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FACULTY OF HUMANITIES, ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

School of Humanities: History

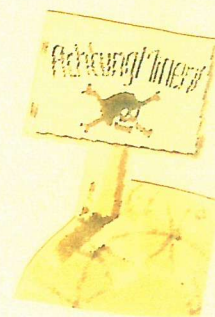
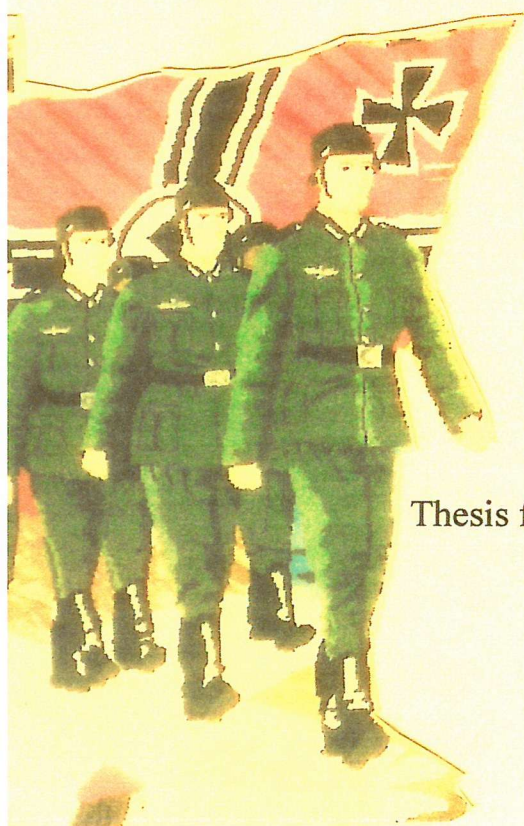
The Changing Face of the Channel Islands Occupation

by

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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

ABSTRACT

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By Hazel Rosemary Knowles Smith

Much has been written about the Channel Islands' Occupation. The official history was published in 1975, and a relatively honourable wartime record then seemed to be assured. However, the climate soon changed dramatically as the progressive release of previously classified files by the Public Record Office in the 1990s, acted as a catalyst for various wide-ranging criticisms - not only of the conduct of the Islands' wartime officials, but also of the civil population. Uncomfortable questions were raised about levels of collaboration, and scornful remarks made about the perceived lack of any recognisable resistance movement. The accusations were further encouraged by Madeleine Bunting's publication in 1995, and in spite of the resultant, spirited defence of their honour by various survivor-witnesses and Island Officials, associated arguments continue. One only needs to read Ms Bunting's article in *The Guardian* earlier this year, claiming that Jersey now acknowledges its 'shameful' wartime past, and AA Gill's more recent disparaging remarks about the Islands' wartime record, culminating with the question: 'what have the Islands ever done for us?' to realise that the raging battle for hegemony over the main features of Occupation history is still very much ongoing.

Every man's War was of course an individual and unique experience, but this study identifies and tracks for the first time what seem to be several distinctly different periods in the evolution of the public face of the Islands' collective memories of their ordeal, as they have looked out across the Channel towards their often critical neighbour of mainland Britain. The study also seeks to remedy the claim of many survivor-witnesses: that the true story of the Occupation has never been told. New evidence from the Moscow Archives provides startling information concerning records of deaths and burials amongst the Islands' forced workers, and gives more harrowing details about their general conditions. Previously untapped sources are also used to establish the sequence of events which culminated in the murder of three Jewish women in Auschwitz, and directly challenges accusations of the willing complicity of Island officials in precipitating their deaths. Other contentious areas discussed include: comparison between the Channel Islands' Occupation and the likely course of a hypothetical occupation of the Mainland; wartime and subsequent feelings towards Britain and Germany; levels of privation experienced within the Islands; the importance of offences committed against the Occupying Power; numbers of illegitimate children born of German fathers; and the degree of general co-operation between the Island Authorities and their foreign masters. Also highlighted are the unique circumstances which surrounded the occupation of the Islands, which have been largely neglected in previous publications.

The present study thus injects new material and fresh evidence into the forum of Occupation discussion, and often either disputes, or refutes the wilder claims of writers who have sought to hi-jack the historiography of the period with a main eye for controversy and scandal. The reader is now invited to form his own judgement on the evidence presented.

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Hazel R Knowles Smith
Southampton, 2004.

