percent) of them were deported—a fact which suggests that the link between arrests and deportations was

¹ Wellers, *L'étoile jaune à l'heure de Vichy*, p. 72.

² *Ibid.*, p. 75.

perhaps not quite as strong as Wellers believed. The discrepancy between the number of Jewish arrestees and deportees appears, moreover, to have had little to do with their “status,” with French and foreign Jews having been deported in nearly identical proportions. This is not to suggest, however, that all Jews were equally as in danger of being sent to “the East” following their arrest. They were not. Indeed, as will be seen in the following pages, the deportations of the Vauclusian Jews (much as it had been the case with their arrests) bore the mark of the hierarchy of persecution—itsself informed by various personal, geographical and temporal considerations.

EXECUTED OR DECEASED

There are various reasons why one-quarter of the Vauclusian Jews that were arrested were never deported. In seventeen cases, the individual passed away before they could ever make the journey eastwards: seven, of the harsh living conditions to which they were subjected; ten, directly at the hands of the Germans. Although these cases are numerically insufficient to conduct proper statistical analyses, the numbers concerning them seem to point in certain directions.

Though interned at Drancy, Henri Nahoum, a twenty-one-year-old French Jew from Avignon, was receiving medical attention at the Tenon Hospital in Paris in 1944, when he was killed in an explosion, the details of which remain unclear.³ Nahoum was the youngest Vauclusian Jew to perish while in internment. Indeed, with the exception of

³ Notes appended to two photographs of Henri Nahoum with family and friends. See CDJC, Marie-Rose Nahoum Collection, MXII_11697 and MXII_11698.

just one other (Herman Jacob Schwarz⁴), all of the Jews who died in a French internment camp were over the age of sixty-one at the time of their death. Is it possible that the physical and psychological demands of life in the camps were simply too great for some Jews to bear, especially those of an advanced age? It certainly appears to have been the case. It is believed, for example, that the stress suffered by Jacques Nersum (pronounced Nerson), an eighty-two-year-old French Jew who was being detained in Valréas, was behind the heart attack to which he succumbed on March 24, 1944.⁵

Age also appears to have been a common trait of those who were murdered by the Germans. In fact, seven of the ten Jews who were executed by the authorities were under the age of forty-eight at the time of their death. All males, these Jews shared another common characteristic: nearly all of them are known to have been involved in Resistance activities.⁶ Among the Vauclusian Jews murdered for having participated in the Resistance were Franck Samuel and Alfred Epstein. Respectively eighteen and forty-two years old at the time, Samuel and Epstein were executed by the Germans on February 22, 1944 at Izon-la-Bruisse (Drôme), for having fought as partisans in the Maquis Ventoux.⁷

Others were murdered for having resisted the Germans in a different way. Such was the case of the Dreyfus brothers from Saignon. At six o'clock in the morning on February 17, 1944, fifteen German soldiers, accompanied by two civilians, presented

⁴ "Pages of Testimony" submitted by Laura Urikh and Rina Shvartz Brotman on behalf of Herman Jacob Schwarz, YV, CDSVN.

⁵ Kaminker, *La persécution contrariée*, p. 298.

⁶ By their very nature, these activities were most often the game of younger, more physically capable individuals. It is, therefore, perhaps not all that surprising that the Vauclusian Jews who were executed for having been part of the Resistance were men of a relatively young age.

⁷ "Page of Testimony" submitted by Samuel Franck (genealogist) on behalf of Samuel Franck and "Pages of Testimony" submitted by Irene de Cou (née Epstein) and Michael J. Suess on behalf of Alfred Epstein, YV, CDSVN.

themselves at the Dreyfus residence and demanded that they be let in. Shortly thereafter, Gaston Daniel, the eldest of the two brothers, struck one of the soldiers. The event provoked immediate reprisals. Gaston and Félix, who was nine years his brother's junior, were brought outside and summarily executed, with the former's wife also suffering injuries. According to a report discussing the incident, it was presumed that "the Germans had come to arrest the two Dreyfus [brothers]."⁸ One act of defiance, however, ultimately cost them their lives.

ESCAPED

Twelve Vauclusian Jews managed to flee the place in which they were being interned, among them, the camps of Pithiviers, Gurs, Rivesaltes and Les Milles. Although, as before, there are too few of these cases to make statistical analysis possible, the numbers seem to point in certain directions, nonetheless. Unlike those who had died while in captivity (either through executions or the harsh living conditions within the camps), the Jews having escaped from internment were a group split nearly down the middle with regards to gender, with seven men and five women. They were, however, similar to those who had been executed by the Germans, in that they, too, had been a youthful group.

The oldest Jewish escapee was a man named Burik Faer, a Romanian Jew born in Orhei in 1895. In his late forties at the time, Burik escaped the internment camp in

⁸ Report from the Sub-Prefect of Apt to the Prefect of Vaucluse, February 17, 1944, ADV, 6W37. See also report by Captain Battesti of the Apt Gendarmerie, February 17, 1944, ADV, 6W37.

Agde (Hérault) with his eighteen-year-old son, Meyer (Maurice).⁹ At eleven years old, Denise Arokas was the youngest person to flee the place in which she was being held. Shortly after being arrested with her mother, Ida, on July 19, 1943, Denise fell ill and was transferred from Les Baumettes Prison to Conception Hospital in Marseille. With the help of sympathetic doctors and staff, she managed to escape, ultimately going into hiding near Orange, at the home of a woman who had worked for her parents.¹⁰

With the exceptions of Faer and Arokas, all of the other Jewish escapees were born between 1900 and 1925, making them between seventeen and forty-four years old at the time of their escape. There were, in other words, few children and no elderly among them. The testimony of Maud Bloch, who was arrested on April 15, 1944, with her parents at their home in Marseille, helps shed some light on this phenomenon.¹¹

Awaiting her and her parents' transfer to Drancy, Maud, who was twenty-one years old at the time, saw possibilities for escape. These, however, did not appear feasible for individuals of her parents' age. Her mother, Marie, was fifty-four years old, while her father, Maurice, was sixty-two.¹² "It would have been possible to escape," Maud explained, "but not for older persons. One had to run. One had to hide. I could have, perhaps, done it, myself. But I did not want to be separated from my parents."¹³ By virtue of their age and physical capabilities, some Jews were thus better positioned than others to attempt, and successfully carry out, an escape.

⁹ International Committee of the Red Cross, Detention Certificate for Baruch Faer, ITS, T/D 748 420, USHMM.

¹⁰ Nelcya Delanoë, *D'une petite rafle provençale...* (Paris: Seuil, 2013), p. 197. See also Lewendel and Weisz, *Vichy, les Nazis et les voyous*, p. 189.

¹¹ For a detailed account of the arrest, see Bloch, VHA, Part I: 17:02-22:06.

¹² *Ibid.*, Part I: 22:12-22:25.

¹³ *Ibid.*, Part II: 3:10-3:21.

RELEASED

Sixty-four Vauclusian Jews were released following their arrest.¹⁴ In June 1943, Siza Ruchla Waksman (née Doktorczyk) was released from Gurs and was permitted to reside with her parents in Pertuis after having given birth to her son.¹⁵ Another woman, Dora Klipper (née Lazar), was released from the same camp on May 20, 1943, in order for her to tend to her ill and aging parents who were living in Ansouis.¹⁶ Arrested on the morning of August 26, 1942, Robert Jean Jokl, for his part, was released once it was discovered that he was eligible to benefit from the exemption awarded to “those who had distinguished themselves through their artistic, literary or scientific work, or who had rendered some other exceptional service to France.”¹⁷ In the report justifying his release, one reads the following: “Jokl, Robert, [...] is in fact a doctor in medicine, a scholar, a psychiatrist and a psychoanalyst of high value. [He] was professor Freud’s assistant in Vienna. [He is also the] author of numerous scientific publications.”¹⁸ Cases such as these were, perhaps unsurprisingly, rather exceptional. But what of that of the Benhaim family from Avignon? Was the possible motive for their release any more representative?

¹⁴ Six of these Jews were ultimately recaptured: five were deported and one was executed by the authorities.

¹⁵ Letter from the Sub-Prefect of Apt to the Prefect of Vaucluse, June 22, 1943 and certificate of liberation from Gurs for Siza Waksman (née Doktorczyk), June 25, 1943, Waksman folder, ADV, 7W17.

¹⁶ Certificate of liberation from Gurs for Dora Klipper (née Lazar), May 19, 1943 and undated letter from the Prefect of Vaucluse to the Prefect of the Pyrénées-Orientales, Klipper folder, ADV, 7W17. Some Jews, like Léopold and Rosa Lyon (née Kahn), were released for “health-related reasons” of their own. See “État mensuel des libérations de ressortissants français ou étrangers arrêtés par les autorités d’opérations allemandes ou italiennes en Zone Libre—Mois d’août 1943,” August 1943, ADV, 6W37.

¹⁷ Prefecture of Vaucluse, “Liste des Juifs étrangers ayant fait l’objet des mesures de regroupement prévues par les instructions de M. le Ministre Secrétaire d’État à l’Intérieur en date des 5 et 15 août 1942 et ayant rejoint effectivement le camp des Milles (B.D.R.) du 23 au 26 août 1942,” Undated document (Probably August 1942), ADV, 7W16; Director General of the National Police to the Regional Prefect of Marseille, August 5, 1942, ADV, 7W16.

¹⁸ Undated report from the Prefect of Vaucluse to the Regional Prefect of Marseille, Jokl folder, ADV, 7W17.

Armand and Reine Benhaim (née Chemoul) were arrested with their three children (Fred, Jacques and Michèle) at their home at 6 Place Jérusalem on April 19, 1943.¹⁹ The next day, the mother and daughter were released, while the father and the two boys remained in custody.²⁰ Although the precise motive for their release is never explicitly stated, one report documenting the event specifies that Michèle was “1 year and 6 months old.”²¹ One wonders, therefore: Were Reine and Michèle released on the basis of their age and gender? It seems likely, and it would certainly fit a pattern. For example, female Jews were released in higher proportions than their male counterparts, as were Jews under the age of five and over sixty, when compared to those from all other age groups. Age and gender thus seem to have factored into the release of certain Jews.

But were other factors—such as one’s “status,” nationality or country of origin—also important? Surprisingly, these appear to have had little to no bearing on the Jews’ release. Indeed, French and foreign Jews—irrespective of their nationality or their country of origin—were set free in nearly identical proportions, with neither having had an advantage over the other. Part of this can be explained by the factor that proved critical to the Jews’ release and that served as a sort of equalizer between the various “types” of Jews: *wealth*.

One’s freedom could be purchased for the right price. Such a prospect was made possible by the evolution of the war and occupation and by the situation on the ground in

¹⁹ Second World War History Committee of the Deportation in Vaucluse, Individual deportation sheet for Armand Benhaim, January 1959, ADV, 2J1. See also “État mensuel des arrestations de ressortissants français opérés par les autorités d’opérations allemandes ou italiennes en Zone Libre—Mois d’avril 1943,” April 1943, ADV, 6W37.

²⁰ “État mensuel des libérations de ressortissants français arrêtés par les autorités d’opérations allemandes ou italiennes en Zone Libre—Mois d’avril 1943,” April 1943, ADV, 6W37.

²¹ Individual arrest sheet for Reine Benhaim (née Chemoul), Undated document, ADV, 6W37.

the department, making it an excellent example of the interplay between the personal, geographical and temporal forces that impacted the Jews.

As seen in the previous chapter, the years 1943 and 1944 were marked by an important decline in the role played by the French administration in the arrests of the Jews. Indeed, from the occupation of the southern zone onwards, this task fell primarily within the purview of the German authorities and their French collaborators, with the latter taking a preponderant role in the operations, due to the finite number of Germans on the ground and their lack of familiarity with the local terrain and populace.

Recruited from the ranks of far-right political and paramilitary groups and from the French underworld, these auxiliaries were handsomely compensated for their work. Arrested with his father and sister by a member of the Milice in May 1944, Alfred El Koubi remembered witnessing the following upon their arrival at Gestapo headquarters: “I saw the Gestapo chief pay, in front of us, the price of the three arrests. [...] At the time, it seemed like a colossal sum [of money] [...]. He [the Gestapo chief] gave him [the Milicien] three times 6,000 francs [18,000 francs total] for the three [of us].”²²

Had the El Koubis had the means of doing so, it is likely that they could have purchased their freedom before being turned over to the authorities, as others had done previously. For example, Edmond and Simone Carcassonne (née Lévy) were arrested in Orange on March 25, 1944, but were released after paying a ransom of 130,000 to 135,000 francs to their captors.²³ Samuel Mossé and his daughter, Danielle, for their part, were arrested by a band of individuals on April 6, 1944. Driven to Gestapo headquarters (though not made to enter), they were able to negotiate their way to

²² Elkoubi, VHA, Part II: 15:32-15:50. For a detailed account of the arrest, see *ibid.*, Part II: 12:39-15:20.

²³ Lewendel and Weisz, *Vichy, les Nazis et les voyous*, pp. 310 and 312.

freedom. In exchange for 120,000 francs, they were let go, but not without first being warned that, if they were ever caught again, they would be executed.²⁴ Finally, on May 15, 1944, two individuals (Charles Palmieri and Robert Conrad) proceeded to arrest Marie Riz at her home, 27 Rue Bancasse in Avignon. She was released upon payment of 100,000 francs. It was not Marie's first such experience. In November 1943, she had similarly been ransomed for 60,000 francs.²⁵ In each of these cases, the Jews obtained their release by paying their captors a sum many times greater than the one they would have earned for turning them in to the authorities. It was, in short, an option available only to the wealthy and the well-to-do.

“The use of [French] ruffraff by the Germans,” wrote Isaac Lewendel and Bernard Weisz scathingly, “would, therefore, have contradictory effects. It contributed to the loss of hundreds of Vauclusian Jews, but the thugs' desire for financial gain allowed many Jews destined for death to escape.”²⁶ As Lewendel and Weisz make clear, the Germans were not unaware of the activities being pursued by their French helpers, but the situation was such that they could do little about it.

To accomplish their tasks[,] [...] the Germans needed an efficient, unscrupulous and francophone personnel. [...] As long as the “yield” of arrests was acceptable, the blackmailing of Jews was tolerated and, in certain circumstances, welcome [...]. From the German point of view, the situation was not without “leaks.” The yield was far from one hundred percent. But without the prospect of making enormous sums, the motivation of the [French] thugs would diminish and the yield would decrease even further. [...] As long as the “yield” was reasonable, they [the Germans] looked the other way.²⁷

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 310-311.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 197, 312-313 and 377.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 204-205.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 328-329.

Thus, the situation on the ground provided the conditions in which certain Jews—in particular, those of means—could, if arrested, purchase their freedom.

“Wealth” was not solely of the financial variety, however. Indeed, Jews were not released exclusively on their ability to pay the ransoms demanded by those that had been tasked with arresting them. Rather than purchasing their freedom, certain Jews benefitted from the “social capital” that they had acquired throughout the years. Much like financial wealth, this social capital benefitted Jews from across the spectrum and proved, once again, to be an equalizer of sorts between the various “types” of Jews.

On August 26, 1942, Rosa Chivat (née Hirszberg), a thirty-five-year-old Polish Jew from Kutno, was arrested at her residence in Apt.²⁸ She was released less than two weeks later, on September 8th.²⁹ According to a report dated September 17, 1942 and addressed to the Prefect of Vaucluse by the Commander of the Gendarmerie in Avignon, Chivat was released upon the “personal intervention” of her brother-in-law, a well-known local doctor.³⁰ The Prefect, however, challenged the Commander’s assessment in subsequent correspondence: “I cannot *a priori* suppose, as you do, that it [the liberation of Chivat] was obtained as a result of the personal intervention of Mr. Doctor Appy, [since] the case [...] was, in fact, examined by a screening commission [*commission de criblage*], outside of any intervention.”³¹ Although there is some doubt surrounding the

²⁸ Prefecture of Vaucluse, “Liste des Juifs étrangers ayant fait l’objet des mesures de regroupement prévues par les instructions de M. le Ministre Secrétaire d’État à l’Intérieur en date des 5 et 15 août 1942 et ayant rejoint effectivement le camp des Milles (B.D.R.) du 23 au 26 août 1942,” Undated document (Probably August 1942) and *procès-verbal* (No. 611) of the arrest of Rosa Chivat (née Hirszberg), August 26, 1942, ADV, 7W16.

²⁹ Report from the Chief of the Apt Brigade to the Captain of the Apt Section, October 29, 1942, ADV, 7W16.

³⁰ Report from the Commander of the Gendarmerie of Vaucluse to the Prefect of Vaucluse, September 17, 1942, ADV, 7W16.

³¹ Report from the Prefect of Vaucluse to the Commander of the Gendarmerie of Vaucluse, September 21, 1942, ADV, 7W16.

role played by Doctor Appy in Rosa's release, the fact remains that this was not the only instance in which a Jew was set free following a Gentile's intercession on their behalf.

Pinchos Estryng was also apprehended during the roundup of August 26, 1942.³² His arrest, much like that of Rosa Chivat, did not go unnoticed. Four days after Estryng was taken into custody, Paul Vève, a farmer and a member of the Special Delegation of Venasque, addressed the following letter to the Sub-Prefect of Carpentras:

It is my honour to inform you that Mister Pinchos Estryng, who is of the Jewish confession, was arrested on the morning of the 26th at his place of residence and was taken to an unknown destination. I am ignorant of the reason for such a measure [...]. But, having had this person at my service for a long time, it is perhaps useful that I provide on his behalf, and in all fairness, the information and impressions garnered and which many years of daily contact lend credence.

Having arrived in France in 1934, [Pinchos] resided one year in Carpentras before moving to Venasque with his brother, where he exploited a small farm. Well-tended, the farm prospered. It is true that he devoted it all of his care. One could even say that it monopolized all of his activity. When his brother was mobilized in November 1939, [Pinchos] wished to replace him as a labourer on my farm. This job, which he occupied concurrently with the exploitation of his own farm, required tremendous efforts from him. Without [Pinchos], it would have been impossible for me, at seventy-two years of age, to continue to ensure the exploitation of my farm in proper conditions. In so doing, he served the country to which he is, by the way, profoundly attached. For these reasons, [Pinchos], it seems to me, deserves some consideration.

Please accept, Mister the Sub-Prefect, my respectful and devoted regards.³³

Thus, the social capital acquired by Estryng during his time on the farm had, in the eyes of his benefactor, merited him at least "some consideration" from the authorities. Ultimately, Pinchos Estryng was released. He went on to live and work on a farm in Mazan, ten kilometres from Venasque.³⁴

³² *Procès-verbal* (No. 487) of the arrest of Pinchos Estryng, August 26, 1942, ADV, 7W16.

³³ Letter from Paul Vève to the Sub-Prefect of Carpentras, August 30, 1942, ADV, 7W16.

³⁴ National Gendarmerie, Carpentras Brigade, "Liste nominative des 'Juifs' qui se sont présentés à la

Even though it is difficult, if not impossible, in cases such as these, to prove causality, the number of instances in which Gentiles attempted to obtain the release of Jews by writing to the authorities on their behalf suggests that there was a certain faith in that approach. A Gentile's intercession in no way guaranteed a Jew's release, however, as the following examples show.

Born in Vienna in 1904, Friedrich Kraus, an engineer at Gustave Naquet et Fils, a company in Avignon specializing in textile products, was arrested in August 1942.³⁵ On September 3, 1942, Mister A. Naquet, the owner of the company, wrote to the Prefect of Vaucluse pleading for his employee's release:

Mister the Prefect,

[...] I have just been informed that Mister Friedrich Kraus was loaded onto the first convoy leaving les Milles for an unknown destination.

[...] This situation is excessively prejudicial to the fabrication of primers for the textile industry [...].

Mister Kraus, who is a distinguished chemical engineer, has recently developed a particularly appreciated and sought after method for bonding rayon fibres [...].

His absence is thus not only an inconvenience for us [Gustave Naquet et Fils] but also an inconvenience for all French textile manufacturers, because[, without him,] I would be forced to cease production.

I hope, Mister the Prefect, that you will be able to intervene [...] so that Mister Friedrich Kraus may return to Avignon promptly. The services that he has rendered and that he renders daily to the French textile industry are certainly more than sufficient for your request to be successful.

brigade pour faire apposer sur leurs titres d'identité la mention 'Juif',” February 2, 1943; Mayor's Office in Mazan, “État des Israélites—Commune de Mazan,” August 31, 1943; Prefecture of Vaucluse, “Liste nominative des Juifs étrangers en résidence dans le département de Vaucluse à la date du 13 mai 1944,” May 13, 1944, ADV, 7W15.

³⁵ Prefecture of Vaucluse, “Liste des Juifs étrangers ayant fait l'objet des mesures de regroupement prévues par les instructions de M. le Ministre Secrétaire d'État à l'Intérieur en date des 5 et 15 août 1942 et ayant rejoint effectivement le camp des Milles (B.D.R.) du 23 au 26 août 1942,” Undated document (Probably August 1942), ADV, 7W16.

While thanking you in advance, please accept, Mister the Prefect, the assurance of my highest consideration [emphasis in original].³⁶

Two additional letters were sent from A. Naquet to the Prefect on behalf of Kraus. One line from the letter of October 7, 1942, summarizes the thrust of his argument in Kraus' favour: "It would be highly regrettable if France were unable to benefit from the knowledge and discoveries of Mister Kraus."³⁷ All of Naquet's efforts were in vain, however. Friedrich Kraus was deported from Drancy to Auschwitz just two weeks after his arrest, aboard convoy 29.³⁸

The taking into custody of Schelma Medvédowsky on June 16, 1944, produced what was probably the greatest backlash to any one single arrest of a Jew in the department. Born on February 20, 1891 in Zolotonoscha, Ukraine, Medvédowsky immigrated to France in the years preceding the First World War and obtained French citizenship through naturalization in 1921.³⁹ A medical doctor by profession, Medvédowsky was apprehended by the Milice on the morning of June 16, 1944, in the town of Cucuron, while on his way to treat patients.⁴⁰ News of the arrest spread like wildfire. Within three days, the residents of four communes (La Tour-d'Aigues, Grambois, Saint-Martin-de-la-Brasque and La Motte-d'Aigues) sent petitions to the Prefect of Vaucluse pleading that Medvédowsky be released.⁴¹ In total, the petitions garnered 448 signatures. In their petition to the Prefect, the residents of Grambois stated

³⁶ Letter from A. Naquet to the Prefect of Vaucluse, September 3, 1942, ADV, 7W16.

³⁷ Letters from A. Naquet to the Prefect of Vaucluse, September 8, 1942 and October 7, 1942, ADV, 7W16.

³⁸ Deportation list of convoy 29, CDJC, C29_41.

³⁹ Prefecture of Vaucluse, "État nominatif des Juifs français résidant en Vaucluse au 1^{er} juillet 1941," July 1, 1941, ADV, 7W15; Prefecture of Vaucluse, "Liste des Juifs exerçant une des professions interdites par les articles 4 et 5 de la loi du 2 juin 1941," Undated document (Probably June 1941), 7W16.

⁴⁰ Letter from the Mayor of La Tour-d'Aigues to the Prefect of Vaucluse, June 21, 1944, ADV, 6W37.

⁴¹ Petitions from the residents of La Tour-d'Aigues, Grambois, Saint-Martin-de-la-Brasque and La Motte-d'Aigues to the Prefect of Vaucluse, June 17-19, 1944, ADV, 6W37.

that they were “greatly afflicted by the news of the arrest of Doctor Medwedosky [*sic*],” whom they described as “universally loved and admired for his devotion towards his patients and his great competence.” They were, moreover, clear in their demands: “The population of Grambois [...] implores the authorities responsible [for his arrest] to release him as soon as possible.”⁴² Once again, things did not transpire as hoped. Unbeknownst to everyone, Medvédowsky was executed in a forest on the outskirts of Beaumont-de-Pertuis on June 17, 1944, although his body was not discovered until several months later.⁴³

Although intercessions on behalf of Jews did not always lead to their release and, in the instances where they may have, the causal link is difficult to prove, the Jews who had someone advocating on their behalf almost certainly had a better chance of being released than those who did not. For instance, five Jews were arrested in Vaison-la-Romaine on January 21, 1944.⁴⁴ “The public,” reads one report, “has made few comments [in relation to these arrests], since the arrested persons are not well known.”⁴⁵

⁴² Petition from the residents of Grambois to the Prefect of Vaucluse, June 17, 1944, ADV, 6W37. It is interesting to compare these words with those used by the Mayor of La Tour-d’Aigues to try to convince the Prefect of Vaucluse to intercede on behalf of Medvédowsky:

The commune of La Tour-d’Aigues and surrounding areas are unable to treat their sick, always more numerous because of the influx of refugees from the coastal areas. There is now only one doctor to treat everyone, while two were barely able to accomplish this task.

Doctor Medvédowsky enjoys the esteem and general consideration [of the residents of the commune]. He is an excellent and devoted practitioner, and [his] arrest has stirred the population of La Tour-d’Aigues and of the region.

I am obliged to ask you to intervene with the competent authorities in order to hasten his release.

See letter from the Mayor of La Tour-d’Aigues to the Prefect of Vaucluse, June 21, 1944, ADV, 6W37.

⁴³ Memorial to Doctor S. Medvédowsky, Route de Beaumont, Beaumont-de-Pertuis, France; Lewendel and Weisz, *Vichy, les Nazis et les voyous*, pp. 239-241.

⁴⁴ Report from the Sub-Prefect of Carpentras to the Prefect of Vaucluse, January 26, 1944, ADV, 6W37.

⁴⁵ Report concerning arrests conducted by the German authorities, January 26, 1944, ADV, 6W37.

Coincidentally or not, none of the Jews apprehended on that day are known to have been released.⁴⁶

Being well known was not, in itself, sufficient, however. One also needed to have the requisite social capital. Indeed, as the Estryn, Kraus and Medvédowsky examples show, the protests and intercessions made on behalf of Jews were almost entirely devoid of moral arguments. Rather than rooting their protest in humanitarian considerations, Gentiles tended to emphasize the pragmatic consequences of the arrests: the Jew whose release they were seeking was, for one reason or another, deemed to be of value and, therefore, in need of being preserved. Thus, insofar as it affected the likelihood that a Gentile might intercede on their behalf, a Jew's perceived worth could either increase or diminish their chances of being released from custody.

LIBERATED

On June 6, 1944, the Allies landed on the beaches of Normandy. Two-and-a-half months later (on August 18, 1944), they liberated Drancy, thereby saving the nearly 1,500 Jews that the Germans had not had the time to deport.⁴⁷ Of these, eight were from the Vaucluse.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ The fate of two of the Jews in question remains unknown. Although their names do not appear on any of the deportation lists, there is no evidence of them ever having been released.

⁴⁷ Wellers, *L'étoile jaune à l'heure de Vichy*, p. 219. The names of the Jewish survivors of Drancy are found on three different, albeit similar, lists. See "Liste des libérés de Drancy," ITS, OCC 6/3 IVA/1, USHMM; International Committee of the Red Cross, "Libérés de Drancy du 18/8/44," ITS, OCC 6/3/a IVA/1, USHMM; International Committee of the Red Cross, "Libérés du camp de Drancy le 18/8/44," ITS, OCC 6/3/b IVA/1, USHMM.

⁴⁸ In addition to these eight individuals, two previously unidentified Jews (Marc Djian and Oscar Reich), who were recorded on one of these lists as having an address in the Vaucluse, were also liberated at Drancy on August 18, 1944. See International Committee of the Red Cross, "Libérés du camp de Drancy le 18/8/44," ITS, OCC 6/3/b IVA/1, USHMM.

At first, one might be tempted to attribute their liberation to geographical and temporal forces. After all, nearly half of the Vauclusian Jews taken into custody were apprehended in 1944, meaning that, in comparison to those arrested earlier, they had a greater chance of still being at Drancy at the Liberation. And since, as was seen in the previous chapter, geographical factors (such as the Italian zone) were partly responsible for the fact that the arrests took place later rather than sooner, one might be inclined to attribute the liberation of the eight Jews in question to these elements (i.e., geographical and temporal factors). That assessment would be misguided, however, since only four of the Vauclusian Jewish survivors of Drancy were arrested in 1944, while the others were apprehended at various times throughout 1943 and were interned *longer* than any other Jew, whether liberated or deported.

What, then, might account for them still being there at the end of the summer of 1944? It is a question fraught with uncertainty, especially in light of the limited number of cases at hand. All of the survivors were men and all—save one—were French. With regards to their age, they were between twenty-nine and sixty-three years old. Interestingly, this profile was not only common to the survivors of Drancy but also to the individuals who, though having ultimately been deported, had spent the greatest amount of time interned (see Table 20).

Pierre Salomon Lévi, for example, checked all of these boxes. Born in Paris on September 16, 1899, Lévi was considered a French Jew by the German and Vichy authorities.⁴⁹ Arrested at the Avignon train station on April 19, 1943, he was brought to,

⁴⁹ Prefecture of Vaucluse, “État nominatif des Juifs français résidant en Vaucluse au 1^{er} juillet 1941,” July 1, 1941, ADV, 7W15.

and was temporarily detained in, the Hautpoul barracks.⁵⁰ Five days later, he was transferred to Drancy via Marseille.⁵¹ On April 29, 1943, ten days after his arrest, Lévi was put at the disposal of the SD in Maisons-Laffitte and was made to conduct agricultural work in a camp in Orgeval, a commune thirty kilometres northwest of Paris.⁵² Called back to Drancy on July 17, 1943, Lévi was deported to Auschwitz two weeks later, aboard convoy 58.⁵³ He had been detained for a total of 103 days.⁵⁴

*Table 20: Number of Days between the Jews' Arrest and Deportation.*⁵⁵

| | 0 to 7 | 8 to 14 | 15 to 30 | 31 to 60 | 61 to 90 | 91 to 180 | 181 to 365 |
|----------------------|--------|---------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|------------|
| Gender | | | | | | | |
| Male | 2 | 27 | 46 | 50 | 6 | 9 | 9 |
| Female | 1 | 30 | 32 | 23 | 8 | 1 | 1 |
| Date of Birth | | | | | | | |
| 1930 to 1945 | 0 | 13 | 11 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 1915 to 1929 | 0 | 10 | 12 | 17 | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| 1900 to 1914 | 3 | 20 | 24 | 28 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Prior to 1900 | 0 | 14 | 31 | 23 | 8 | 7 | 7 |
| Status | | | | | | | |
| French | 1 | 13 | 29 | 26 | 9 | 5 | 4 |
| Foreign | 2 | 40 | 42 | 29 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Both | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Unknown | 0 | 3 | 7 | 16 | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| Total (245) | 3 | 57 | 78 | 73 | 14 | 10 | 10 |

In addition to his age, gender and “status,” Pierre Salomon Lévi shared one of two other traits common to the Jewish survivors of Drancy: former military service⁵⁶

⁵⁰ Individual arrest sheet for Pierre Salomon Lévi, Undated document, ADV, 6W37; Individual deportation sheet for Pierre Salomon Lévi, Undated postwar document, ADV, 2J1.

⁵¹ “Entrées au camp de Drancy d’internés en provenance de la Zone Sud,” April 24, 1943, CDJC, CDXVI-151; Klarsfeld, *Mémorial*, p. 403.

⁵² Prefecture of Police, Drancy Internment Camp, Untitled list concerning “23 Jews put, this day, at the disposal of the SD of Maisons-Laffite [*sic*] for agricultural work,” April 29, 1943, CDJC, DLIX-19; Undated postwar questionnaire (No. 231) addressed to the Order of Our Lady of Sion (Notre-Dame de Sion) by Paulette Lévi (née Weil), CDJC, DI(1-264).

⁵³ Undated postwar questionnaire (No. 231) addressed to the Order of Our Lady of Sion (Notre-Dame de Sion) by Paulette Lévi (née Weil), CDJC, DI(1-264); Deportation list of convoy 58, CDJC, C58_22.

⁵⁴ Lévi was one of nineteen Jews to be detained more than one hundred days before being deported.

⁵⁵ Only the Jews whose date of arrest and deportation were known were included.

⁵⁶ Lévi fought for France in both the First and Second World Wars. See individual arrest sheet for Pierre Salomon Lévi, Undated document, ADV, 6W37; Undated postwar questionnaire (No. 231) addressed to the Order of Our Lady of Sion (Notre-Dame de Sion) by Paulette Lévi (née Weil), CDJC, DI(1-264).

(with the other trait being the spouse's status as a non-Jew). Two of the Jews liberated at Drancy had fought for France in the First World War, while two had done so between 1939 and 1940.⁵⁷ Of the eight, four were married to Gentiles, and two had children who were considered non-Jews.⁵⁸ Whether it was their military service or the status of their spouse or children that preserved these individuals long enough for them to witness the liberation of the camp remains unclear. These were, however, among the factors that influenced the place to which a given Jew was deported. As such, they had a direct bearing on one's chances for survival, as the following pages will show.

THE DEPORTED

Eighty-one "official" convoys, carrying nearly 76,000 Jews, left France for "the East" between March 1942 and August 1944⁵⁹, forty-one of which carried at least one Vauclosian Jew (see Table 21). Combined, these convoys transported 382 Jewish

⁵⁷ Henri Jacques Dreyfus and Ernest Rudolph Lévy: Prefecture of Vaucluse, "Liste des Juifs exerçant une des professions interdites par les articles 4 et 5 de la loi du 2 juin 1941," Undated document, ADV, 7W16; Pierre Marc Franck: Jean Lebon, SEC Marseille, Report No. 1388, January 19, 1943, AN, AJ³⁸ 3805; Jean Jules Bernheim: Letter from Rose Eva Bernheim (née Fogle) to an unidentified person (probably the Prefect of Vaucluse), April 21, 1943, ADV, 6W37.

⁵⁸ Jean Isidore Kahn: Report from the Sub-Prefect of Carpentras to the Prefect of Vaucluse, March 18, 1944, ADV, 6W37; Henri Jacques Dreyfus: Individual arrest sheet for Marie Dreyfus (née Charrol), Undated document, ADV, 6W37; Ernest Rudolph Lévy: Letter from Mrs. Domenichini to the departmental delegation of the French Red Cross, July 10, 1943, ADV, 6W37; Pierre Marc Franck: Letter from Pierre Marc Franck to the Prefect of Vaucluse, March 18, 1943, ADV, 7W17.

⁵⁹ It is generally recognized that seventy-nine convoys left France for "the East" between March 1942 and August 1944. This is, in part, because of an accounting error. Though the last recorded convoy was convoy number 79, convoys 41, 43, 54 and 56 never existed. In fact, these particular numbers were mistakenly passed over by those responsible for numbering the convoys. Additionally, seven previously unnumbered convoys are known to have departed France during the war. These include the four convoys that made up convoy 80, as well as convoys 81, 82 and 641. Thus, a total of eighty-one convoys carrying Jewish victims travelled eastwards from France between 1942 and 1944. See Klarsfeld, *Mémorial*, pp. ii-xvii.

victims of the Vaucluse to concentration and extermination camps in Central and Eastern Europe.

The remaining seventeen deportees were transferred by way of “unofficial” or foreign transports. For example, as previously mentioned, Ojser Warszawski, a Polish Jew who resided in Avignon and Gordes in 1942 and 1943, was arrested in Rome, Italy on May 17, 1944 and was deported to Auschwitz two months later.⁶⁰ Having been part of a foreign transport, Warszawski’s name never appeared on a French deportation list.

Though deported from France, Léonore Stern (née Besser) and her daughter, Maïdy, were not part of an official, numbered convoy. Residents of Le Thor, a town eighteen kilometres east of Avignon, from June 1940 until their arrest in May 1944, the Sterns were deported from Drancy to a camp in Dresden on June 21, 1944.⁶¹ Neither the means of transportation used for, nor the route taken by, the convoy are known. Ruth Asch, another German Jew, was apprehended in Avignon by members of the Gestapo on February 10, 1943.⁶² She was deported that same day to a camp in Karlsruhe, Germany.⁶³ No further details are known of this transport.

⁶⁰ “Page of Testimony” submitted by Lydie Lachenal-Ritter on behalf of Ojser Warszawski, YV, CDSVN.

⁶¹ Mayor’s Office in Le Thor, “État nominatif de tous les étrangers résidant dans la commune [du Thor] au 31 janvier 1941,” February 4, 1941, ADV, 3W266; “État mensuel des arrestations de ressortissants français opérées par les troupes allemandes—Mois de mai 1944,” May 1944, ADV, 6W37; Minister of Veterans and War Victims to the Chief of the French Liaison Mission to the International Tracing Service, June 11, 1958, ITS, T/D 678 984, USHMM.

⁶² Letter from the Police Commissioner in Avignon to the Prefect of Vaucluse, February 11, 1943, ADV, 6W37.

⁶³ Minister of Veterans and War Victims to the Chief of the French Liaison Mission to the International Tracing Service, April 4, 1957, ITS, T/D 540 471, USHMM.