**‘There is nothing noble about a military occupation.
From the viewpoint of the occupied it is a period of
continuing humiliation...Moral ambiguities abounded.
Where was the line to be drawn between submission
and collaboration, between intransigence and
resistance...’**

**In the context of small communities largely bereft of their
menfolk of fighting age, and swamped by superior force...
Channel Islanders...have little of which to be ashamed...’**

Sir Philip Bailhache, Bailiff of Jersey, Foreword to:
The Ultimate Sacrifice, Paul Sanders, 1998

‘Secret files accuse island officials of Nazi collaboration.’

The Times, 18 November 1996.

‘Nazis crucified Channel Island captives.’

The Telegraph, 20 November 1996.

‘Islanders outraged by wives who slept with Germans.’

The Times, 20 November 1996.

‘The majority of the islanders were more quiescent than other Europeans. They did what they were told.’

‘Islanders compromised, collaborated and fraternised just as people did throughout occupied Europe’

‘In reality, the ‘Model occupation’ was a deeply pragmatic policy: peace at any price...There were protests, but they were timid’

‘The Occupation is a very human story in which there is more evidence of weakness than of bravery. There were only a few incidents in this history to admire or to inspire.’

All excerpts from *The Model Occupation*,
Madeleine Bunting, 1995.

Introduction

‘Our sense of the...relationship...between short-term and long-term (historical change) depends on the vantage point in time from which we contemplate the past. The vantage points of 1940 or...1945 or of the often dread years between were completely different from ours. A historian must try to recapture the immediacy of the past, always ‘another country,’ but he must also establish perspectives relating one past to another and pasts to presents and futures. He can never simply return.’

Fifth Joan Stevens Memorial Lecture by Asa Briggs, 26 April 1996.¹

Much has been written about the Channel Islands’ Occupation during World War Two. The pertinent extracts on the preceding pages give just a glimpse of the vast diversity of views which have been recorded over the last sixty years and more; from the nature of the initial dilemma presented to the Islanders, to the wide range of controversies which have lead to headline grabbing statements, and hot disputes within the British and Island Press. The official history by Charles Cruikshank was published in 1975, and there have also been several other unofficial histories, as well as a whole host of additional published and unpublished material, which has mushroomed over the last decade.²

In the 1990s, previously classified official files were released in Britain, and others within the Islands and abroad have included startling revelations concerning the Islands’ Jewish population and the fate of the forced workers. Increasing numbers of unpublished diaries and letters have also become available, after family bereavement or a returning interest in this unique event. There has also been a large increase in the effort to collect survivor-witness testimony, driven by their advancing age, as well as by the wish of many to record their personal experiences for posterity, rather than risk them

passing into oblivion. So far, no up-to-date overview of these new sources has been undertaken. When considered in conjunction with other primary and secondary sources, they yield fresh and exciting insights, not just into what may be proven to have happened under German rule in the Islands, but also into what lay behind the façade of so-called ‘correct’ relations. Neither has any attempt been made to appraise apparent changes in representation of the Occupation experience over the last sixty years, especially during the last decade, when sensationalist Press coverage and accusations of widespread collaboration in the Islands followed hard upon the release of Public Record Office documents in 1992. As more previously classified files soon followed, they provided the catalyst for unprecedented attacks being made upon what was at that time a reasonably settled and comfortable face of collective Occupation memory.

This project will seek to address these deficiencies in the Islands’ history, using the vast amounts of fresh evidence currently available to discuss and re-evaluate the many different representations, phases or faces of the Occupation - including many of the controversies - as they have arisen, or been presented over the intervening years. It will also seek to address the oft-repeated claim of many survivor-witnesses, that the true story of the Occupation has so far never been told.

Of course, all sources should be allowed to make their contribution to the development of Occupation memory after the fact, and by taking as many as possible into account, one is now able to establish a much more rounded picture of what the “People’s” Occupation actually involved as it unfolded, how it felt on a personal level, and how it affected the daily patterns of life. On this basis, an examination will also be made of the relationship between the Islanders’ contemporary experience on the one hand, and the post-war public and private memory of the Occupation - as projected towards the rest of the world - on the other. The burning question must now be: in the light of so many different interpretations of what appear to be historical facts as they

have so far been presented, what were the predominant features of the Occupation experience at the time? Is it possible to come close to identifying them after all these years of obfuscation and debate? In addition, through what stages has the Islands' collective memory passed? Internal processes of selective forgetting and remembering must be considered, especially in matters relevant to collaboration and perceptions of the role of wartime Island Government; but it is also interesting to consider how the memories of the community may have become altered, shaped or influenced by the passage of time and external events. Conflicts have arisen in some areas between 'official' memory and the recollections of ordinary people, and there is a natural desire amongst Islanders to uphold a sense of community integrity, not just on behalf of the vast majority of their compatriots who lived through the experience, but for the benefit of their descendants, and for the Island communities living in today's world. Shifting post-1945 attitudes outside the Islands towards the total experience of World War Two are also relevant. These have been inevitably shaped, not just by the immediate impact of the revelation of previously unimaginable horrors, which were perpetrated in Europe during the war years, but also by established changes in Western policy towards the former Axis powers, particularly Germany, which was quickly allowed to metamorphose from hated enemy to valued ally, against the perceived threat of Bolshevism from the East.

There are many differences of opinion, but it is generally noticeable that the phases of Occupation representation overall fall into four fairly distinct periods. At the same time, this statement must be qualified, as will be illustrated within this study, by a recognition that representations of each individual area of the Occupation experience have not necessarily developed along the same lines, or within exactly the same time frames. For example: in respect of conditions endured by the population, as described in the chapters 'Make Do and Mend' and 'Health, Malnutrition, and Deteriorating Conditions,' two very different pictures have run concurrently for years with little change in either,

and with even less attempt being made to highlight just how bad things actually were. The dividing line is drawn simply: by and large the Islanders believe that the Occupation was a time of great hardship and privation, whilst most Mainland British - if they have any knowledge of the Occupation at all - think that it was a time of shortage, but an otherwise not unpleasant period involving fraternisation with the Germans, whilst getting on with the normal business of life. Details of the unique backdrop to the Islanders' imprisonment have also remained largely unknown, or overlooked on Mainland Britain, except in the occasional Press discussion. Two more aspects of the Occupation experience have merited even less consideration. These concern differences of perception about the Islands' relationship with Britain, and their feelings towards Nazi Germany and the Germans, both during and after their subjugation. At the same time other topics, mostly to do with collaboration, have regularly been over-exposed, especially in popular memory during and immediately after Liberation, and again in the British media and other publications from around 1991. In other areas, changes in knowledge and awareness have been wrought by an upsurge of interest in the experience of particular groups of people during the Occupation, as in the case of the Jewish population, and of those who committed offences against the Occupier.

As for the remaining areas of the Occupation experience discussed within this study, the surface image has often been more complicated, as well as more fluid, with various alternative versions of the same events being clearly visible beneath the official picture as promoted at any given time. One such is the fate of the Islands' forced workers discussed in Chapter 13, the other, the record of the Island Governments, as they dealt first with their German masters and then with the aftermath of their subjugation.

In the first phase of Occupation representation, most early works and many of the unpublished diaries spoke of the whole experience seemingly without respect for the opinions of posterity, and untroubled by issues of collective honour. They mainly wrote

in heartfelt terms about the difficulties and anxieties of their captivity in the Islands; and the strong sense of belonging to that community, reinforced by traumatic family experiences, made them forthright in their criticism of the few who had caused such misery to their neighbours. Writing in Guernsey in 1945, Mrs. Cortvriend vividly described the depths of revulsion felt by the general populace about ‘those who betrayed...their fellows by...despicable acts.’³ Similarly, published in 1946, R.C.F. Maugham made reference to ‘a terrible situation...in which women married to British serving soldiers, bore German children and registered them as the legitimate offspring of their [absent] husbands.’⁴

A few years later came the first general history of the Occupation, published in 1955. This was, and still is, probably one of the most balanced accounts yet written, and it is interesting to note that, although critical in places, the authors show considerable understanding of the Islanders’ ordeal. When mentioning what they called ‘a cloud of conflicting recollections’, treated with suspicion and censure by some later writers, they observed that ‘an enemy occupation, with its bodily hunger...mental anxiety... humiliations and temptations, can play strange tricks with the memory.’ They added: ‘no one who has not lived under an enemy occupation should pass judgement on those who have.’⁵ At the same time, whilst highlighting the Islanders’ personal difficulties, which have sometimes been overlooked or belittled by later writers, the authors hardly mention other issues which are now considered very important, for example the fate of the Islands’ Jewish citizens, and the sufferings of the forced workers.