Table 21: Convoys to “the East” Carrying Vauclusian Jews, 1942-1944.⁶⁴

| Convoy Number | Number of Vauclusian Jews Onboard | Camp of Departure | Date of Departure | Final Destination | Date of Arrival |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 7 | 1 | Drancy | 19/07/1942 | Auschwitz | 21/07/1942 |
| 18 | 1 | Drancy | 12/08/1942 | Auschwitz | |
| 19 | 1 | Drancy | 14/08/1942 | Auschwitz | 16/08/1942 |
| 20 | 3 | Drancy | 17/08/1942 | Auschwitz | 19/08/1942 |
| 24 | 1 | Drancy | 26/08/1942 | Auschwitz | 28/08/1942 |
| 25 | 3 | Drancy | 28/08/1942 | Auschwitz | 31/08/1942 |
| 29 | 52 | Drancy | 07/09/1942 | Auschwitz | 09/09/1942 |
| 30 | 13 | Drancy | 09/09/1942 | Auschwitz | 11/09/1942 |
| 33 | 8 | Drancy | 16/09/1942 | Auschwitz | 19/09/1942 |
| 35 | 1 | Pithiviers | 21/09/1942 | Auschwitz | 23/09/1942 |
| 37 | 3 | Drancy | 25/09/1942 | Auschwitz | 27/09/1942 |
| 42 | 2 | Drancy | 06/11/1942 | Auschwitz | 08/11/1942 |
| 46 | 1 | Drancy | 09/02/1943 | Auschwitz | 11/02/1943 |
| 48 | 4 | Drancy | 13/02/1943 | Auschwitz | 15/02/1943 |
| 50 | 5 | Drancy | 04/03/1943 | Sobibor / Majdanek | |
| 51 | 2 | Drancy | 06/03/1943 | Sobibor / Majdanek | |
| 53 | 3 | Drancy | 25/03/1943 | Sobibor | |

⁶⁴ The order of convoys 63 and 64 (December 7 and 17, 1943) were inverted by the Gestapo. This order has been retained.

| | | | | | |
|------|----|--------|------------|----------------|---------------------------------|
| 55 | 2 | Drancy | 23/06/1943 | Auschwitz | 25/06/1943 |
| 57 | 7 | Drancy | 18/07/1943 | Auschwitz | 20/07/1943 |
| 58 | 5 | Drancy | 31/07/1943 | Auschwitz | 02/08/1943 |
| 59 | 14 | Drancy | 02/09/1943 | Auschwitz | 04/09/1943 |
| 60 | 13 | Drancy | 07/10/1943 | Auschwitz | 10/10/1943 |
| 61 | 10 | Drancy | 28/10/1943 | Auschwitz | 30/10/1943 |
| 62 | 5 | Drancy | 20/11/1943 | Auschwitz | 23/11/1943 |
| 64 | 6 | Drancy | 07/12/1943 | Auschwitz | 10/12/1943 |
| 63 | 17 | Drancy | 17/12/1943 | Auschwitz | 20/12/1943 |
| 66 | 1 | Drancy | 20/01/1944 | Auschwitz | 22/01/1944 |
| 67 | 4 | Drancy | 03/02/1944 | Auschwitz | 06/02/1944 |
| 69 | 9 | Drancy | 07/03/1944 | Auschwitz | 10/03/1944 |
| 70 | 5 | Drancy | 27/03/1944 | Auschwitz | 30/03/1944 |
| 71 | 28 | Drancy | 13/04/1944 | Auschwitz | 16/04/1944 |
| 72 | 28 | Drancy | 29/04/1944 | Auschwitz | 01/05/1944 |
| 73 | 21 | Drancy | 15/05/1944 | Kaunas / Reval | 18/05/1944 and 20/05/1944 |
| 74 | 28 | Drancy | 20/05/1944 | Auschwitz | 23/05/1944 |
| 75 | 24 | Drancy | 30/05/1944 | Auschwitz | 02/06/1944 |
| 76 | 40 | Drancy | 30/06/1944 | Auschwitz | 04/07/1944 |
| 77 | 4 | Drancy | 31/07/1944 | Auschwitz | 03/08/1944 |
| 78 | 1 | Lyon | 11/08/1944 | Auschwitz | 22/08/1944 |
| 80 B | 2 | Drancy | 03/05/1944 | Bergen-Belsen | |

| | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|----|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 81 | 1 | Toulouse | 30/07/1944 | Ravensbrück / Buchenwald | |
| 641 | 3 | Drancy | 1943 | Alderney Island | Unknown |
| Unofficial or Foreign Convoy | 17 | Various or Unknown | Various or Unknown | Various or Unknown | Various or Unknown |

Though the Jews of the department of Vaucluse were transported to “the East” between July 19, 1942 (convoy 7) and August 11, 1944 (convoy 78), the cadence at which they were deported was not consistent over time. Indeed, certain convoys transported a significantly greater number of them than others. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the number of Jews that were part of a particular convoy was related to the number of arrests having been carried out in the days and weeks prior to its departure. In fact, 211 (of 245) Jews—or 86.1 percent—were deported within just sixty days of their arrest (see Table 20).

In essence, the Vauclusian Jews were deported in three waves. Between September 7 and 16, 1942, convoys 29, 30 and 33 carried with them seventy-three Jews (or 18.3 percent of those deported), all of whom had been apprehended during, or in the days leading up to, the large-scale roundup of August 26.⁶⁵ All but one were foreign Jews.⁶⁶ The second wave occurred between September 2 and December 17, 1943 and corresponded to convoys 59 through 64. These transports, which saw the deportation of

⁶⁵ Convoy 29 transported more Vauclusian Jews than any other during the war: fifty-two.

⁶⁶ Echiel Janowski was found on both a list of foreign Jews and one of French Jews. Wilhelm Fantl, who was also deported via convoy 29, was, for his part, of unknown “status.” See Prefecture of Vaucluse, “État nominatif des Juifs français résidant en Vaucluse au 1^{er} juillet 1941,” July 1, 1941, ADV, 7W15 and Prefecture of Vaucluse, “Liste des Juifs étrangers ayant fait l’objet des mesures de regroupement prévues par les instructions de M. le Ministre Secrétaire d’État à l’Intérieur en date des 5 et 15 août 1942 et ayant rejoint effectivement le camp des Milles (B.D.R.) du 23 au 26 août 1942,” Undated document (Probably August 1942), ADV, 7W16.

sixty-five Jews (or 16.3 percent of those deported) to Auschwitz, coincided with the fall of the Italian occupation zone in southeast France and the intensive manhunt that followed in its wake. The third wave, for its part, took place within the final months of the Occupation of France. Between April 13 and June 30, 1944, convoys 71 to 76 carried with them 169 Jews (or 42.4 percent of those deported) to camps in Lithuania, Estonia and Poland. This, of course, coincided with the wave of arrests that had taken place in the Vaucluse in the spring and summer of that year—arrests that, as previously stated, matched those of 1942 and 1943 combined. All told, the fifteen convoys that were part of these three waves accounted for 76.9 percent of the deportations.⁶⁷

Of the 399 Jewish deportees of the Vaucluse, the overwhelming majority (343, or 86.0 percent) were sent to Auschwitz via Drancy.⁶⁸ In fact, of those who were transferred by way of an official, numbered convoy, only three began their journeys east from places other than Drancy, including Pithiviers, Lyon and Toulouse.⁶⁹ The destinations of these convoys were much more diverse than the places from which they originated. Three Jews were deported to Sobibor and two were sent to Bergen-Belsen. Twenty-nine others were part of convoys with two “final” destinations. (In nearly every instance, it was not possible to determine in which of the two camps the individual disembarked.) One Jew was sent to Ravensbrück or Buchenwald, seven to Sobibor or Majdanek and twenty-one to Kaunas or Reval. The remaining three Jews were not

⁶⁷ Three hundred and seven of the 399 Jewish deportees of Vaucluse were transported to “the East” via these convoys.

⁶⁸ An additional thirty-six Jews were deported from Drancy to camps other than Auschwitz.

⁶⁹ The places of departure of the seventeen Jews who were deported via unofficial or foreign transports are known in only three instances. Two began their journey east from Drancy, while one did so from Rome, Italy.

deported to “the East” but, rather, to Alderney (French: Aurigny), an island in the English Channel.⁷⁰

Used as labourers by the Organisation Todt for construction projects aimed at reinforcing the fortifications along the Atlantic Wall, the Jews sent to Alderney had to endure harsh living conditions and perform arduous work.⁷¹ One wonders, therefore: Why would the Jews in question (at thirty-seven, fifty-nine and sixty-four years of age, respectively) be selected for such labour intensive and, arguably, sensitive projects, when other inmates at Drancy, many years their junior and, in all likelihood, in better physical condition, could have been chosen in their stead? In general, Jews deported to the island were selected for one specific reason: they were married to non-Jews.⁷²

This was not the only instance in which the status of one’s spouse as a non-Jew had a direct bearing on the destination of one’s deportation. For example, convoy 80, which left Drancy for Bergen-Belsen on four occasions between May and July 1944, consisted primarily of spouses and children of French prisoners of war.⁷³ This was the case, for instance, of Golda Drogoczyner (née Szyszczycka), a foreign Jew born in Sosnowice, Poland in August 1910.⁷⁴ Drogoczyner, who was deported to Bergen-Belsen

⁷⁰ The known destinations of those deported by unofficial or foreign transports are as follows: Auschwitz (4), Buchenwald (1), Dachau (1) and Ravensbrück (1). Four others were sent to camps in cities throughout Germany, including Berlin (1), Dresden (2) and Karlsruhe (1).

⁷¹ Wellers, *L'étoile jaune à l'heure de Vichy*, p. 195.

⁷² *Ibid.*; Poznanski, *Les Juifs en France pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale*, p. 385. Although all three Jews were known to be married, proof certifying that their spouse was a Gentile could only be found for one of them: Henri (Hemyk) Kohn. See individual arrest sheet for Henri Kohn, Undated document, ADV, 6W37; Lewendel and Weisz, *Vichy, les Nazis et les voyous*, p. 91.

⁷³ Klarsfeld, *Mémorial*, p. xvii.

⁷⁴ Prefecture of Vaucluse, “État nominatif des Juifs de nationalité étrangère résidant en Vaucluse au 1^{er} juillet 1941,” July 1, 1941 and Police Commissariat in Sorgues, “État des Israélites—Commune de Sorgues,” September 17, 1943, ADV, 7W15.

on May 3, 1944 via convoy 80 B, was married to a Frenchman who, as of September 17, 1943, remained a prisoner of war.⁷⁵

One's marriage to a Gentile was not the only factor that could influence the place to which one was ultimately deported. In certain cases, other personal characteristics—such as one's age and gender—were the deciding considerations. Unlike the three Jews who were deported to the island of Alderney, the twenty-one that were part of convoy 73 were selected not in spite of their age but because of it. All men, the Vauclusian Jews that were part of this convoy were between sixteen and fifty-eight years old, with only four being over the age of forty-five.⁷⁶ Though told that they would be put to work for the Organisation Todt, they were instead deported to one of two locations: the Ninth Fort of Kaunas in Lithuania or the prison of Reval (Tallinn) in Estonia.⁷⁷ Few survived the war. That the place to which a Jew was deported was at times contingent upon certain personal and individual factors is thus significant, since not all camps offered the same prospects of survival, as the following chapter will show.

Irrespective of the place to (or from) which the Jews were deported, the journey east generally took between two and four days.⁷⁸ Various survivor testimonies provide a glimpse into the deportations of the Jews from France to Poland or elsewhere, as well as the horrors that accompanied them. “I arrived at Drancy in December 1943,” recalled Max Skripek in December 1996. “I was there for fifteen days or so. [...] I was expedited from Drancy to the train station of [Bobigny] via Parisian buses,” Skripek explained.

⁷⁵ Klarsfeld, *Mémorial*, pp. iv and 164; Police Commissariat in Sorgues, “État des Israélites—Commune de Sorgues,” September 17, 1943, ADV, 7W15.

⁷⁶ The average age of the Jews in question was thirty-six.

⁷⁷ Klarsfeld, *Mémorial*, p. xvii.

⁷⁸ Yad Vashem's Transports to Extinction: Shoah Deportation Database provides an overview of each of the convoys, including the routes taken, and the stops made, during the journey to their final destination. See <http://db.yadvashem.org/deportation/search.html?language=en>.

“[...] We were loaded into cattle cars, crammed in like animals. [...] There was a bucket that was used as a toilet. There was neither water nor food, neither blankets nor straw, nor anything. [...] From what I can remember, [the journey] lasted two days and three nights.”⁷⁹

Other survivors gave similar accounts. “On May 20, 1944, buses arrived [at Drancy], and [...] we left for the Bobigny train station,” remembered Maud Bloch.

[...] At the Bobigny station, we were put in cattle cars, and we were locked in these cars. There were one hundred or so of us: men, women, seniors, [and] babies. In short, everyone [was put] in these cars. [...] Leaving Drancy, we were given soft foods, such as jam. But we were not given anything to drink. [...] We travelled three days and three nights through Germany in these cattle cars.⁸⁰

Arrested at his home in Buoux on March 9, 1944 and transported from Drancy to Auschwitz one month later (aboard convoy 71)⁸¹, Robert Chazine recalled the circumstances surrounding his deportation in the following way:

From Drancy, [...] we were sent by bus to Bobigny train station. There, we were loaded into the cars. [...] These were closed cars. They were not cattle cars. They were large freight cars for transporting merchandise. [...] [The voyage lasted] three days and four nights. [...] We were given a little something to eat. [...] At first, [the atmosphere] was relatively calm. [...] But it degraded as time passed and as things got more and more difficult. The heat during the day and, mostly, the lack of air. And then there was an element that, in my opinion, was determinant from a psychological standpoint. The train stopped in a field, and we were taken out of the cars, so that we might relieve ourselves. It was the first act of total humiliation: one that everyone felt; one that I felt. For the men, it was relatively easy. [...] For the women, it was certainly much more difficult. From that moment on, the atmosphere [within the train] degraded rapidly.⁸²

⁷⁹ Sinclair, VHA, Part III: 0:22-0:57, 6:01-6:52 and 8:20-8:29.

⁸⁰ Bloch, VHA, Part II: 9:33-9:44 and 12:02-12:49.

⁸¹ Chazine, VHA, Part II: 23:22-24:34; “État mensuel des arrestations de ressortissants français opérées par les troupes allemandes—Mois de mars 1944,” March 1944, ADV, 6W37; Deportation list of convoy 71, CDJC, C71_10.

⁸² Chazine, VHA, Part III: 10:00-10:23 and 11:06-12:35.

For some, the journey east marked the beginning of a long and difficult existence within the German concentration camp system; for others, it marked the end of the road. “The day that we left Drancy, five minutes before the train’s departure [for Auschwitz], we saw my sister, her husband and her son board [the train],” added Maud Bloch. “[...] We were absolutely stunned to see them, since we believed them to be safe over there [in the department of Hautes-Alpes]. It was terrible. [...] [We were] in the same convoy but not in the same car. We never saw each other again. It was over.”⁸³

Upon their arrival at Auschwitz, Maud’s parents, Maurice and Marie, her sister, Jacqueline Behmoiras (née Bloch), and her nephew, Claude, were immediately sent to the gas chambers. Though initially admitted to the camp, her brother-in-law, Léon, was sent to work in a salt mine, where he succumbed within six months.⁸⁴ Thus, out of six family members to have been deported, Maud was the sole survivor. Her admittance to the camp and her ultimate survival were not entirely arbitrary nor were they simply the product of luck or chance. On both of these fronts, the hierarchy of persecution had once again made itself felt.

⁸³ Bloch, VHA, Part IV: 6:37-7:28.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, Part IV: 7:29-8:19.

CHAPTER 5

CONCENTRATION AND EXTERMINATION CAMPS, 1942-1945

THE CAMPS

ARRIVAL, SELECTION AND ENTRY

“When we descended the wagon, [...] [there were] screams, tears, [...] [and] a terrible panic. Everyone was panicking. We did not know where to run. [...] We knew nothing. We ran left [and] right[,] [...] [with] dogs running behind, trying to bite us.”¹ Such was the way Maud Bloch described her arrival at Auschwitz on May 23, 1944.

Upon disembarking, Bloch and the other deportees were made to undergo a “selection,” a physical inspection conducted by the SS, whereby the Jews deemed fit for labour were separated from the others and admitted to the camp, with everyone else being sent to the gas chambers. “It was done in a matter of seconds,” remembered Alfred El Koubi. “[...] There were two or three people in uniform in front of us, who, brandishing their whips, indicated ‘Right.’ ‘Left.’ ‘Right.’ ‘Left.’”² Other survivors outlined the criteria upon which they believed the selections had been made. “Upon arriving at Auschwitz,” explained Robert Chazine, then twenty-four years old,

we heard howling, screaming and barking, and then the [train car] doors opened. [...] We were let out and were immediately placed in a row. The women and children [were placed] on one side. Men over the age of fifty were [also] grouped with the women. That left them [the

¹ Bloch, VHA, Part II: 16:24-16:57.

² Elkoubi, VHA, Part III: 3:49-4:38.

Germans] with those between sixteen and fifty years of age. We were separated from one another at that moment. [...] We were told that the women and the elderly would be leaving by truck, which is what happened. Trucks came and picked them up. And us, we entered Auschwitz on foot.³

Nineteen years old at the time of her deportation, Ginette Cherkasky observed that “the oldest [persons to be selected for labour at Auschwitz] were maybe in their forties,” adding that, “if anyone over fifty years old entered the camp, they would have needed to look young.”⁴

The above-quoted survivor testimonies suggest that one’s admission to a camp was largely influenced by—if not entirely predicated upon—one’s age and gender. Statistical analyses corroborate this assessment, all while underscoring the pre-eminence of one of these criteria for admission to the camps. Indeed, Chi-square tests revealed that there was a statistically significant relationship between independent variables “gender” and “age when deported” and dependent variable “admitted to the camp upon arrival.” The strength of the association between these different variables was far from equal, however: “gender” had only a weak effect on the variable “admitted to the camp,” while “age when deported” had a strong (and, indeed, nearly very strong) effect on the same variable.⁵

Table 22: Admissions to the Camps by Gender.

| Gender (χ^2 ***) | Admitted to the Camp upon Arrival | | Total |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|------------------|
| | No | Yes | |
| Female | 118 (83.1 %) | 24 (16.9 %) | 142 (100.0 %) |

³ Chazine, VHA, Part III: 13:23-14:43.

⁴ Kolinka, VHA, Part III: 8:02-8:16.

⁵ As before, this was determined by way of the Phi and Cramer’s V measures.

| | | | |
|-------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Male | 168 (66.1 %) | 86 (33.9 %) | 254 (100.0 %) |
| Total | 286 (72.2 %) | 110 (27.8 %) | 396 (100.0 %) |

Table 23: Admissions to the Camps by Age.

| Age When Deported (χ^2 ***) | Admitted to the Camp upon Arrival | | Total |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| | No | Yes | |
| 0 to 15 Years Old | 41 (97.6 %) | 1 (2.4 %) | 42 (100.0 %) |
| 16 to 25 Years Old | 23 (46.0 %) | 27 (54.0 %) | 50 (100.0 %) |
| 26 to 40 Years Old | 81 (63.3 %) | 47 (36.7 %) | 128 (100.0 %) |
| 41 to 50 Years Old | 61 (68.5 %) | 28 (31.5 %) | 89 (100.0 %) |
| 51 Years Old and Over | 80 (88.9 %) | 10 (11.1 %) | 90 (100.0 %) |
| Total | 286 (71.7 %) | 113 (28.3 %) | 399 (100.0 %) |

Looking at Table 24 (which breaks down admissions to the camps by both age and gender), one notices that, for each of the age groups, fewer female Jews—both numerically and proportionally—were admitted to the camps than men. This discrepancy, however, is not necessarily indicative of a German preference for male labourers, ostensibly because of their greater physical strength. Indeed, the disparity between the number of males and females admitted to the camps is partly the result of missing data: in the final days of the war, the Germans destroyed nearly all of the documents pertaining to the women’s camp in Auschwitz, thereby erasing the evidence

of their admission to, and existence within, the camp. One need only recall the case of Estréa Asséo (discussed in the introduction) for whom not a single document was found in the concentration camp records, in spite of the fact that she had not only been admitted to Auschwitz but had also survived two other camps.

The underrepresentation of women can also be explained by the fact that they were most often the ones responsible for accompanying the children, who were, themselves, rarely—if ever—admitted (see Tables 23 and 24).⁶ Take, for example, the case of Jacqueline Behmoiras. “Upon arriving [at Auschwitz],” her sister explained, “[...] [Jacqueline] was holding her little boy in her arms. [...] Therefore, she was sent directly [to the gas chambers] [...]. Women with children were, like the elderly, sent directly to the gas chambers.”⁷ Indeed, Jacqueline may not have been murdered upon her arrival at Auschwitz because of her age and physical attributes but in spite of them. “Some people were screaming, ‘Give your children to... [someone else!],” continued her sister, Maud.

[...] [Jacqueline] could have, [but] she was not able to bring herself to hand over her child to [our] mother. She would have then maybe entered [the camp] with me [...], because she was young. She was [only] thirty years old. [...] [Instead,] she was sent directly [...] to the gas chambers.⁸

At thirty years of age, Jacqueline found herself in the second most likely age group to be admitted: those between twenty-six and forty years old. As can be seen from the tables concerning the Jews’ admissions to the camps by age, Robert Chazine and Ginette Cherkasky were correct in observing that Jews under the age of fifteen and those

⁶ It is probably not a coincidence that Georges Marcou, the sole Vauclusian Jew under fifteen years of age to be admitted to one of the camps, was described as being “fifteen years old... fourteen and a half, but he looked eighteen.” See Kolinka, VHA, Part II: 20:16-20:20.

⁷ Bloch, VHA, Part IV: 7:28-8:01.

⁸ *Ibid.*, Part IV: 7:37-8:01.

over fifty were seldom selected for labour and thereby made to walk beneath the infamous sign reading “*Arbeit macht frei*” (“work sets you free”). In most cases, their names simply disappear from the sources. With nothing attesting to their presence in the camp, they are presumed to have been murdered in the gas chambers upon arrival.⁹

Table 24: Admissions to the Camps by Age and Gender.

| Age When Deported | Gender | Admitted to the Camp upon Arrival | | Total |
|-----------------------|--------|-----------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| | | No | Yes | |
| 0 to 15 Years Old | F | 18 (100.0 %) | 0 (0.0 %) | 18 (100.0 %) |
| | M | 23 (95.8 %) | 1 (4.2 %) | 24 (100.0 %) |
| 16 to 25 Years Old | F | 9 (47.4 %) | 10 (52.6 %) | 19 (100.0 %) |
| | M | 14 (45.2 %) | 17 (54.8 %) | 31 (100.0 %) |
| 26 to 40 Years Old | F | 39 (81.2 %) | 9 (18.8 %) | 48 (100.0 %) |
| | M | 42 (53.8 %) | 36 (46.2 %) | 78 (100.0 %) |
| 41 to 50 Years Old | F | 26 (86.7 %) | 4 (13.3 %) | 30 (100.0 %) |
| | M | 35 (59.3 %) | 24 (40.7 %) | 59 (100.0 %) |
| 51 Years Old and Over | F | 26 (96.3 %) | 1 (3.7 %) | 27 (100.0 %) |
| | M | 54 (87.1 %) | 8 (12.9 %) | 62 (100.0 %) |

⁹ Of the 399 deportees of Vaucluse, 286—or 71.7 percent—are believed to have been murdered upon arriving at their final destination.

| | | | |
|-------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Total | 286 (72.2 %) | 110 (27.8 %) | 396 (100.0 %) |
|-------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|

LIVING CONDITIONS AND LABOUR ASSIGNMENTS

“I entered the camp. [And] right away, we were made to enter these large rooms, [these] enormous rooms,” recalled Maud Bloch.

[...] We were made to strip down entirely. Completely naked. They began shaving our heads, shaving our entire bodies, [and] tattooing a number on our arm [...]. We stayed there for hours and hours, completely naked. We were unrecognizable[,] [as] we no longer had hair on our heads. [...] So, [we were] tattooed, shaved, and then they gave us some clothes. They gave us dirty, disgusting clothes. I received a dress, which was black [...] and made of wool, [...] and some pants... an awful pair of pants. That is all we had. No socks. No stockings. Nothing, [but] a pair of shoes.¹⁰

Max Skripek provided a similar description of his first moments at Auschwitz:

They placed us in a barrack [and] told us to undress. [...] After we were undressed, they brought us, naked, in the cold, to the showers. We were showered. We were shaved. [...] Then, they made us cross the courtyard again, always in the cold. [...] We were brought to [another] barrack [and] given clothes.¹¹

Skripek added an interesting detail, however: “We were also made to fill out forms.”¹² Though he provided few details about the contents of these forms (stating only that the inmates had been asked to indicate their occupation and to provide the names of their former places of employment), the then-twenty-three-year-old was almost certainly referring to the *Häftlinge Personalbogen* (or “Auschwitz registration forms”), filled out

¹⁰ Bloch, VHA, Part II: 17:17-18:38.

¹¹ Sinclair, VHA, Part III: 11:47-13:24.

¹² *Ibid.*, Part III: 11:55-11:57.

by the new prisoners as part of the admissions process.¹³ In addition to providing basic biographical details on the individual in question (including their name, date and place of birth, and address), the registration forms specify the number under which the new inmate was registered and indicate the category of prisoner to which they belonged.¹⁴ But, more importantly, they offer insights into the personal information deemed of value to the Germans, with each providing a physical description of the inmate (a separate space is dedicated to recording any disease or infirmity they may have had) and listing the languages spoken by them. One's occupation, as Max Skripek correctly observed, is also recorded.

Thus, one learns that Louis Maurice Weil (prisoner 159813) measured 183 centimetres, was of a strong, athletic build and spoke French, German and Spanish.¹⁵ With brown hair, blue eyes and an oval face, Alexander Israeler (prisoner 177568), though not quite as tall (standing at 165 centimetres), was also of a muscular build. And he, too, spoke more than one language: German and Slovak.¹⁶ Indeed, the two men were far from unique in this regard. Of the thirteen Jews for whom a registration form was found, ten were identified as being bi- or multi-lingual¹⁷, with seven of them noted as speaking German—a fact whose importance will become clear shortly.

An interesting observation can also be made with regards to the occupations reported by the inmates. Often, they reflected those held by the individual prior to their

¹³ The *Häftlinge Personalbogen* (or “Auschwitz registration forms”) can be found in the archives of the International Tracing Service under the following call number: OCC 2/3/a.

¹⁴ The thirteen Vauculian Jews for whom a registration form was found all belonged to the same category of prisoner: “Jew.”

¹⁵ Auschwitz Registration Form for Maurice Weil, ITS, OCC 2/3/a, USHMM.

¹⁶ Auschwitz Registration Form for Alexander Israeler, ITS, OCC 2/3/a, USHMM.

¹⁷ Salomon Jeruchemson was the Vauculian Jew recorded as speaking the greatest number of languages (5): French, German, Polish, Russian and another that was illegible. See Auschwitz Registration Form for Salomon Jeruchemson, ITS, OCC 2/3/a, USHMM.

arrest and deportation. For instance, Szulim Niedzwiecki, David Ehrenfreund and Alexandre Jablonski, wrote that they were, respectively, a “painter,” a “dentist” and a “hat maker”¹⁸—all occupations that they are known to have practiced prior to their arrival at Auschwitz.¹⁹ Karl Hirsz, Albert Belfer and Alexander Israeler, on the other hand, reported having occupations that were conspicuously different from the ones that they had held previously. Thus, Hirsz went from being a “hair stylist” to a “labourer”; Belfer, from a “merchant” to a “car driver”; and Israeler, from a “merchant” to a “labourer.”²⁰ But what, if anything, can explain this discrepancy?

Although it is difficult to say for certain, one gets the impression that those whose reported occupation was consistent with the one that they had held earlier tended to be employed in fields that could have been perceived as having a certain “utility” in a concentration camp setting, especially in times of war. For instance, it is not difficult to imagine David Ehrenfreund believing that, by virtue of his work as a dentist, he might be able to ingratiate himself with the Germans, by perhaps offering his services to them. Nor is it difficult to picture Alexandre Jablonski making a similar calculation, by

¹⁸ Auschwitz Registration Forms for Shulem Niedzwiecki, David Erenfreund and Alexander Jablonski, ITS, OCC 2/3/a, USHMM.

¹⁹ Prefecture of Vaucluse, “Liste des Juifs étrangers ayant fait l’objet des mesures de regroupement prévues par les instructions de M. le Ministre Secrétaire d’État à l’Intérieur en date des 5 et 15 août 1942 et ayant rejoint effectivement le camp des Milles (B.D.R.) du 23 au 26 août 1942,” Undated document (Probably August 1942), ADV, 7W16; Prefecture of Vaucluse, “État nominatif des Juifs français résidant en Vaucluse au 1^{er} juillet 1941,” July 1, 1941, ADV, 7W15; Deportation list of convoy 69, CDJC, C69_25.

²⁰ Auschwitz Registration Forms for Karl Hirsz, Albert Belfer and Alexander Israeler, ITS, OCC 2/3/a, USHMM; Prefecture of Vaucluse, “État nominatif des Juifs de nationalité étrangère résidant en Vaucluse au 1^{er} juillet 1941,” July 1, 1941, ADV, 7W15; Central Police Commissariat in Avignon, “Liste des personnes de confession israélite qui se sont présentées au Commissariat Central pour faire viser leurs cartes d’alimentation et d’identité,” February 3, 1943, ADV, 7W15; Prefecture of Vaucluse, “Liste des Juifs étrangers ayant fait l’objet des mesures de regroupement prévues par les instructions de M. le Ministre Secrétaire d’État à l’Intérieur en date des 5 et 15 août 1942 et ayant rejoint effectivement le camp des Milles (B.D.R.) du 23 au 26 août 1942,” Undated document (Probably August 1942), ADV, 7W16.

perhaps believing that his skills as a hat maker could be harnessed towards similar, though different, ends, including the fabrication of uniforms for the German military.

But what about those having an occupation whose “utility” was less readily apparent? Indeed, what incentive would there have been for “hair stylists,” “merchants” or others in similar fields to be forthcoming about their occupation, given the possibility that the Germans might not perceive them as offering anything of value nor as being particularly well-suited for hard labour and that they might, therefore, deem them expendable? Though speculative, is it possible that the Jews in question (Hirsz, Belfer and Israeler) misrepresented their occupation on their respective registration forms, in the hopes that this might help them curry favour with the Germans or, at the very least, might help preserve them a little while longer? A passage from Alfred El Koubi’s postwar testimony suggests that new arrivals to Auschwitz were sometimes advised to do just that, though the message may or may not have always been understood:

We descended from the wagons [...], [and] these people in pyjamas [i.e., other prisoners] told us... whispered in our ear, [...] “You are twenty years old, and you are a tinsmith.” “You are eighteen years old, and you are a painter.” [In the moment,] we did not understand. [...] They also told us, “Puff out your chest.” [...] [And others said,] “Attention, you are eighteen years old.” “You are twenty years old. Puff out your chest. And you are a painter or a carpenter.”²¹

Had a similar message been conveyed to—and, more importantly, been understood by—Hirsz, Belfer and Israeler? Who knows? One thing is certain, however: upon their arrival at Auschwitz, each of these men reported having an occupation that was different from the one that they had held up until that point. And as “labourers” and “car drivers,” they would almost certainly have been viewed more favourably by the Germans than if they had remained “merchants” and “hair stylists.”

²¹ Elkoubi, VHA, Part III: 2:58-3:46.

Their entry into the camp complete, the Jews “were triaged once again,”²² remembered Robert Chazine. This second “selection” saw the allocation of the new inmates to various commandos—an allocation that, in the short term at least, had little to do with their reported occupations. “Each [inmate] had a job to do,” explained Ginette Cherkasky. “[...] We were placed in small commandos, with each commando doing a different task [than the others].”²³ The tasks assigned to the various commandos did, indeed, vary greatly, though they left many inmates with a similar impression: essentially labour for labour’s sake, the assigned tasks were designed to do one thing: liquidate the Jews more quickly. “We dug. We dug, and we moved soil,” recounted Chazine, who had first been assigned to a commando responsible for excavation and earthmoving projects. “We would dig and move soil from [one place], [and] we would bring it with a wheelbarrow [further away]. Then, the next day, we would bring the soil from that location back to the place from which we had taken it originally. It was completely imbecilic work.”²⁴

Maud Bloch was also originally assigned to an “earthmoving and excavation commando” (*commando de terrassement*). Describing her experience in much the same way as her male counterpart, Bloch was adamant about the objective behind the “imbecilic work” they were forced to undertake:

They would give us [...] a pick and a shovel, and we would leave. We would sometimes walk two [or] three kilometres outside of the camp, where we would work outside, that is, in the rain, wind and snow. [...] We dug. We dug holes. We dug trenches. We dug trenches and, the next day, they would make us refill these same trenches, the ones we had dug the previous day. [...] We would return to the same location,

²² Chazine, VHA, Part III: 14:48-14:53.

²³ Kolinka, VHA, Part IV: 2:17-2:28.

²⁴ Chazine, VHA, Part III: 22:01-22:15.

and they would tell us, “Refill these trenches!” It was useless work, designed simply to annihilate us.²⁵

“It was,” Bloch concluded, “[...] useless work, designed to make us die a little more quickly.”²⁶

Because of their former occupations, certain Jews were only made to work in these types of commandos for a limited period of time. In November 1944, six months after her arrival at Auschwitz, Bloch was transferred to another commando²⁷, one made to build items ostensibly for the German war effort.

The [new] work consisted of [the following] [...]. We were all seated on chairs and, in front of us, there was an enormous, very long table. On either side, there were chairs, and we each worked on our own side [of the table]. They [the Germans] placed cloths, dirty cloths, on the table, [...] and we were each given a pair of scissors. [...] All day, we had to cut the cloths that they had given us into strips, from which we had to make braids. [...] We never found out exactly what they did [with these braids]. We were told that they were used to clean canons.²⁸

According to Bloch, the transfer from one commando to another offered at least one important advantage. The new commando, she observed, operated “out of one room,” adding that “one advantage [...] was that we were sheltered there. We were sheltered. Therefore, we were a little less exposed to the winter weather conditions.”²⁹

Whether Bloch’s former work experience had been the deciding factor in her selection for this particular commando remains unclear, though it is certainly a possibility. After all, prior to her arrest and deportation, Bloch had been employed at an establishment in Marseille specializing in the fabrication of trinkets and other small

²⁵ Bloch, VHA, Part II: 22:20-23:05.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, Part III: 6:22-6:27.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, Part II: 26:04-26:11.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, Part III: 2:20-4:21.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, Part II: 26:12-26:22.

articles.³⁰ Thus, the Germans may have believed that the skills and the know-how that she likely would have acquired during her time there might make her an excellent candidate for the type of work being undertaken by the commando in question—work that, ultimately, benefitted them and their war effort.

As was alluded to earlier, the languages one spoke could also be used to leverage a better position for oneself within the camps. “From Drancy, I know that he was deported to the work camps in Estonia, where they [the Jews] were made to construct airfields [and] work in the woods,” said Adolphe Waysenson of his father, Joseph. “And I believe that he was given a small privilege because, as he spoke multiple languages, he was used as an interpreter.”³¹ As an interpreter, Joseph would probably have avoided (though maybe only temporarily) the backbreaking work that some of his fellow deportees were made to endure—and all because he spoke the same language(s) as his captors.

One cannot help but wonder whether it was this “small privilege” that allowed Joseph to see the Liberation of the camps.³² Indeed, could it really have been that simple? Perhaps not. Nevertheless, even if it did not always guarantee access to privileged positions, speaking multiple languages (and, most importantly, German) greatly facilitated one’s existence in the camps and, in all likelihood, increased one’s chances for survival. “During roll calls, the majority [of the inmates] did not speak German,” recalled Max Skripek. “And the commands were given in German. [...] For those who did not speak German, it was a catastrophe. [...] We were given all of the

³⁰ *Ibid.*, Part I: 13:01-13:28.

³¹ A. Waysenson, VHA, Part V: 28:03-28:20.