Around the same time, probably in 1954, John Dalmau published his memories of life in Alderney. Simply entitled *Slave Worker*, this short booklet graphically describes the conditions of captivity for many prisoners of the Reich.⁶ The collective memory, which already had plenty of information from eye-witnesses about the often cruel treatment of forced workers in Jersey and Guernsey, seems also to have picked up, and become

haunted by, several of the more horrific images contained within this publication. The use of Alsatian dogs to control and kill prisoners, and stories of bodies being thrown over cliffs, cited by Dalmau, form just part of the storehouse of collective memories - and some myths - which are still repeated today.

For the majority of Islanders, the years of German Occupation were indeed terrible. Life was a struggle, and thousands were fined or imprisoned. Death sentences were passed, and particularly after September 1942 there was the continual fear of more deportations. In direct conflict with this overwhelming reality, claims of a moderate Occupation afterwards made by some Island and British Government officials would simply not have been recognised by most of those who lived through it. In fact, immediate memories at the end of the 'nightmare' were often highly charged with emotion, influenced by the extent of family losses and other traumas suffered. The enemy presence had violated not just the soil, but the community, and there were strong feelings against any who had fraternised, or collaborated with the Germans.

As a result of their sufferings, after Liberation, as far as the great majority of the Islanders were concerned, the events of the last five years were over, dead and buried. All that mattered was getting their lives back to normal: 'the future was at stake, so why waste time chasing shadows of the past.'⁷In these early days, because of associated memories, many Islanders hated the sight of all things German, but as time rolled on, it was children who led the way to a change in attitudes towards this legacy. In 1956, two Guernsey schoolboys, Richard Heaume and John Robinson, formed a club which enjoyed collecting Occupation artefacts. 'By 1961 the size of Richard Heaume's collection had grown so substantially that it could not be contained in his attic, so too had the membership of his club,'⁸ which in 1963 became known as the Channel Islands Occupation Society. The Society's first newsletter was circulated in August 1966. A new, second phase of Occupation representation had begun to emerge out of the dark

and troubled shadows which had previously surrounded it. At around the same time, more painful individual memories had also eased, as described by one convicted former member of the Guernsey Underground News Service, Frank Falla, in his preface to *The Silent War* published in 1967: 'it has been said that I should have written this book 21 years ago. I disagree. For now that my experiences have... come of age, I can write more dispassionately. The bitterness has almost gone, and I am glad to be alive, especially as my liberators in 1945...gave me only 2 weeks to live.'⁹As an extension of this view, Carel Toms noted in *Hitler's Fortress Islands*, also published in 1967: 'Now, long after the islands' Liberation the passion and debate about the Occupation has largely evaporated...[and] as documents and photographs have since come to light, military historians have had a field day.'¹⁰

The interest in fortifications blossomed, and during more than twenty years thereafter, a much more comfortable period began for most collective memories of the Occupation. The newly formed CIOS continued to increase its membership, and provided a focus for latent interest at home and abroad in all aspects of the Islands' wartime experience, which were explored and promoted through its many, well-researched publications. Overall, there was a fairly relaxed approach to the Occupation experience, and given the lack of 'passion and debate' as described above, the study of military installations and weaponry continued to take precedence over more controversial subjects. After 1975, Charles Cruikshank's official history, commissioned by the Governments of Jersey, Guernsey, Alderney and Sark, and published under the auspices of the Trustees of the Imperial War Museum, did nothing to upset this balance. Based on British War Cabinet, Foreign Office, Air Ministry and Home Office papers held by the Public Record Office, some of which were still classified at the time, as well as upon Channel Island, German and SHAEF documents, it described the co-operation of the Island administrators as 'plainly commonsense,' later adding that if they did 'seem occasionally to have leaned

too far in the direction of collaboration, it was their judgement that was at fault and not their loyalty.’¹¹

Other publications of the period also tended to fit in with this comfortable image, and Doctor John Lewis’s well known book, giving an account of his Occupation experience, including many remarkable details of his ingenuity in the field of ‘make do and mend,’ was no exception.¹² However, there were naturally occasional ‘blips’ on the scene, and in spite of earlier claims to have lost most of his bitterness, Frank Falla also wrote of the still painful memories of those who had offended against German ‘Orders’, many of whom felt they had been ‘made...the victims of both systems: the democratic and the Fascist.’¹³ As he explained: ‘Loyalty to King and Country, patriotism and remaining British under pressure was to prove of no real value, except in the conscience of those who had held these things as precious...[leaving]...the sour taste of Nazism...in the mouths of those who had suffered.’¹⁴