³² After the war, a survivor from Avignon reported that both he and Joseph were liberated by the Russians. Though apparently alive at the Liberation, Joseph, whose ultimate fate remains a mystery, was never reunited with his family. See A. Waysenson, VHA, Part V: 23:44-23:59 and 28:21-28:47.

exercises in German. It was very difficult for the French, who did not understand.”³³

“The most traumatising thing was trying to understand the German commands, for those of us who did not speak German,” explained, for his part, Alfred El Koubi. “We always had a friend [with us] who spoke Yiddish and who would try to interpret the German orders so that we could face them and so that we might respond.”³⁴

MURDERED OR DECEASED

With the harsh living conditions and arduous labour assignments came a belief that death could come at any time. “We always believed that we were living our final hour,” observed Alfred El Koubi. “[...] At every instant, we were on the brink of death. At every instant, we could be killed.”³⁵ Maud Bloch similarly described the situation: “Every day was uncertain. Everyday, death was all around us. [...] Every second we lived there [in the camps] was uncertain.”³⁶

Of the 113 Jews who survived their initial deportation, thirty-three are known to have died in the camps, while the fate of twenty-three others remains unknown.³⁷ There are three principal sources for identifying those who perished in the camps, each of which are housed in the archives of the International Tracing Service: camp infirmary (or “hospital”) records, death registers (*Totenbücher*) and death certificates. From these documents, one is in a position to determine the precise date on which an individual

³³ Sinclair, VHA, Part III: 14:30-15:40.

³⁴ Elkoubi, VHA, Part III: 12:17-12:34.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, Part IV: 1:14-1:26. El Koubi also added the following: “You understand that your days are numbered, that your hours are numbered and that you can die from one second to the next.” See *ibid.*, Part III: 13:06-13:12.

³⁶ Bloch, VHA, Part III: 12:48-12:58.

³⁷ The twenty-three Jews whose fate is unknown are those for whom there was no proof that they had perished or survived.

succumbed in a camp and, in most cases, the alleged cause of their death. Albrecht Marienfeld, for example, died of “myocardial degeneration” or “myocarditis” (inflammation of the heart) at Auschwitz on September 23, 1942, thirty-eight days after having arrived from Drancy.³⁸ Jozef Minc, a Polish Jew who was deported to Auschwitz aboard convoy 76, succumbed to “cardiovascular weakness” at Buchenwald on February 15, 1945, while Sigmund Kahn suffered “acute heart failure” at Dachau just a few weeks earlier, on January 6, 1945.³⁹

Seeing as these men were, respectively, fifty-four, forty-seven and fifty years old at the time of their deaths, the fact that each of them passed away from heart-related illnesses could, conceivably, be attributable to their age. What is curious, though, is the number of younger Jews having perished from similar health-related ailments. Gérald Brunswick, a thirty-year-old French Jew, died of “colitis” (inflammation of the colon) and “circulatory weakness” at Mauthausen on February 8, 1945.⁴⁰ Victor Revah, then thirty-seven, succumbed to “circulatory weakness” on the same day and in the same camp as Brunswick.⁴¹ Anton Max Spitzer, for his part, passed away at age thirty-eight from “cardiovascular weakness” and “bronchial” or “catarrhal pneumonia” at the camp

³⁸ Death Certificate (No. 935-Abt. Au) for Albrecht Marienfeld, ITS, USHMM; “List of Belgian Nationals Who Died in C.C. Auschwitz,” ITS, OCC 2/14/a IIIIE/1, USHMM; Deportation list of convoy 19, CDJC, C19_24.

³⁹ Jozef Minc: Death Certificate (No. 1758-Abt. Bu) for Jozef Minc, ITS, USHMM; Buchenwald Death Register (for the period between December 19, 1944 and March 25, 1945), ITS, GCC 2/291 IIIA/9, USHMM; Deportation list of convoy 76, CDJC, C76_59_60. Sigmund Kahn: Death Certificate (No. 284-Abt. Da) for Sigmund Kahn, ITS, USHMM; Dachau Death Register (for the period between November 28, 1944 and February 8, 1945), ITS, GCC 3/176 IIIA/3, USHMM.

⁴⁰ Death Certificate (No. 685-Abt. M) for Gérald Brunswick, ITS, USHMM; Mauthausen Death Register, ITS, OCC 15/30/e, USHMM.

⁴¹ Death Certificate (No. 2104-Abt. M) for Viktor Revah, ITS, USHMM; Ministère des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre, “Liste officielle no. 1 des décédés des camps de concentration : Mauthausen et ses kommandos,” ITS, OCC 15/16 IIIIE/2, USHMM.

of Ebensee.⁴² But were these health-related deaths brought on by the many months of mistreatment, malnourishment and oppressive working conditions to which the men in question had been subjected? It is certainly possible, given the amount of time each of them ultimately spent in the camps.⁴³

There is, however, at least one individual who was recorded as having died from something other than “natural causes.” On March 15, 1945, the head of pathology at the infirmary in Buchenwald drafted a report concerning the death of Alexander Israeler, which listed the numerous injuries from which the latter had succumbed one day earlier:

Infected wound on the right knee. Hematomas on the right calf, on both hips and on the left thigh. Multiple hematomas on the back and on the left side of the abdomen. Bleeding from both eyelids. Wound on the left cheek. Ruptured spleen. Blood in the abdominal cavity (2L). Blood in the left pleural cavity (300 ccm). Cause of death: splenic rupture / internal bleeding.⁴⁴

The way in which Israeler sustained his injuries was also documented: “He was hit by a truck in front of the prisoners’ bath, thrown to the ground and driven over, whereby he suffered severe bruising.” Israeler, the report noted, was “delivered [to the infirmary] dying,” being “cyanotic, without pulse, and unable to speak,” and “died on 14.3.45 [March 14, 1945] at 14.55 hours,” “shortly after being admitted.”⁴⁵

Uniquely detailed and candid, the report in question draws attention to the fact that, of the fifteen Jews for whom the cause of death can be found in the concentration camp records, only one—Israeler—reportedly died of *non*-natural causes (though nothing suggests that his death had been anything more than an accident). There are

⁴² Death Certificate (No. 6419-Abt. M) for Anton Max Spitzer, ITS, USHMM; Mauthausen Death Register, ITS, OCC 15/30/e, USHMM.

⁴³ Brunswick, Revah and Spitzer, respectively, survived 298, 261 and 275 days in the camps.

⁴⁴ Head of Pathology in Buchenwald, Death Report for Alexander Israeler, March 15, 1945, ITS, GCC 2/88 IIIB/1, USHMM.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

reasons to be sceptical, however. Take, for instance, the case of Maxime Baze. Born in Avignon on July 29, 1891, Baze was deported on October 7, 1943 from Drancy to Auschwitz, where he arrived three days later.⁴⁶ On October 26, barely two weeks following his arrival, the fifty-two-year-old journalist was admitted to the camp infirmary for the first time. He was released on November 7. Baze was admitted to, and released from, the Monowitz “hospital” four more times between late November 1943 and early March 1944. On March 21, Baze visited the infirmary for the last time. On March 25, 1944, rather than being “released” (*entlassen*), he was (in the cryptic words of one of the hospital registers) “sent to Birkenau” (*nach Birkenau*).⁴⁷ Though this likely means that he was sent directly from the infirmary to the gas chambers, one does not find information to that effect in the documentation. Instead, a single annotation provides the cause of death: “diabetes.”⁴⁸ Maxime Baze had thus died of “natural causes,” or so the Germans would have one believe.

The situation was nearly identical for Bernard Karfiol, a Polish Jew born in Cologne in June 1904.⁴⁹ Deported to Auschwitz via the same convoy as his French counterpart⁵⁰, Karfiol was first admitted to the camp infirmary on November 20, 1943. From that point forward, things went downhill quickly. Released on December 4, the thirty-nine-year-old was re-admitted to the hospital a mere three days later. Though he

⁴⁶ Prefecture of Vaucluse, “État nominatif des Juifs français résidant en Vaucluse au 1^{er} juillet 1941,” July 1, 1941, ADV, 7W15; Deportation list of convoy 60, CDJC, C60_4.

⁴⁷ Maxime Baze’s visits to the Monowitz “hospital” were as follows: October 26 to November 7, 1943 (released), November 28 to December 15, 1943 (released), January 6 to 10, 1944 (released), January 13 to 25, 1944 (released), February 14 to March 4, 1944 (released) and March 21 to 25, 1944 (sent to Birkenau). See Hospital Register of Monowitz, ITS, OCC 2/31 IIE/4, USHMM.

⁴⁸ Register of Inmates Treated at the Hospital of Monowitz (for the period between January 5 and May 31, 1944), ITS, OCC 2/85, USHMM.

⁴⁹ Prefecture of Vaucluse, “État nominatif des Juifs de nationalité étrangère résidant en Vaucluse au 1^{er} juillet 1941,” July 1, 1941, ADV, 7W15.

⁵⁰ Deportation list of convoy 60, CDJC, C60_19.

was released twice more, he returned each time within twenty-four hours. Having spent nearly two straight months in the infirmary, Karfiol was—like Maxime Baze—“sent to Birkenau.”⁵¹ And he, too, reportedly died a “natural death,” having simply “collapsed.”⁵²

It is no small wonder, then, why some Jews had wanted to avoid the hospitals and infirmaries at all cost. “We did not want to go there, to the camp hospital,” recalled Ginette Cherkasky.⁵³ “I told myself, ‘You must certainly not go there,’ [...] that is to say, to the hospital,” explained, for her part, Maud Bloch.

[...] I avoided going, because I told myself that, if I went to the hospital, I would never come out, because they [the Germans] often did “selections” in the hospitals. They would take all of the sick women and send them directly to the crematorium... well, to the gas chamber and then to the crematorium. So I avoided going. I never went.⁵⁴

In spite of it all, the Jews who perished in the camps survived considerably longer than expected. “It took me but a few days to understand that the average lifespan of an inmate of this camp could scarcely exceed six months,” remarked Georges Wellers of his first impressions of Auschwitz.⁵⁵ That is, indeed, what Nicolas Mariot and Claire Zalc found in their study of the Jews of Lens. Of the forty-five Lenois Jews for whom Mariot and Zalc knew the date of death, forty-two—or 93.3 percent—succumbed within six months of their arrival at Auschwitz, three-quarters of whom never even made it to the three-month mark.⁵⁶ Interestingly, these findings are nearly the opposite of what was

⁵¹ Bernard Karfiol’s visits to the Monowitz “hospital” were as follows: November 20 to December 4, 1943 (released), December 7 to 28, 1943 (released), December 29, 1943 to January 9, 1944 (released) and January 10 to 17, 1944 (sent to Birkenau). See Hospital Register of Monowitz, ITS, OCC 2/31 IIE/4, USHMM.

⁵² Register of Inmates Treated at the Hospital of Monowitz (for the period between January 5 and May 31, 1944), ITS, OCC 2/85, USHMM.

⁵³ Kolinka, VHA, Part IV: 8:05-8:07.

⁵⁴ Bloch, VHA, Part II: 25:00-25:35.

⁵⁵ Wellers, *L'étoile jaune à l'heure de Vichy*, pp. 181-182.

⁵⁶ Mariot and Zalc, *Face à la persécution*, p. 204.

found for the Vauclysian Jews. Of the twenty-five Jews for whom the date of death is known, only ten—or 40.0 percent—died within six months of arriving at the camp (see Table 25). Eight individuals—or one-third—survived between six and twelve months, while seven others—or 28.0 percent—did so for more than one year, with three of these having spent upwards of twenty-four months (or two years) in the camps. In fact, the average lifespan of a Vauclysian Jew was 301 days—or *ten* months. It is, in short, a lifespan far exceeding expectations.

Table 25: Lifespan in the Camps of the Jews whose Date of Death is Known.

| Lifespan in the Camps | Number of Jews | Percentage of Jews |
|--------------------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Less than One Month | 1 | 4.0 % |
| One to Two Months | 4 | 16.0 % |
| Two to Three Months | 3 | 12.0 % |
| Three to Six Months | 2 | 8.0 % |
| Six to Twelve Months | 8 | 32.0 % |
| Twelve to Eighteen Months | 3 | 12.0 % |
| Eighteen to Twenty-Four Months | 1 | 4.0 % |
| More than Twenty-Four Months | 3 | 12.0 % |
| Total | 25 | 100.0 % |

But what, if anything, can account for such a glaring discrepancy in findings? Were the Jews of the Vauclyse that much more able-bodied, strong-willed and resilient than their Lensois counterparts? Or was there something else at play? Could, for instance, the answer lie in the one factor that, arguably, distinguished the Jews of Lens

and those of the Vaucluse the most: the timing of their deportation? As Mariot and Zalc noted, the cadence at which the Jews of Lens were deported was far from even: 89.0 percent were deported in 1942, 8.0 percent in 1943 and only 3.0 percent in 1944.⁵⁷ Once again, the pattern was quite the opposite of what it had been in the Vaucluse, where the Jews were deported in increasingly higher numbers year-over-year through 1944.⁵⁸ This is important because, when one compares the number of days the Jews survived in the camps with the year in which they were deported, one notices that those who were deported in 1943 and 1944 tended to live longer than those who were deported in 1942 (see Table 26). This may seem like a curious statement, given that three of the Jews deported in 1942 survived longer than any other (i.e., more than twenty-four months). One must remember, however, that, depending on the camp to which they were sent, those deported in 1943 or 1944 would have been liberated long before they could have ever reached that milestone. For instance, Jews who were deported to Auschwitz in 1944 and who remained there until the end would have lived in the camp a maximum of 371 days (or just over twelve months), since the first convoy of the year coming from France (convoy 66) arrived at the camp on January 22, 1944, almost one year to the day of its liberation, on January 27, 1945.⁵⁹ That none of the Vauclusian Jews deported in 1944 are known to have died after having spent more than twelve months in the camps is, thus, not much of a surprise.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

⁵⁸ Of the 388 Vauclusian Jews whose date of deportation is known, 89 (or 22.9 percent) were deported in 1942, 98 (or 25.3 percent) in 1943 and 201 (or 51.8 percent) in 1944.

⁵⁹ See Klarsfeld, *Mémorial*, “Tableau chronologique des convois de déportation.”

Table 26: Lifespan in the Camps Based on Year of Deportation.

| Lifespan in the Camps | Year of Deportation | | | Total (25) |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|------|------|---------------|
| | 1942 | 1943 | 1944 | |
| Less than One Month | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| One to Two Months | 1 | 2 | 1 | 4 |
| Two to Three Months | 0 | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| Three to Six Months | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Six to Twelve Months | 1 | 0 | 7 | 8 |
| Twelve to Eighteen Months | 0 | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| Eighteen to Twenty-Four Months | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| More than Twenty-Four Months | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 |

One wonders, however: Why would the Jews deported later in the war have generally had a longer life expectancy than those deported earlier? One hypothesis might be that, with the tide of the war beginning to turn against them, the Germans may have seen the benefit of maintaining and preserving their Jewish “workforce,” if only for a little while longer. After all, as was seen earlier, some Jews (such as Maud Bloch) were coopted into commandos that performed tasks aimed at supporting the German war effort. Would killing them “prematurely” not, thus, have been entirely irrational?

Though there is no documentary evidence of such a change in policy, the numbers concerning the admission of Jews to Auschwitz are rather suggestive. When one compares the number of deportees of convoys having undergone a “selection” upon their arrival at Auschwitz with the number of those admitted to the camp from the same convoys, one observes that, on average, more Jews were selected for labour and

admitted to Auschwitz in 1943 and 1944 than in 1942.⁶⁰ For the thirty-three convoys⁶¹ that arrived at Auschwitz in 1942, an average of 226 Jews (or 23.4 percent of the deportees) were selected for labour and admitted to the camp, while the average for the thirteen convoys having arrived in 1943 and the twelve having done so in 1944 was 341 Jews (33.9 percent) and 321 Jews (27.7 percent), respectively.⁶² Thus, in the later stages of the war, the Germans generally selected a greater number of Jews from each convoy for labour at Auschwitz than they had previously.

If this were, indeed, because of a newfound preoccupation for exploiting Jewish labour to the fullest, then would the same calculation not likely have been applied within the camp as well, with the Germans maybe thinking twice before eliminating their not-so-superfluous Jewish workers? Was that perhaps the thought process in the case of Maxime Baze? As discussed previously, Baze was admitted to the “hospital” in Monowitz on several occasions between late October 1943 and late March 1944. Is it possible that the Germans “tolerated” his multiple visits to the infirmary and only decided to send him “to Birkenau” after assessing that they had probably extracted all that they could from him?⁶³ And what about Bernard Karfiol? At thirty-nine years old, he would have almost certainly been viewed as someone capable of labour at Auschwitz. But he, too, was “sent to Birkenau.” Is it possible that, despite four visits to the

⁶⁰ Put differently: On average, a smaller percentage of Jews were murdered immediately upon their arrival at Auschwitz in 1943 and 1944 than in 1942.

⁶¹ Only the convoys having undergone a “selection” at Auschwitz were taken into account.

⁶² These calculations are based on the figures provided in Klarsfeld’s *Mémorial*. Two things make them somewhat fragile, however. First, though the precise figure is unknown, a certain number of Jews deported in 1942 were selected for labour at Kosel, shortly before their train arrived at Auschwitz. Thus, they were not gassed upon their arrival at Auschwitz, though they are recorded as such. Second, there are occasional, though minor, discrepancies in the figures provided by Klarsfeld. For example, convoy 67 of February 3, 1944 is noted as having transported 1,214 Jews. Of these, 985 are recorded as having been gassed upon arrival, while 215 (166 men and 49 women) are identified as having been admitted to the camp. As one can see, the numbers do not quite add up.

⁶³ Maxime Baze was “sent to Birkenau” on his one hundred and sixty-seventh day at Auschwitz.

infirmary, Karfiol showed so few signs of rehabilitation that the Germans no longer saw the “value” in retaining him and, thus, decided to dispatch him to the gas chamber?⁶⁴ Whatever the reason, neither Baze nor Karfiol was among the Vauclisian survivors of Auschwitz.

THE SURVIVORS

“The Americans arrived [at Mauthausen] on the 5th [of May 1945],” recalled Alfred El Koubi. “Fellow inmates helped me out of bed and brought me to the entrance [of the barracks], because I did not believe it. I could no longer believe in anything. Held up by two comrades, I saw an American soldier... two, three, four [soldiers and] tanks pass in front of us.”⁶⁵ El Koubi had lived in the camps just shy of one year (347 days), split nearly seventy-thirty between Auschwitz and Mauthausen. Though Maud Bloch had also been deported from Drancy on May 20, 1944⁶⁶, she was liberated a few months earlier and at a different location than her male counterpart. Unlike El Koubi, who experienced the “death marches” in the closing months of the war, Bloch’s ordeal came to an end with the Liberation of Auschwitz on January 27, 1945.⁶⁷ “One morning, they [the Russians] entered the camp,” explained Bloch.

[...] When they saw us, well, they were incredibly surprised by what they saw. They were shocked to see us in that state. [We] were thin, skeleton-like. [...] We were practically bedridden. [...] We could no

⁶⁴ As will be recalled, every time Karfiol was discharged from the infirmary, he was re-admitted shortly thereafter (often within twenty-four hours).

⁶⁵ Elkoubi, VHA, Part V: 13:32-13:49.

⁶⁶ Deportation list of convoy 74, CDJC, C74_8 and C74_15.

⁶⁷ See Elkoubi, VHA, Part IV: 12:48-14:02 and Bloch, VHA, Part III: 23:40-23:44.

longer stand on our feet. When they saw that, they were stunned. Apparently, some [of the Russian soldiers] were overheard saying, “Poor people!” [...] Of course, they took us into their care immediately. [...] They created a makeshift hospital, [...] and doctors came [...] and treated us.⁶⁸

In total, fifty-seven Vauclisian Jews survived the German concentration camps. Representing half of the Jews admitted to the camps and 14.3 percent of those having been deported, it was a survival rate nearly *five times greater* than for the country as a whole.⁶⁹ But what could account for this? Was it yet again a question of timing? As one author observed, “considering the living conditions in the camps [...], the luckiest [Jews] were those who were deported last.”⁷⁰ The statistics do, indeed, seem to point in that direction. For instance, a greater number and proportion of Jews deported in 1944 survived the war than those having made the journey east in 1943, who, in turn, were more numerous to survive than those having been deported in 1942 (see Table 27). And though the results were not statistically significant, they are corroborated by other analyses, as well as by the literature.

Table 27: Ultimate Fate Based on Year of Deportation.

| Year of Deportation | Ultimate Fate | | | Total |
|---------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| | Survived | Deceased | Unknown | |
| 1942 | 5 (33.3 %) | 6 (40.0 %) | 4 (26.7 %) | 15 (100.0 %) |
| 1943 | 10 (40.0 %) | 11 (44.0 %) | 4 (16.0 %) | 25 (100.0 %) |
| 1944 | 40 (57.1 %) | 16 (22.9 %) | 14 (20.0 %) | 70 (100.0 %) |

⁶⁸ Bloch, VHA, Part III: 18:39-19:56.

⁶⁹ Approximately 2,500 of the 76,000 Jews deported from France—or 3.0 percent—survived the war. See Marrus and Paxton, *Vichy et les Juifs*, p. 473 and Kaspi, *Les Juifs pendant l'Occupation*, p. 383.

⁷⁰ Kaspi, *Les Juifs pendant l'Occupation*, p. 383.

| | | | | |
|-------|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|
| Total | 55 (50.0 %) | 33 (30.0 %) | 22 (20.0 %) | 110 (100.0 %) |
|-------|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|

As can be seen from Table 28, nearly two-thirds of the Jews who survived the concentration camps were liberated within one year of their arrival.⁷¹ Another 17.2 percent were liberated after being interned from twelve to eighteen months, while 20.6 percent found freedom after spending upwards of eighteen months in the camps. What is particularly telling, however, is that nearly *eighty percent* of these survivors were deported within the last *five* months of the Occupation of France. They were, in other words, among the last to be deported.

*Table 28: Number of Months between Arrival and Liberation.*⁷²

| Number of Months between Arrival and Liberation | Number of Jews | Percentage of Jews |
|---|----------------|--------------------|
| Less than Six Months | 1 | 3.5 % |
| Six to Twelve Months | 17 | 58.6 % |
| Twelve to Eighteen Months | 5 | 17.2 % |
| Eighteen to Twenty-Four Months | 3 | 10.3 % |
| More than Twenty-Four Months | 3 | 10.3 % |
| Total | 29 | 100.0 % |

In their study on the Jews of Lens, Mariot and Zalc also noted the effect that a late date of deportation had on survival rates. “The number of survivors,” wrote Mariot

⁷¹ Interestingly, seven of the twenty-five Jews who died in the camps (or 28.0 percent) had been interned longer than twelve months, meaning that they ultimately spent more time in the camps than the survivors in question. This begs the question, then: How many of these Jews might have survived the war had they been deported in 1944 rather than in 1942 or 1943?

⁷² Only the Jews for whom the date of arrival and the date of Liberation are known were counted.

and Zalc, “was all the more small the earlier the deportees had arrived at Auschwitz.”⁷³ Indeed, out of the 101 Jews whom they identified as having been admitted in the camp in 1942, only fourteen (or 13.9 percent) survived the war, while that was the case for three of the seven (or 42.9 percent) having been admitted in 1943 or 1944.⁷⁴

The effect that a late deportation had on one’s chances of surviving the concentration camps is noteworthy, given that, as the previous chapters have shown, the date of deportation was intimately tied to the date of arrest, which was, itself, influenced by a number of personal, geographical and temporal factors. For example, although the Unoccupied and Italian zones had only been temporary fixtures of France’s geopolitical landscape, they had offered the majority of the Jews living within them a certain, though momentary, degree of protection from arrest. This meant that a certain number of Vauclusian Jews were arrested—and, by extension, deported—later than they otherwise would have been, a fact whose significance cannot be understated: in general, the deportees of Vaucluse did not have to endure the concentration camps quite as long before witnessing the Liberation. As discussed previously, personal factors, including one’s wealth, also had an impact on the timing of one’s arrest and deportation. Since less affluent Jews often left the safer towns and villages of the Italian-occupied zone for Avignon in search of food, housing and employment, they tended to expose themselves more early to the dangers of arrest. Of humble financial means, these Jews were also the least likely to be able to purchase their freedom if arrested, a purchase which could have prevented or, at the very least, delayed their eventual deportation and, in so doing, increased their odds of surviving the war.

⁷³ Mariot and Zalc, *Face à la persécution*, p. 210.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 210-211.

But, one wonders, was the date of deportation the most important factor in explaining the high number and percentage of Vauclusian Jews having survived the German concentration camps? As mentioned earlier, though corroborated by other analyses and by the literature, the relationship between the variables “year of deportation” and “ultimate fate” was not statistically significant. In fact, neither were those concerning the latter variable in relation to the Jews’ “status,” “nationality” and “country of origin.” That, however, was not the case for two other variables considered, though the statistical analyses concerning these variables were not without a few surprises.⁷⁵

The first set of analyses revealed that there was a statistically significant relationship between the variables “age when deported” and “ultimate fate” and that the association between them was a moderately strong one. Looking at Table 29 (which breaks down the fate of the Jews by the age they had when they were deported), one observes that the proportion of survivors decreased from age group to age group, with one exception: those fifty-one years old and over, who survived in greater proportions than their slightly younger counterparts. The latter case notwithstanding, these results were not entirely unforeseen, since younger and more physically capable individuals could be expected to withstand the rigours of life in a concentration camp better than older, presumably less able-bodied persons.

⁷⁵ For reasons discussed below, the variables in question may have played a role in the non-significant result obtained when assessing the relationship between the variables “year of deportation” and “ultimate fate.”

Table 29: Ultimate Fate Based on Age When Deported.

| Age When Deported (χ^2 *) | Ultimate Fate | | | Total |
|------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|
| | Survived | Deceased | Unknown | |
| 16 to 25 Years Old | 21 (77.8 %) | 3 (11.1 %) | 3 (11.1 %) | 27 (100.0 %) |
| 26 to 40 Years Old | 25 (53.2 %) | 13 (27.7 %) | 9 (19.1 %) | 47 (100.0 %) |
| 41 to 50 Years Old | 7 (25.0 %) | 13 (46.4 %) | 8 (28.6 %) | 28 (100.0 %) |
| 51 Years Old and Over | 4 (40.0 %) | 3 (30.0 %) | 3 (30.0 %) | 10 (100.0 %) |
| Total | 57 (50.9 %) | 32 (28.6 %) | 23 (20.5 %) | 112 (100.0 %) |

Less anticipated, however, were the results concerning the variable “gender.” Statistically significant, the relationship between “gender” and “ultimate fate” was extremely strong. As can be seen from Table 30, female Jews survived the concentration camps in far greater proportions than their male counterparts. In fact, nearly ninety percent of the women admitted into a camp were alive at the Liberation, while that was the case for just over thirty-eight percent of the men. The lion’s share of the Jews having succumbed in the camps came, moreover, from the latter group. These were, in short, highly unexpected results.

Table 30: Ultimate Fate Based on Gender.

| Gender (χ^2 ***) | Ultimate Fate | | | Total |
|------------------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|
| | Survived | Deceased | Unknown | |
| Female | 21 (87.5 %) | 1 (4.2 %) | 2 (8.3 %) | 24 (100.0 %) |

| | | | | |
|-------|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|
| Male | 33 (38.4 %) | 32 (37.2 %) | 21 (24.4 %) | 86 (100.0 %) |
| Total | 54 (49.1 %) | 33 (30.0 %) | 23 (20.9 %) | 110 (100.0 %) |

But what, if anything, can explain some of these counterintuitive findings? Though the statistics are not entirely conclusive, there are reasons to believe that, while important in their own right, “age” and “gender” may have also played an *indirect* role in the survival of the Jews, by occasionally influencing the camps to which they were deported. This was no small thing, however, since certain camps appear to have offered far greater prospects of survival than others. For instance, all of the Vauclusian Jews who were initially deported to Bergen-Belsen, Ravensbrück, Karlsruhe, Dresden and Alderney ultimately survived the war, while that was the case for only a handful of those having ended up at camps like Sobibor, Majdanek, Kaunas and Reval (see Table 31).⁷⁶

Table 31: Ultimate Fate Based on Camp to which Initially Deported.

| Camp to which Initially Deported | Ultimate Fate | | | | Total |
|----------------------------------|----------------|---------------|--------------------------------|---------------|------------------|
| | Survived | Deceased | Presumed Murdered upon Arrival | Unknown | |
| Auschwitz | 43 (12.3 %) | 30 (8.6 %) | 256 (73.4 %) | 20 (5.7 %) | 349 (100.0 %) |
| Sobibor | 0 (0.0 %) | 0 (0.0 %) | 3 (100.0 %) | 0 (0.0 %) | 3 (100.0 %) |
| Sobibor / Majdanek | 0 (0.0 %) | 0 (0.0 %) | 6 (85.7 %) | 1 (14.3 %) | 7 (100.0 %) |

⁷⁶ Twenty-seven of the thirty-two Jews (or 84.4 percent) having been deported to one of the latter camps are believed to have been murdered upon their arrival, while only two (or 6.3 percent) are known to have survived the war.

| | | | | | |
|----------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------|------------------|
| Bergen-Belsen | 2 (100.0 %) | 0 (0.0 %) | 0 (0.0 %) | 0 (0.0 %) | 2 (100.0 %) |
| Buchenwald | 1 (50.0 %) | 1 (50.0 %) | 0 (0.0 %) | 0 (0.0 %) | 2 (100.0 %) |
| Dachau | 0 (0.0 %) | 0 (0.0 %) | 1 (100.0 %) | 0 (0.0 %) | 1 (100.0 %) |
| Ravensbrück | 1 (100.0 %) | 0 (0.0 %) | 0 (0.0 %) | 0 (0.0 %) | 1 (100.0 %) |
| Kaunas / Reval | 2 (9.5 %) | 1 (4.8 %) | 17 (81.0 %) | 1 (4.8 %) | 21 (100.0 %) |
| Berlin | 0 (0.0 %) | 0 (0.0 %) | 0 (0.0 %) | 1 (100.0 %) | 1 (100.0 %) |
| Dresden | 2 (100.0 %) | 0 (0.0 %) | 0 (0.0 %) | 0 (0.0 %) | 2 (100.0 %) |
| Karlsruhe | 1 (100.0 %) | 0 (0.0 %) | 0 (0.0 %) | 0 (0.0 %) | 1 (100.0 %) |
| Alderney | 3 (100.0 %) | 0 (0.0 %) | 0 (0.0 %) | 0 (0.0 %) | 3 (100.0 %) |
| Total | 55 (14.0 %) | 32 (8.1 %) | 283 (72.0 %) | 23 (5.9 %) | 393 (100.0 %) |

The numbers concerning the fate of the deportees from France to one of the latter camps are particularly telling. Of the four thousand Jews transferred from Drancy to Sobibor or Majdanek in March 1943 (convoys 50 to 53), only fifteen—or 0.38 percent—survived the war.⁷⁷ The survival rate of those having been deported to Lithuania or Estonia in May 1944 (convoy 73) does not appear to have been that much better, since “nearly all of them,” according to Serge Klarsfeld, “were exterminated.”⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Klarsfeld, *Mémorial*, “Tableau chronologique des convois de déportation” and p. xv.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. xvii.

Though it was critical to one's survival, the camp to which one was deported was not entirely arbitrary. Indeed, for better or for worse, some individuals were selected to be part of specific convoys because they had a particular profile. For instance, the Jews who were deported to Kaunas or Reval aboard convoy 73 were predominantly young males (see Tables 32 and 33). This was not mere happenstance. In fact, they had been chosen precisely because of their age and gender, since, as the deportees were made to believe, they would be sent to work on construction projects for the Organisation Todt. Instead, they were transported to places from which almost no one returned: the Ninth Fort of Kaunas or the prison of Reval.⁷⁹

Table 32: Camp to which Initially Deported by Gender.

| Camp to which Initially Deported | Gender | | Total |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| | Female | Male | |
| Auschwitz | 133 (38.2 %) | 215 (61.8 %) | 348 (100.0 %) |
| Sobibor | 1 (33.3 %) | 2 (66.7 %) | 3 (100.0 %) |
| Sobibor / Majdanek | 0 (0.0 %) | 7 (100.0 %) | 7 (100.0 %) |
| Bergen-Belsen | 2 (100.0 %) | 0 (0.0 %) | 2 (100.0 %) |
| Buchenwald | 0 (0.0 %) | 2 (100.0 %) | 2 (100.0 %) |
| Dachau | 1 (100.0 %) | 0 (0.0 %) | 1 (100.0 %) |
| Kaunas / Reval | 0 (0.0 %) | 20 (100.0 %) | 20 (100.0 %) |

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

| | | | |
|-----------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Berlin | 1 (100.0 %) | 0 (0.0 %) | 1 (100.0 %) |
| Dresden | 2 (100.0 %) | 0 (0.0 %) | 2 (100.0 %) |
| Karlsruhe | 1 (100.0 %) | 0 (0.0 %) | 1 (100.0 %) |
| Alderney | 0 (0.0 %) | 3 (100.0 %) | 3 (100.0 %) |
| Total | 141 (36.2 %) | 249 (63.8 %) | 390 (100.0 %) |

At other times, by virtue of having certain personal characteristics, specific Jews were selected to be part of convoys whose final destination was, in the end, more conducive to survival. Though this was true for both males and females, it was more often the case for women⁸⁰, even if the selections were not, strictly speaking, made on the basis of one's gender. For example, as was seen in the previous chapter, one's marriage to a non-Jew occasionally influenced the place to which one was deported. Golda Drogoczyner (née Szyszczyccka), for instance, was one of seventy-four Jews transferred from Drancy to Bergen-Belsen on May 3, 1944 for being married to, or for being the child of, a French prisoner of war.⁸¹ Incidentally or not, Drogoczyner and Marie Eysseric (née Palombo), who was also deported to Bergen-Belsen on convoy 80 B, ultimately survived the war.⁸² One suspects that familial ties to a Gentile may have also played a role in the deportation of Maïdy Stern and her fifty-one-year-old mother,

⁸⁰ This might help explain why the association between the variables "gender" and "ultimate fate" was as strong as it was (i.e., extremely strong).

⁸¹ Klarsfeld, *Mémorial*, pp. iv, xvii and 164; Police Commissariat in Sorgues, "État des Israélites—Commune de Sorgues," September 17, 1943, ADV, 7W15.

⁸² Klarsfeld, *Mémorial*, pp. iv, xvii and 183; List of former inmates of Bergen-Belsen, ITS, GCC 1/2, USHMM; Minister of Veterans and War Victims to the Chief of the French Liaison Mission to the International Tracing Service, December 9, 1957, ITS, T/D 564 067, USHMM; Individual deportation sheet for Marie Eysseric (née Palombo), Undated postwar document, ADV, 2J1.

Léonore, to Dresden on June 21, 1944 and that of Ruth Asch to Karlsruhe on February 10, 1943.⁸³ Like Drogoczyner and Eysseric, all three lived to see the Liberation.⁸⁴

Being selected for a specific transport on the basis of one's marriage to a non-Jew was not something that was unique to women, however. Moreover, as was hinted at with the example of Léonore Stern, this selection may have allowed some Jews to witness the end of the war, even if, by virtue of their age, they were among the least likely to survive the camps. As discussed previously, approximately six hundred Jews (the majority of whom were married to Gentiles) were deported to the island of Alderney in 1943 and early 1944 to be used as labourers for construction projects along the Atlantic Wall.⁸⁵ Among them were Jean Jules Bernheim and René Naquet, who, at fifty-nine and sixty-five years old, respectively, share the distinction of being the two oldest Vauclusian Jews to return from deportation.⁸⁶ Though their concentration camp experience had certainly not been an easy one, because of their age, it is difficult to imagine how either of the men would have made it through the war intact had they been deported to anywhere but Alderney.

⁸³ Divorced from her first husband (Hans Joseph Hermann), Ruth Asch had married Erich Kult, a German national who was eventually sentenced to death in absentia (by a court in Germany) for desertion. See reports from the Police Commissioner in Avignon to the Prefect of Vaucluse, February 11 and March 3, 1943, ADV, 6W37.

⁸⁴ Second World War History Committee of the Deportation in Vaucluse, Individual deportation sheets for Léonore and Maily Stein, January 1959, ADV, 2J1; Minister of Veterans and War Victims to the Chief of the French Liaison Mission to the International Tracing Service, June 11, 1958, ITS, T/D 678 984, USHMM; Minister of Veterans and War Victims to the Chief of the French Liaison Mission to the International Tracing Service, April 4, 1957, ITS, T/D 540 471, USHMM.

⁸⁵ Benoît Luc, *Les déportés de France vers Aurigny, 1942-1944* (Marigny: Eurocibles, 2010), pp. 41-44 and 53-55; Wellers, *L'étoile jaune à l'heure de Vichy*, p. 195.

⁸⁶ "Liste des libérés de Drancy," ITS, OCC 6/3 IVA/1, USHMM; International Committee of the Red Cross, "Libérés du camp de Drancy le 18/8/44," ITS, OCC 6/3/b IVA/1, USHMM; Amicale des anciens déportés politiques de l'île anglo-normande d'Aurigny, "Troisième liste des adhérents," November 26, 1967, ITS, VCC 217, USHMM; Luc, *Les déportés de France vers Aurigny*, pp. 249 and 264.