Soon, other authors began to address what had taken place in Alderney. Compiled from personal accounts and contemporary documents during the 1960s, M. St. J. Packe and M. Dreyfus published *The Alderney Story* in 1971,¹⁵ and ten years later, former Captain T.X.H.(Bunny) Pantcheff, the official Military Intelligence Interrogator sent to the Islands in 1945: *Alderney Fortress Island*.¹⁶ Although shocking in what they revealed, these books were not particularly controversial, unlike *The Alderney Death Camp*, also published in 1981 by a South-African, Solomon Steckoll, which first looked into the fate of the Jewish population of the Islands, and also presaged some of the more sensational headlines and debates which would appear a decade later.¹⁷ As well as mentioning bodies buried in concrete, which has today firmly lodged itself within the Islands’ collective memory of the German treatment of forced workers, this book also severely criticised the British Government’s failure to prosecute any of the Germans

involved in the running of the work camps, when some - it claimed - were already held in custody after the war.

Then in 1992, the progressive release of previously classified files and other official documents by the Public Record Office provided the catalyst for radical change in the fundamental perception of many features of the Occupation experience, both inside and outside the Islands. A much more turbulent third era of Occupation historiography was about to begin. Despite the fact that most of the more sensitive information revealed by these documents was already available through the Archives du Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine, and through American records of original interviews, uncomfortable questions about the extent of collaboration were asked. Accusations, first aired with passion within the Islands during and immediately after Liberation, were now resurrected and embellished, this time by agencies outside the Islands. The affected populations felt that both their honour and integrity were being seriously called into question. They felt angry, unfairly judged and indignant, especially given that many of their own calls for guilty persons to face justice after Liberation had simply been ignored. The long, previously comfortable interlude enjoyed and reflected by mellowed and blended collective memories was thus shocked out of existence by a barrage of criticism, which then developed and extended over the course of the next five or six years.

In 1995, this questioning of the Islanders' wartime record seemed to reach a crescendo within the pages of Madeleine Bunting's *The Model Occupation*. Perhaps a little unfairly with hindsight, bearing in mind that the Islanders were already upset, and the adage that 'those who pose critical challenges are...[also] agents of renewal and change,'¹⁸ this book 'caused great anger.'¹⁹ In spite of some positive remarks and excellent detail, accompanied by considerable - if qualified - acknowledgement of the bravery of those persons involved in offences against the occupying power, 'the overall

effect [produced by the book] is one of compromise.²⁰ The short selection of stinging extracts from the same volume on the facing page to this introduction, will no doubt add more dimension to this 'effect.' The intensity of the reaction to Ms. Bunting's work, in conjunction with other sensationalist media reports on collaboration and related matters, have indeed triggered unprecedented anger amongst many interested Islanders. So much so, that three well-respected Island historians, Michael Ginns, Bob Le Sueur, and Joe Mière, who had responded 'in good faith' to her request for assistance in writing the book, afterwards issued a public signed statement: 'We did not expect unpalatable truths about the occupation to be suppressed...But... if the negative aspects were to be recorded, we had the right to expect the positive ones would be also...Misrepresentation on such a scale is not merely immoral, it is contemptible.'²¹

The same year, there also appeared an entry in the *Oxford Companion to the Second World War*. 'Set to remain a standard work of reference for many years, it contains a 36-line entry on the Channel Islands, of which almost half is about collaboration...(A) separate entry...concludes: Documentation released...in 1992 confirmed that some of the Islands' administrators collaborated with the Germans and helped in the round-up and deportation of Jews to concentration camps.'²² It is significant however that not everyone agreed with such conclusions, since, presumably aware of recent publications, Lord Asa Briggs also wrote in 1995 that Occupation history had been 'hi-jacked' by 'people who in seeking headlines succeed not so much in understanding as in simplifying and sensationalising at the same time.'²³

A year later, Tom Freeman Keel's work: *From Auschwitz to Alderney and Beyond*, also received a lukewarm, though not quite such critical reception, as he sought to introduce even more horrific images into the collective memory of the war.²⁴ Tending towards the sensational, he postulated the theory that the Channel Islands were very likely being planned as the site of gas chambers to exterminate the undesirable elements

- from a National Socialist point of view - who were already listed for expulsion from the British Isles, once they came under German control.

The impact of all this aggregated distress was so great that energetic steps have since been taken to counter all accusations made against the honour of the Islands, and from that time on, the injured collective memory has been subtly influenced, and sometimes actively steered, back towards a more comfortable position. As Messrs. Ginns, Le Sueur, and Mière also pointed out in their statement: ‘We islanders were no less fallible than our continental neighbours. But neither are we more so.’ They and many other Islanders still feel that the record needs to be put and kept straight, and the Island Authorities have been no less involved. The gradual reappraisal of the Occupation years, which had begun during the planning stages of celebrations to mark the 45th and half-centenary anniversaries of the Liberation, had already led to the crystallisation of a new awareness of the public image of those years, and a ‘need to identify and remember the unsung heroes of that period.’²⁵ New memorials have since been dedicated to those who died, and more recently published books on the Islands all carry a positive message to the outside world. One such memorial was unveiled on 9 November 1996, to record the names of twenty Jersey residents who ‘defied the German Authorities during the Occupation of the island... [and] died as a consequence of ill-treatment...suffered in prisons and concentration camps on the Continent.’²⁶ The subsequent book, *The Ultimate Sacrifice* by Paul Sanders, was commissioned to record details of the lives of these twenty people, and was later published in 1998.

But one subject still under dispute is the question of responsibility for what is now known to have happened to the Islands’ Jewish population. For forty years very little was known, but then an upsurge of accusations and interest concerning what had happened to this group, together with the discovery of a missing file entitled ‘Aliens Office, Island of Jersey, Orders relating to measures against Jews’²⁷ by Mr. F.E. Cohen

in 1995, led to a transformation of the known features of the Jewish Occupation experience. Published in 1998, and despite a later but much less well-known publication by David Fraser,²⁸ which is very critical of the Island Administration, Mr. Cohen not only refuted – but afterwards continued to refute - almost all claims of anti-Semitic behaviour during the Occupation. He also requested that Yad Vashem should honour Albert Bedane, an Islander who risked his life by hiding a Jewish woman from the Germans for over two years. The honour was granted, and the story became the subject of a BBC television programme screened in the Islands in March 1999.

This new positive face of Occupation history is still being supported to this day, and the campaign of defence seems to continue. As Frank Keiller categorically states in *Prison Without Bars* published in 1999, ‘Unfair criticism dishonours those who died,’ and from the general tone of this book and several others in the same vein, it is not difficult to imagine that such works intend to support and promote a more serene and untroubled narrative of Occupation memory for the future.²⁹ The present study, in the course of exploring the many representations or phases of Occupation historiography, will also provide much new evidence; both in support of, and in opposition to, this case.

Note on Sources:

This section is devoted to a brief summary and discussion of the wide range of sources upon which this study is based. Firstly, being cognisant of the present interest in and around the role of memory in history, it is also important to establish what level of credibility may be accorded to those sources which rely upon recall.

In the first place, to accord with the so-called ‘positivist’ approach to history, the trustworthiness of survivor-witness testimony must always be doubtful, since ‘memory is conceived as being subjectively constituted in its entirety.’³⁰ Furthermore, in line with

this approach, private notes, diaries, memoirs and other oral testimony may also be considered as having secondary value, because of their same perceived subjectivity, vagueness and tendency towards misunderstanding and forgetfulness. Indeed, inaccuracy of recall has always been a problem, and weakness within survivor testimony has long been recognised. As the director of Yad Vashem's Archive told a reporter a few years ago, most of the 20,000 testimonies it had collected were unreliable. "Many were never in the places where they claim to have witnessed atrocities, whilst others relied on second hand information given to them by friends or passing strangers."³¹ Nevertheless, historians need to use survivor-witnesses, and with all their potential failings, it is still 'generally held that memories are an indispensable historical source that must be preserved.'³² To rule out the value of such testimony would simply be to deprive the historical narrative of the chance to progress further towards a more complete understanding of the events they describe, as they presented themselves to each individual at the time. Of course, uncertainties associated with the foibles of memory must also be taken into consideration, together with differences of individual and group paradigm, which influence the construction and reconstruction of all our recollections. They are also useful in combating those versions of history which are postulated by people who seek to misuse, or deny recollections of cruelty or suffering, whether for their own personal reasons or for some form of political expediency, as illustrated within the recent, well-publicised Lipstadt/ Irving trial.