Table 33: Camp to which Initially Deported by Age at Time of Deportation.

| Camp to which Initially Deported | Age at Time of Deportation | | | | | Total |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| | 0 to 15 Years Old | 16 to 25 Years Old | 26 to 40 Years Old | 41 to 50 Years Old | 51 Years Old and Over | |
| Auschwitz | 42 (12.0 %) | 41 (11.8 %) | 101 (28.9 %) | 81 (23.2 %) | 84 (24.1 %) | 349 (100.0%) |
| Sobibor | 0 (0.0 %) | 0 (0.0 %) | 1 (33.3 %) | 1 (33.3 %) | 1 (33.3 %) | 3 (100.0%) |
| Sobibor / Majdanek | 0 (0.0 %) | 1 (14.3 %) | 4 (57.1 %) | 1 (14.3 %) | 1 (14.3 %) | 7 (100.0%) |
| Bergen-Belsen | 0 (0.0 %) | 0 (0.0 %) | 2 (100.0%) | 0 (0.0 %) | 0 (0.0 %) | 2 (100.0%) |
| Buchenwald | 0 (0.0 %) | 0 (0.0 %) | 2 (100.0%) | 0 (0.0 %) | 0 (0.0 %) | 2 (100.0%) |
| Dachau | 0 (0.0 %) | 1 (100.0%) | 0 (0.0 %) | 0 (0.0 %) | 0 (0.0 %) | 1 (100.0%) |
| Ravensbrück | 0 (0.0 %) | 0 (0.0 %) | 1 (100.0%) | 0 (0.0 %) | 0 (0.0 %) | 1 (100.0%) |
| Kaunas / Reval | 0 (0.0 %) | 4 (19.0 %) | 11 (52.4 %) | 5 (23.8 %) | 1 (4.8 %) | 21 (100.0%) |
| Berlin | 0 (0.0 %) | 0 (0.0 %) | 1 (100.0%) | 0 (0.0 %) | 0 (0.0 %) | 1 (100.0%) |
| Dresden | 0 (0.0 %) | 1 (50.0 %) | 0 (0.0 %) | 0 (0.0 %) | 1 (50.0 %) | 2 (100.0%) |
| Karlsruhe | 0 (0.0 %) | 0 (0.0 %) | 1 (100.0%) | 0 (0.0 %) | 0 (0.0 %) | 1 (100.0%) |
| Alderney | 0 (0.0 %) | 0 (0.0 %) | 1 (33.3 %) | 0 (0.0 %) | 2 (66.7 %) | 3 (100.0%) |
| Total | 42 (10.7 %) | 48 (12.2 %) | 125 (31.8 %) | 88 (22.4 %) | 90 (22.9 %) | 393 (100.0%) |

The contrast between the survival rates of the Jews who were deported to this island in the English Channel and those who, for example, were sent to places like Kaunas or Reval is striking, and it also serves to underscore the importance of the convoys' final destination on the fate of the Jews—perhaps even above all else. Indeed, even though the Jews of convoy 73 (Kaunas/Reval) were deported *later* and had generally been *younger* than those of convoy 641 (Alderney), far fewer of them lived to see the Liberation because of *where* they had been deported. When it came to surviving the concentration camps, the destinations of the convoys leaving France could, and often did, make all the difference in the world.

CONCLUSION

LIFE AFTER THE WAR

RETURN HOME

Though liberated at Buchenwald by the Third United States Army on April 11, 1945, Gustav Rottenberg was not released until a few weeks later, on May 5, 1945.¹ Originally from Vienna, Rottenberg was not the only Vauclisian Jew to have spent several weeks or months in a camp or hospital before being repatriated home.² “Home,” of course, was not necessarily the department of Vaucluse nor was it always France.

At the Liberation of Auschwitz on January 27, 1945, Maud Bloch was “in a truly lamentable state.” “I had an infected wound on my leg, [...] and I could not walk,” she explained. “[...] I was [also] covered in boils.”³

[Though] liberated, I stayed like that, in the infirmary in Auschwitz, [...] from January to the end of May [1945]. [...] Every country came to retrieve their own [nationals], but us, we were among the last [to be repatriated]. [...] We were repatriated on June 5, 1945. [...] We took

¹ Gustav Rottenberg, “Request for Certificate of Incarceration,” June 20, 1950, ITS, T/D 126 171, USHMM; Military Government of Germany, “Order for Disposal of Inmates,” May 5, 1945, ITS, USHMM.

² Although Rottenberg had initially intended to return to Vienna (and had subsequently expressed a desire to go to Palestine), he immigrated to Switzerland on April 18, 1947, after having spent several months in a displaced persons camp in Gauting, Germany. See Gustav Rottenberg, “Concentration Camp Inmates Questionnaire,” April 23, 1945, ITS, USHMM; American Expeditionary Forces Displaced Persons (A.E.F. D.P.) registration card for Gustav Rothenberg, ITS, USHMM; Gustav Rottenberg, “Request for Certificate of Incarceration,” June 20, 1950, ITS, T/D 126 171, USHMM; United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) - Sanatorium Gauting, “List of all DP Patients,” December 16, 1946, ITS, F-8-147/E, USHMM.

³ Bloch, VHA, Part III: 14:56-15:31.

the train from Pilsen in Czechoslovakia [...] [and] returned to France in June, arriving at the Bourget [train station] in Paris. [...] Then, we made our way to Marseille.⁴

“I weighed twenty-eight kilos when I was liberated [at Ebensee],” remembered, for his part, Robert Chazine.

[...] The Americans arrived [...] [and] created an infirmary [in the camp] with showers [and] laundry, [...] paramedics [and] nurses. And they asked us to present ourselves at this so-called hospital to be registered. [...] We provided our names and date of birth, [information] which was then broadcasted over the radio. [...] Thereafter, everyone from the hospital was brought [...] to Nuremberg. Why Nuremberg? I do not know. Probably because there was a railway in the area that was still functional. [...] I was transported to the Nuremberg Hospital, where I remained for approximately one month. [...] [I was subsequently] taken to a repatriation centre, where I was grouped with others. [...] We returned to France [all together]. [...] I was brought to a health centre in Metz, where I remained, once again, for about one month. [...] [Finally,] we were taken [to Paris].⁵

Following his roundabout journey back to France, Chazine’s priority was to get in touch with his loved ones. “Arriving at the Hôtel Lutetia, I had but one thought: to call my family and get news from them, as well as to let them know that I had returned.”⁶ Chazine was particularly anxious to communicate with his wife, Simone, given the time that had lapsed between his liberation and repatriation. “Some friends had telephoned her [my wife] to say that they had heard on the radio that I was alive. But it had been two months, and they were [still] waiting [and without news].”⁷

Chazine’s belief that he would ultimately be reunited with his loved ones was not one that was universally shared by his fellow deportees of Vaucluse. In her memoirs published in 1974, Estréa Asséo, who had been separated from her husband, Marc, and

⁴ *Ibid.*, Part III: 23:35-28:26.

⁵ Chazine, VHA, Part V: 20:21-25:34.

⁶ *Ibid.*, Part V: 26:04-26:11.

⁷ *Ibid.*, Part V: 26:15-26:22.

their two children, Liliane and Elie Édouard, when she was arrested in Avignon on June 6, 1944⁸, captured the competing sentiments felt by some deportees during their journey home from the concentration camps: the happiness of knowing that one had survived with the fear of never again being reunited with family and friends. “The train [that brought me back to France] was full of [former] prisoners,” wrote Asséo. “It was covered in flowers and green branches. At each French railway station, we were greeted with ovations and fanfare! [It was] a wonderful welcome!” But, she continued, “those [who cheered] did not realize [...] the nightmare from which we had just emerged. I had a husband [and] children[.] Was I going to find them again? And where?”⁹

Fortunately, Asséo’s story had a happy ending. “I remember that, when I got off the train, my heart beat quickly as I read the sign ‘Avignon Train Station.’ I did not dare look... Were all three of them there...? My God, thank you, all four of us were reunited! It was completely unexpected.”¹⁰ As it had been during the return voyage home, the reunion was not free of competing emotions. Seeing her family for the first time in nearly twelve months, Estréa was unable to bring herself to speak. “Not a sound came out of my throat,” she explained.

My husband [was] smiling, [though he seemed] astonished[;] my daughter[;] [“who was pale and in tears,”] looked fearful[;] [and] my son [had] his mouth wide open... He had been told that his mother would be returning [...] and [instead] a ghost stood before him. I did not weigh even thirty kilos. A scarf hid my short hair, which had begun to regrow, grey and coarse; my face was emaciated[;] my eyes [were] almost haggard, and I was dressed, I do not remember how.

⁸ Division Commissioner and District Chief of Police in Avignon, “Liste des personnes arrêtées pour des raisons politiques par les services de police allemands,” November 24, 1944, ADV, 6W37; Prefecture of Vaucluse, “État nominatif des Juifs français résidant en Vaucluse au 1^{er} juillet 1941” and “État nominatif des Juifs de nationalité étrangère résidant en Vaucluse au 1^{er} juillet 1941,” July 1, 1941, ADV, 7W15. See also Asséo, *Les souvenirs d’une rescapée*, pp. 33-37.

⁹ Asséo, *Les souvenirs d’une rescapée*, p. 122.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

[...] I was simultaneously happy and broken.¹¹

Arriving in Lyon after her liberation from Theresienstadt¹², Ginette Cherkasky was similarly preoccupied with finding her loved ones. “But,” she asked, “where were they? Were they still alive? Because I did not know whether they, themselves, had not also been deported. I did not have the faintest idea. Nor did I know what to do [to find them].”¹³ Though she eventually located her relatives, Ginette recalled that the search had not been an easy one, given that, upon her return from deportation, her loved ones were no longer where she believed them to be. The surviving members of her family had left Avignon and the department of Vaucluse (where they had resided since 1942) and had returned home to Paris.¹⁴

SEARCHING FOR LOVED ONES

Wanting to avoid a predicament similar to the one described by Ginette Cherkasky, the Waysenson family decided to settle in the Vaucluse after the war rather than return to Luxembourg. “The question of returning to Luxembourg was not one that we even entertained,” explained Adolphe Waysenson, whose father, Joseph, had been deported to Kaunas/Reval in May 1944.¹⁵ “[There was] no question of leaving [...] as long as my father had not returned. [...] Therefore, we settled in Avignon.”¹⁶

The Waysensons also actively sought information on their missing family member. Adolphe’s older brother, Léon, recalled that, after the Liberation, he would

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Kolinka, VHA, Part V: 13:40-13:48, 15:20-15:50 and 17:41-18:00.

¹³ *Ibid.*, Part V: 18:43-18:54.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, Part II: 10:36-11:10 and 16:18-16:34 and Part V: 18:55-20:47.

¹⁵ Deportation list of convoy 73, CDJC, C73_34.

¹⁶ A. Waysenson, VHA, Part VI: 9:59-10:14.

frequently travel to the Office of Veterans and War Victims in Marseille to see if he could find his father's name among the lists of those who had returned.¹⁷ Adolphe, for his part, remembered that their mother, Yenta, would go to the train station in Avignon almost daily, in the hopes of one day finding her husband waiting there for her.¹⁸ In the end, “[w]e never got any news[,] [...] [and] we came to realize that my father would not be returning,” observed Léon.¹⁹ “Then, we had to live, not with, but without. And that [was] not easy.”²⁰

Others were almost incapable of coming to terms with the harsh reality that they would likely never see their loved one again. After the war, Isaac Lewendel, who was eight years old when his mother, Sarah, was arrested and deported, routinely checked the names of concentration camp survivors published in *La Marseillaise*, a daily newspaper in Provence.²¹ “This [after school] ritual continued for months,” explained Lewendel in his memoirs. “I was overwhelmed by anguish as the list of names dwindled and finally vanished from the newspaper[,] [with] [m]y mother's name never show[ing] up.” But still he held out hope. “[S]ure that someday she would be back[,] [...] I refused to connect the fate of my mother to the horror stories that had started to appear in many conversations and in the news.” The key, Isaac came to believe, was patience: “Every day became temporary, and I started waiting for tomorrow.”²²

Time, however, does not heal all wounds, especially when there is no real sense of closure. On April 8, 1978, Bernard Weinberg wrote a letter to the International

¹⁷ L. Waysenson, VHA, Part IV: 14:42-15:05.

¹⁸ A. Waysenson, VHA, Part VI: 9:49-9:53.

¹⁹ L. Waysenson, VHA, Part IV: 16:20-16:21 and 24:49-24:53.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, Part IV: 19:28-19:35.

²¹ Lewendel, *Not the Germans Alone*, pp. 129-130.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 130. Lewendel also explained how “[p]eople around [him] behaved as if [his] mother were dead and gone forever[,] [but that he] neither accepted this nor believed them, because [he] still badly wanted her back.” Lewendel, *Not the Germans Alone*, p. 181.

Tracing Service (ITS) in Bad Arolsen, Germany, in search of information on the fate of his brother and that of his sister-in-law, Romanian Jews who had been arrested in Cavaillon on November 11, 1943 and who had been deported to Auschwitz less than one month later, aboard convoy 64²³:

I am writing to you on behalf of the reconstruction of destinies [project] [i.e., the Shoah Victims' Names Recovery Project] of "Yad Vashem" in Jerusalem.

My brother[,] Elias Weinberg[,] and his wife[,] Sophie Weinberg, née Mendelsohn, were arrested by the Gestapo in Cavaillon (France) in November 1943.

As shown in the copy (in German translation) of [the] act delivered on February 13, 1952 by the French Ministry of Former Deportees [i.e., the Ministry of Veterans and War Victims], my brother and his wife were deported from Drancy to Auschwitz on December 7, 1943.

Since the day of their deportation and in spite of all of my efforts, I have not been able to determine what happened to them.

I would be most grateful if you could provide me with any information that you may have on the tragic fate of my brother and his spouse.

[...]

In the hopes of hearing from you, please accept [...] my warmest regards. [emphasis in original]²⁴

For reasons unknown, without awaiting a response, Bernard Weinberg submitted "Pages of Testimony" for both Elias and Sophie just two days later, on April 10, 1978.²⁵ Bernard's "premature" submissions to Yad Vashem proved to be prescient, however, for he never obtained further details on the fate of his loved ones. The response that he received from the ITS via the French Liaison Mission on June 29, 1978 indicated simply

²³ Police Commissariat in Cavaillon, "État des Israélites étrangers—Commune de Cavaillon," September 11, 1943, ADV, 7W15; "État mensuel des arrestations de ressortissants français opérées par les autorités allemandes—Mois de novembre 1943," November 1943, ADV, 6W37; Deportation list of convoy 64, CDJC, C64_39.

²⁴ Letter from Bernard Weinberg to the International Tracing Service, April 8, 1978, ITS, T/D 1 048 290, USHMM.

²⁵ "Pages of Testimony" submitted by Bernard Weinberg on behalf of Elias and Sophie Weinberg, YV, CDSVN. These "Pages of Testimony" reproduce nearly verbatim the information that Bernard had received from the Ministry of Veterans and War Victims in 1952. See Ministry of Veterans and War Victims, Certificate for Elias Weinberg, February 13, 1952, ITS, T/D 1 048 290, USHMM.

that Elias Weinberg had been “arrested in November 1943 in Cavaillon (France); interned at Drancy and then deported to Auschwitz on December 7, 1943; [and] *disappeared*. [emphasis added]”²⁶ The reason for the vague formulation can be inferred from a report sent from the ITS to the Chief of the French Liaison Mission on July 10, 1978. The report, which outlined the information that had been found on Elias Weinberg in the ITS holdings, indicated that his name had only been found in concentration camp records predating his deportation.²⁷ Thus, Bernard’s search for answers ultimately went unfulfilled.

The absence of closure experienced by Bernard Weinberg was, unfortunately, the rule rather than the exception, and the distress and pain that it inflicted on certain survivors is evident. On August 18, 1994, Max Doktorczyk submitted a “Tracing Inquiry” to the American Red Cross regarding his father, Sina (or Sinai), a Polish Jew who was arrested by the Gestapo on May 8, 1944 in the town of Pertuis.²⁸ In his inquiry, Max explained that “[On] May 6, 1945, [*sic*] my father went to buy something and he never returned.” Concerning the purpose of the search, Max wrote the following: “I would like to know what happened to my father [...] [when he] disappear[ed] on May 6, 1945 [*sic*] in Pertuis, France.”²⁹

In the testimony that he provided in December 1995 to the Shoah Foundation, Max explained that he and his sister, Esther, had written to the International Red Cross

²⁶ Report from the International Tracing Service (via the French Liaison Mission) to Bernard Weinberg and the Office of the Secretariat of State for Veterans in Paris, June 29, 1978, ITS, T/D 1 048 290, USHMM.

²⁷ Report from the International Tracing Service to the Chief of the French Liaison Mission, July 10, 1978, ITS, T/D 1 048 290, USHMM.

²⁸ Police Commissariat in Pertuis, “État des Israélites—Commune de Pertuis,” September 10, 1943, ADV, 7W15; Division Commissioner and District Chief of Police in Avignon, “Liste des personnes arrêtées pour des raisons politiques par les services de police allemands,” November 24, 1944, ADV, 6W37.

²⁹ Tracing Inquiry from Menachem (Max) Doktorczyk to the American Red Cross, August 18, 1994, ITS, T/D 767 231, USHMM.

and that they had received information indicating that Sina had been arrested in Pertuis in May 1944 and had subsequently been sent to Drancy. According to Max, the Red Cross also provided them with details of the convoy that had taken their father to Auschwitz. “So we wrote to Auschwitz to [...] [see whether] he was killed over there.”³⁰ (A letter to that effect is, indeed, found in the ITS archives.³¹) Max further explained that the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum had responded to their query and confirmed the details of the transport that had carried Sina to the East. The museum indicated, however, that it did not possess any documentation proving that he had died in the camp.³² “They have no records in Auschwitz,” said Max, visibly disappointed. “And Auschwitz is supposed to have all the records [of those] who [were] killed there. There [are] no records.”³³

But hope remained. The museum “gave us an address [...] [in] Germany, where they are supposed to have all the records... complete [records]. If he die[d] on the road, if he... Whatever happened[to him,] [they are supposed to know].” Max was, of course, talking about the International Tracing Service in Bad Arolsen. “So we wrote to Germany just recently, and we got an answer. And they said, ‘Don’t rush us. We [will] go find out. Have patience, and we will let you know.’”³⁴ Indeed, on October 16, 1995, Max received the following letter from the ITS:

We should like to acknowledge receipt of your inquiry. Due to the considerable number of applications and the many records that have to be checked, a longer period of time will be needed to process your inquiry. It is not necessary to remind us.