Since Maurice Halbwach's first classical formulations, historians undertaking research are now well aware, if they were not before, that all representations of the past are in some way problematic. Even seemingly reliable official records may be deceptive, being also subject to alteration, omission or falsification. But, as historian and holocaust survivor Saul Friedlander points out: 'memory and history are interconnected, and both are conveyed via the instrumentality of historical consciousness.'³³ He explains further that historical understanding, if we are to have as accurate a view of events as possible,

would be altogether impossible without taking into account the voices of the victims and others who lived through the experiences as they took place, 'For it is their voices that reveal what was known and what could be known.'³⁴

Of course, every man's Occupation was different, and individual memory, although providing the building blocks for later collective memories, is always likely to be gradually, if not immediately, selected, adapted or rejected by wider society as it is introduced into the collective consciousness. Once processed, it is then used to support the needs of the community at any given time - or vantage point - for its own group definition within the collective present. It is also well known, that the most powerful collective memories are usually memories of shared traumatic times and deep grievance. The Occupation period is no exception. What the Channel Islanders suffered together during the Occupation has provided an additional facet to the traditional collective identity of all those who were living in the Islands at the time, and today the interested community probably feels a stronger bond, having grown closer together in order to deal with 'outside' attacks upon its honour. This is entirely natural. It is one thing to criticise one's own family and friends, or other associated group members, but quite another to receive criticism from 'outsiders,' who - in the case of the Channel Islands' community - had not shared their experiences, and seemed only to wish to exploit them for sensationalist 'copy' in the British Press.

In view of this, it may well be that those recollections of Occupation life which have accorded with the requirements of what Halbwachs would call the 'frameworks' of the collective memory at any given time, or which have simply appealed to the popular imagination, have been prioritised. Alternatively, other recollections, being unpleasant or dishonourable in the eyes of the community, may have been purposely overlooked, marginalised, or even pushed into obscurity. These processes would all be completely normal for any human beings in most situations.

In this context, one should also mention the occurrence of myths in post-Occupation group remembrance. The creation and adoption of certain mythical stories is perhaps one of the most extreme examples of how more unusual or traumatic memories may become adapted to enhance some collective ideas or events, which have had a high level of impact upon the community psyche. The process often involves quite high levels of imagination, including selective remembering and forgetting, in order to accentuate those parts of an account, which are best able to support what is usually a simplistic, narrative structure necessary to present a strong mythical story.

In consideration of more horrific memories, Tony Kushner explains the apparent inability of society in general to accept the levels of savagery into which human beings can fall: as a 'failure of the liberal imagination to acknowledge the unthinkable.'³⁵This was a real problem throughout both world wars, and even after World War Two there were still people who refused to accept concrete evidence of atrocities, some claiming to this day that they were faked to gain some propaganda advantage. Other remarks linked to this concept also provide food for thought, especially if one considers a literal interpretation: 'The first casualty when war comes is the truth,'³⁶and '[during the war] all men became liars.'³⁷ However, also worth considering is a quote in mitigation, taken from Eric Walker's book: *Don't Annoy the Enemy*, in which he writes: 'It will be understood that a man being shot or fired at will see things in a different light.'³⁸Bearing in mind that during their captivity the Channel Islanders were in frequent contact with armed German soldiers, one is bound to accept the relevance of this remark, since perspectives concerning obedience to the enemy were bound to be tempered by potentially serious considerations of this kind.

Of course, some witnesses were so traumatised by what happened to them, that many may never be persuaded to share accounts of their most private and terrifying nightmares.

Such recollections have been described by Saul Friedlander as ‘deep’ memories, or impressions on the mind which are ‘essentially unrepresentable.’ However, they are potentially very relevant to a wider understanding of the more sadistic facets of the war years, as well as to various ‘unthinkable’ life situations which they recall, and we are fortunate indeed if just some of these people decide to share their pain, and give some level of insight into how the ‘unrepresentable’ may have been allowed to happen. As one witness in Jersey told me many months ago: ‘those who have the least to remember often say most, whereas those who remember most say least.’ When one of these witnesses does decide to break his silence - for example Harold Le Druillenec, a Jerseyman who was rescued at the point of death from Belsen early in 1945 - it is often in the fervent hope that future generations will learn from past mistakes, and so avoid repeating them. As he concluded in a rare radio interview in September 1945:

Now my experience, terrible though it was, was no worse than that of millions of other concentration camp prisoners. Why, you may ask, should we wish to recall these horrors? Why not forget?...I...often wish I could... And yet, at other times, I think...such stories should be remembered. There is a danger that these camps may come to be regarded as part of a fantastic nightmare from which mankind has awakened. This, I believe, is an over-optimistic view... whenever a state achieves total power...not subject to democratic control, unscrupulous men will be tempted to use this weapon again...if civilisation is to survive, we must preserve...a humane and liberal way of life.³⁹