We shall inform you of the result, as soon as our investigations

³⁰ Doktorczyk, VHA, Part IV: 8:58-9:41.

³¹ Letter from Max Doktorczyk to the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum, September 3, 1995, ITS, T/D 767 231, USHMM.

³² Doktorczyk, VHA, Part IV: 9:42-9:54.

³³ *Ibid.*, Part IV: 10:25-10:31.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, Part IV: 9:56-10:18.

have been concluded.³⁵

Four years later, the response finally arrived:

Dear Mr Doktorczyk,

[...]

Please be advised that based on the particulars that you gave, a check was made of the documentary material available here.

As [a] result of these investigations, we enclose an Excerpt from Documents, containing all the particulars on hand here about the incarceration of your father.

Particulars after 20th May 1944 are not at our disposal, so that we unfortunately are not in a position to clarify the fate.

May we ask for understanding for the belated reply to your inquiry that is to be attributed to an extremely large amount of incoming mail during the last years.³⁶

Dated December 13, 1999, the “Excerpt from Documents” revealed no details previously unknown to Max and his sister: Sina had last resided in “Pertuis, T[raverse]. Colbert,” had been “confined in Camp Drancy” and had been “transferred on 20th May 1944 to Concentration Camp Auschwitz.” When it came to additional details, there were “none.”³⁷

When Max Doktorczyk passed away in Miami, Florida on April 26, 2005³⁸, he was no closer to knowing for certain what had happened to his father following the latter’s arrest and deportation in May 1944. The absence of closure clearly affected Max for the remainder of his life. “They [the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum] [had] said that 147 people from this transport [convoy 74] were sent to other camps,” he stated during his interview in 1995. “Where, they don’t know. Maybe he [my father] was in this group. This, I don’t know. But he was on the train, and his name was there [on the

³⁵ Letter from the International Tracing Service to Max Doktorczyk, October 16, 1995, ITS, T/D 767 231, USHMM.

³⁶ Letter from the International Tracing Service to Max Doktorczyk, December 13, 1999, ITS, T/D 767 231, USHMM.

³⁷ International Tracing Service, “Excerpt from Documents” for Sina Doktorczyk, December 13, 1999, ITS, T/D 767 231, USHMM.

³⁸ <http://www.locateancestors.com/menachem/> (consulted on March 22, 2019).

list]. [...] This, in the end, is [...] [all that] we know.”³⁹

In April 1999, in honour of her brother’s efforts, Esther Goldberg (née Doktorczyk) submitted a “Page of Testimony” to Yad Vashem on behalf of Sina, containing all of the information that they had acquired on him over the years.⁴⁰ And following Max’s death, Esther continued to correspond with the International Tracing Service, in the hopes of one day being able to shed light on the fate of their father.⁴¹ No new information ever surfaced.⁴²

LIFE IN THE SHADOW OF THE HOLOCAUST

Life did not simply return to normal following the Liberation. For Jews like Robert Chazine and Estréa Asséo, who, upon their return from deportation, “did not weigh even thirty kilos,”⁴³ the immediate concern was regaining one’s health and physical strength, something that was more easily said than done. “Readjusting to life was not an easy thing,” wrote Asséo in her memoirs.

[...] I had to stay in bed for months and months, receiving care, [...] [and eating] food that was more than light, for my life to take back its normal course. All of the illnesses that I had managed to avoid in the camps manifested themselves surreptitiously: swollen legs, upset stomach, chronic tonsillitis, limb pain, vertigo, insomnia... I could take care neither of my household nor of my children[.] I could not support anyone or [even] myself[.] I was a burden for others.

Yet life went on, with its worries and its daily struggles, but I was incapable of resuming it. The clouds were accumulating[:] in the

³⁹ Doktorczyk, VHA, Part IV: 10:34-11:12.

⁴⁰ “Page of Testimony” submitted by Esther Goldberg (née Doktorczyk) on behalf of Sina Doktorczyk, YV, CDSVN.

⁴¹ Letter from the French Red Cross to the French Liaison Mission to the International Tracing Service, February 12, 2010, ITS, T/D 767 231, USHMM.

⁴² Letter from the International Tracing Service to the Chief of the French Liaison Mission, May 25, 2010, ITS, T/D 767 231, USHMM.

⁴³ Asséo, *Les souvenirs d’une rescapée*, p. 123; Chazine, VHA, Part V: 20:21-20:23.

home to which I had returned, a rift, a gulf had been created, insurmountable.⁴⁴

Reintegrating oneself into society was yet another challenge. “Diminished both physically and morally,” Asséo continued, “overcome by the nightmare that I had lived through, frightened and doubting everything that was happening, I inspired pity and curiosity [from those around me].”⁴⁵

For many Vauclusian Jews, the end of the war marked “the beginning of a silence that would last [...] years.”⁴⁶ “For forty years, we did not speak. We were not understood,” lamented Maud Bloch.

[...] No one was interested. You would speak of it [life during the war], but people were indifferent. They did not understand. They could not understand. It was not possible to explain what you had lived through [...]. One truly needed to have been there to understand, because it was unimaginable. It was incomprehensible. So people would vaguely listen. We saw [...] that people were not interested in what we had to say. [Therefore,] we stopped [speaking]. We spoke no more. We withdrew within ourselves.⁴⁷

Ginette Cherkasky, who also rarely spoke of her wartime experiences with others, was more charitable to those who had been in her immediate entourage in the period following the Liberation. Where Bloch saw disinterest and indifference, Cherkasky saw a desire not to reopen old wounds. “I never spoke about it [my life during the war and my experience of the concentration camps] to anyone,” Cherkasky explained. “[...] Maybe if I had been asked, I might have perhaps spoken about it, but no

⁴⁴ Asséo, *Les souvenirs d'une rescapée*, p. 124.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Levendel, *Not the Germans Alone*, p. 102.

⁴⁷ Bloch, VHA, Part IV: 11:39-13:10.

one dared to ask us [about these things], because, I believe, they feared that they would upset us.”⁴⁸

Others, like Isaac Lewendel, withdrew within themselves for entirely different reasons. “For many years, I [...] avoided every opportunity to reopen the past that was so vividly present in me,” wrote Lewendel in his memoirs.

The pain would not go away, but I kept it locked inside. For one thing, sharing my feelings was like asking for undeserved sympathy. I had, after all, survived. The real heroes, dead or alive, were those who had had to endure the concentration camps, not someone like me who had stayed behind and been lucky enough to find a safe haven.⁴⁹

Contempt for those who had not been deported was a sentiment with which Robert Chazine, a former inmate of Auschwitz and Ebensee (Mauthausen)⁵⁰, had had to contend.

Immediately [after the war], I struggled with a feeling that, in my opinion, almost all of the deportees had: a sort of commiseration in listening to others, who had not been deported, complain about life [during the war], of not having been able to eat certain things, of life having been expensive, of not having had enough [money or food], etcetera. It was incredibly tiresome listening to *these people* complain, something that, for us [former deportees], did not make any sense. [...] I harboured that [feeling] for quite some time. [emphasis added]⁵¹

In his testimony, Chazine remembered how, for a period of time, he also struggled with a “feeling of superiority,” for, unlike countless others, “[he] had survived.”⁵² This feeling, Chazine explained, eventually gave way to another, one shared by nearly all of the Jews who testified after the war: the feeling that one’s survival had been the result of *luck* and little more.⁵³

⁴⁸ Kolinka, VHA, Part V: 22:04-22:27.

⁴⁹ Lewendel, *Not the Germans Alone*, p. 198.

⁵⁰ Deportation list of convoy 71, CDJC, C71_10; Chazine, VHA, Part V: 0:58-1:09 and 15:22-15:30.

⁵¹ Chazine, VHA, Part VI: 4:43-6:08.

⁵² *Ibid.*, Part VI: 5:11-5:18.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, Part VI: 5:19-5:47.

EXPLAINING SURVIVAL

Had “luck” spared Robert Chazine from the gas chambers? Indeed, had his survival (to borrow the words of another survivor) been similar to that of “an ant who escapes an anthill that is crushed by a heel,” since, “[o]n the whole, there are always at least a few of them [ants] that escape [such an ordeal]”?⁵⁴ And had his fate been wholly independent of his personal attributes, as the above analogy also implies: regardless of the ant’s individual characteristics, the only thing that mattered was its location at the moment the anthill was trampled?

Robert Chazine and his wife, Simone, arrived in the department of Vaucluse from Paris (via Cannes) on October 5, 1941, initially settling in Saint-Saturnin-lès-Apt, a town whose population scarcely exceeded one thousand souls.⁵⁵ They had, in fact, chosen this location for precisely that reason: having visited a local hostel in his youth, Robert knew that, in this town, they were likely to find “abandoned farms” and that they would, at least, be “much more isolated.”⁵⁶ After a few days of roaming the countryside, Robert and his wife stumbled upon a small, abandoned farmhouse in the neighbouring village of Buoux, which they proceeded to rent from a local.⁵⁷ Having previously studied and worked in farming and agriculture, Robert was able to operate the farm without much difficulty.⁵⁸ This allowed the Chazines to be more or less self-sufficient and to not

⁵⁴ Asséo, *Les souvenirs d'une rescapée*, p. 29.

⁵⁵ Police Commissariat in Apt, “État des Juifs s’étant présentés dans nos services pour l’apposition de la mention ‘Juif’,” February 9, 1943, ADV, 7W15; Chazine, VHA, Part II: 10:17-11:08; “État comparatif des municipalités de Vaucluse,” August 1939, ADV, 4W680.

⁵⁶ Chazine, VHA, Part II: 10:25-10:50.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, Part II: 11:34-12:45.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, Part I: 19:48-22:48.

have to leave the countryside for a larger city in search of employment, housing or foodstuffs, as others (including the Holcman family) had done.⁵⁹

Born in Paris on September 14, 1919, Robert held French citizenship and was considered a French Jew by the authorities.⁶⁰ As such, he was not targeted for arrest during the large-scale roundup of August 26, 1942.⁶¹ Living in Buoux (a village with a population of seventy-three⁶²) offered yet another degree of protection, for the danger of arrest in a village in the Italian zone—with an almost non-existent Jewish population—was considerably lower than it was in other, larger municipalities with a higher concentration of Jewish residents. Taken into custody on March 9, 1944, Chazine was one of only two Jews to be arrested in a village with fewer than five hundred residents.⁶³ Of course, the safety one gained from living in an isolated area with a low concentration of Jews could be offset by a lack of anonymity, especially for those who, like Chazine, were “known to the gendarmerie [and] had been the object of multiple reports” because of their “tendency to conduct black market activities.”⁶⁴

Deported from Drancy on April 13, 1944, Chazine arrived at Auschwitz three days later.⁶⁵ At twenty-four years old, he belonged to the group that had the highest proportion of admissions to the camps (men between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five), likely because the Germans viewed them as being the most suitable for hard

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, Part II: 15:27-15:44. See also Holcman, VHA, Part II: 9:13-9:40.

⁶⁰ Prefecture of Vaucluse, “Liste nominative des Juifs français (13 mai 1944),” May 13, 1944, ADV, 7W15.

⁶¹ Prefecture of Vaucluse, “Liste des Israélites étrangers entrés en France depuis le 1^{er} janvier 1936 qui doivent faire l’objet des mesures prévues par les instructions de M. le Ministre Secrétaire d’État à l’Intérieur en date des 5 et 15 août 1942,” Undated document (Probably August 1942), ADV, 7W16.

⁶² “État comparatif des municipalités de Vaucluse,” August 1939, ADV, 4W680.

⁶³ “État mensuel des arrestations de ressortissants français opérées par les troupes allemandes—Mois de mars 1944,” March 1944, ADV, 6W37. Sixty-nine villages of the department fit that population profile, though only twelve ever recorded having Jewish residents.

⁶⁴ Individual arrest sheet for Robert Chazine, Undated document, ADV, 6W37.

⁶⁵ Deportation list of convoy 71, CDJC, C71_10.

labour. His admission to Auschwitz complete, Chazine was assigned to a commando responsible for excavation and earthmoving projects, where his previous exposure to agricultural work served him well.⁶⁶ Though his former work experience did not enable him to be reassigned to a commando working in an area that was less exposed to the elements (as was the case with Maud Bloch⁶⁷), it helped him survive the camps, nonetheless. “For many, the work was very difficult,” explained Chazine. “It was not difficult for me, absolutely not. But it was very difficult for some, who, for example, quickly got open blisters on their hands and could no longer hold onto their shovel. I had the hands of a manual labourer. [...] As a result, I did not suffer from that type of thing.”⁶⁸

Chazine was liberated at Ebensee (Mauthausen) on May 6, 1945, just over one year (388 days) after his deportation from Drancy.⁶⁹ In addition to having been among the last deported from France, he had spent the majority of his time in Auschwitz, a concentration camp whose survival rate, though low, was nevertheless higher than many other camps.⁷⁰ Then in his mid-twenties, Chazine had also been better suited to withstand the rigours of life in a concentration camp than many (if not most) of his older counterparts.

Unbeknownst to him, Robert Chazine had been the beneficiary of the hierarchy of persecution (or, in his case, the hierarchy of privilege) and the confluence of personal, geographical and temporal forces upon which it had rested. This was true of every aspect

⁶⁶ Chazine, VHA, Part III: 20:51-20:56 and 21:58-22:36.

⁶⁷ Bloch, VHA, Part II: 26:04-26:22.

⁶⁸ Chazine, VHA, Part III: 25:44-26:03.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, Part V: 18:51-19:02.

⁷⁰ Chazine was subjected to the death marches from Auschwitz in January 1945. He arrived at Mauthausen on February 2, 1945. See Chazine, VHA, Part IV: 25:07-26:51 and Part V: 0:18-4:22; Mauthausen Entry Register (for the period between February 1 and 15, 1945), February 3, 1945, ITS, OCC 15/2/d, USHMM.

of his life during the war: from his comings and goings to his arrest and deportation, and from his selection at Auschwitz to, indeed, his ultimate survival. “Luck,” if understood as something entirely arbitrary and inexplicable, played no part in his fate.

In the end, the hierarchy of persecution (or of privilege) played a role not only in the life of Robert Chazine but also in that of every single Vauclusian Jew—both individually and as a collective whole. This should provide a degree of solace to survivors who, by virtue of the enormity and inexplicableness of the Holocaust, may still harbour feelings of guilt for having simply survived. Jacques Benroubi, a French Jew from Paris, who, in 1941 or 1942, took refuge in Avignon with his parents and sister, is one such survivor.⁷¹ “My parents died because they were Jewish,” asserted Benroubi in April 1995. “Six million died because they were Jewish. I didn’t die. I survived. I don’t know why. [...] It still bothers me that I survived. But I have to keep on surviving. Even now.”⁷²

⁷¹ Jacques Benroubi, Interview 1823, VHA, USC Shoah Foundation, 1995, Part I: 13:32-17:09.

⁷² *Ibid.*, Part IV: 8:10-9:04.

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RÉSUMÉ

La survie des trois quarts des Juifs de France lors de la Shoah fait depuis longtemps l'objet de débats entre historiens. Après la guerre, certains hauts dirigeants de Vichy tentèrent de présenter leur rôle dans la persécution des Juifs sous le meilleur jour possible et furent parmi les premiers à articuler ce qui devint la « théorie du bouclier ». Le régime de Vichy, affirmait-t-on, servit de bouclier contre le pire des exigences allemandes à l'égard des Juifs, ce qui permit d'épargner des milliers de Juifs—et, en particulier, ceux d'origine française—de la mort. Cette thèse fut ultérieurement reprise par certains des plus éminents chercheurs dans le domaine, qui tendaient à se rallier à l'un de ces principaux arguments : la « dichotomie franco-étrangère », l'idée selon laquelle les autorités de Vichy sacrifièrent de manière pragmatique les Juifs étrangers afin de préserver les Israélites de souche. Cette thèse de doctorat remet en question ce qui est devenu la manière de concevoir la Shoah en France, en examinant la vie des Juifs d'un département rural au sud-est du pays à travers le prisme de la prosopographie quantitative. Elle soutient que, en raison de ses appels répétés à la « dichotomie franco-étrangère », l'historiographie a surestimé l'importance d'un facteur pour expliquer le sort des Juifs en France durant la guerre, en regroupant des individus fort différents en deux groupes artificiellement homogènes, qui, ce faisant, eut l'effet d'obscurcir bon nombre d'autres, plus importantes différences entre ces mêmes individus. Cette thèse montre qu'il y eut, effectivement, une hiérarchie entre les Juifs vauclusiens, quoiqu'une non seulement définie par la nationalité ou le pays d'origine. Cette hiérarchie évolua au cours de la guerre et fut par moment une de persécution ou de privilège. Au final, ce fut cette hiérarchie—et les facteurs personnels, géographiques et temporels sur lesquels elle reposait—qui permit à la majorité des 2 826 Juifs du Vaucluse de survivre à la guerre.

MOTS CLÉS

Holocauste ; Shoah ; prosopographie ; méthodes quantitatives ; département de Vaucluse ; Avignon

ABSTRACT

How three-quarters of the Jews of France survived the Holocaust has long been a subject of debate between historians. After the war, top Vichy officials sought to frame their participation in the persecution of the Jews in the best light possible and were amongst the first to articulate what came to be known as the “shield thesis.” The Vichy Regime, so the argument went, had served as a shield against the worst of the German demands regarding the Jews, which had the happy result of saving thousands of them—and, in particular, those of French origin—from destruction. This thesis was subsequently advanced by some of the most prominent scholars in the field, who tended to rally around one of its central tenets: the “French-foreign dichotomy,” the argument according to which the Vichy authorities pragmatically sacrificed the foreign Jews in order to preserve the French *Israélites*. This dissertation challenges what has become the framework for understanding the Holocaust in France, by examining the lives of the Jews of a small, rural department in south-east France through the prism of quantitative prosopography. It argues that, through its repeated appeals to the “French-foreign dichotomy,” the historiography has overemphasized one factor for explaining the fate of the Jews in France during the war, by bringing together very different individuals into two artificially homogeneous groups, thereby inadvertently obscuring other, more important differences between them. This dissertation shows that there was, indeed, a hierarchy between the Vauclusian Jews, but not one narrowly defined by nationality or country of origin. This hierarchy, moreover, evolved throughout the war and was at times one of persecution or of privilege. In the end, it was this hierarchy—underpinned by a confluence of personal, geographical and temporal forces—that enabled the majority of the 2,826 Jews of the Vaucluse to make it through the war intact.

KEYWORDS

Holocaust; Shoah; prosopography; quantitative methods; Department of Vaucluse; Avignon