The remainder of this section will be dedicated to outlining other sources, and introducing some of my diarists to the reader. Secondary sources are of course also vital, and have been extensively explored in order to discuss the many representations of Occupation history, as they have been so far presented as ‘finished historical products’ to the interested public over the last sixty years. But the raw materials for the early collective memories of the period were derived from all primary source information,

which came into existence after the time when the Germans first looked likely to take possession of the Islands. Whether previously unseen, or overlooked, they are all just as potentially valuable today. Input came from private written sources, official records, police reports, newspapers, pamphlets, records of parliamentary and States debates, published and unpublished autobiographies and reminiscences, as well as photographs, songs and poems. All contributed more texture to the basic detail of the period, notwithstanding the potentially huge gaps left by what must be assumed to have been the most sensitive - and probably most incriminating documents - mainly of a military nature, which the Germans destroyed before Liberation. More recently, memories have been induced and preserved during the compilation of video footage from snippets of original wartime films, and also by the making of occasional television programmes. Jersey Radio, L. B. C. Radio and others, have also made a contribution to public awareness of the period, as interviews with survivor-witnesses have been recorded and broadcast over the intervening years.

At this point, I should also mention in more detail the enormous value of the contribution to my thesis made by the study of many published and unpublished diaries, which I have been privileged to read during the course of my research. In fact, the contents of contemporary diaries and other accounts have been an invaluable source of information, illuminating details of many events of history over the years. Those of wartime leaders such as Winston Churchill have become very well-known, and the diaries of Anne Frank during her period of hiding in Occupied Holland are amongst the most famous accounts ever written. Of course, dependent upon the perceived integrity of the author, a good level of reliability has usually been accorded to such documents, and in some controlled post-war studies of semi-starvation mentioned later in this study, the diaries of participating volunteers were afterwards used as a control to establish the progressive effects of similar regimes.

Of course, in the writing of Occupation diaries, there were special circumstances to consider. Although critics have suggested that many authors are unreliable simply because they are already so deeply conditioned by upbringing, culture, and political beliefs, yet most writers of Occupation diaries actually mention their reasons for putting pen or pencil to paper, and seem to have written simply through a pressing need to ‘write and record’ the very unusual details of their existence. They probably continued in a further effort to maintain some semblance of control in their otherwise completely regulated lives. As well as this, there seems to have been a personal need to bear witness that they were progressing through the ordeal, and saying what they thought on paper, even if at times they dare not say it out loud. Frank Barton noted on the front of one of his journals that he just hoped that one day some of his family would be interested in reading it, and Kenneth Lewis wrote after Liberation that he was going to put his account away and decide what to do with it in a few years time. Others wrote with the intention of telling the story of their daily lives to an absent relative or friend after the war is over. There is often therefore some element of telling a good tale, and trying not to grumble, in order to maintain at least some aspect of the traditional British stiff upper lip, in spite of remarks about how ‘fed up’ they are, or how isolated they feel. A number of humorous tales are also told, and there is an almost universal confidence that everything will work out all right in the end, even if the diarist does not survive to witness it. At the same time, many diarists feel inhibited as they write. This is not surprising when one reads a rather ominous entry of 14 March 1943, made by the Reverend Ord in Guernsey: ‘Someone in Jersey has been imprisoned for keeping a diary!’ As a result of this perceived danger, some writers intentionally omit potentially incriminating details of their lives, and in particular, any event which may be construed as involving an infringement of ‘Orders’.

However, in spite of these reservations, as historian James Young much later points out: ‘in the final analysis, no document can be more historically authentic than that embodying the victim’s grasp of events at the time.’⁴⁰ Furthermore, the accounts are

usually very vivid, since they were often written as a result of the diarist being stung into recording his thoughts or feelings, by the occurrence of something shocking, unjust, or simply uncomfortable. The sheer speed with which the entry is made - usually within hours of the observation - tends to preclude the chance of any alteration of data due to possible misinformation, which may be overlaid after the event. These facts also tend to confirm the value of original diaries, although some of the published ones have been subject to subtle changes in later editions. Some are very well known, especially the accounts of Leslie Sinel and Edward Le Quesne in Jersey, as well as the seven unpublished volumes produced by Reverend Ord in Guernsey.⁴¹

The Reverend Douglas Ord was one of only a handful of ministers of religion who remained in the Island after evacuation. Quite early, he noticed that his influence on the community increased as the people needed ever more support in the face of increasing difficulties. He spoke some Russian, and as a fluent German speaker also made some friends amongst the enemy. Not only did this enable him to secure the release of an Island prisoner from German custody, but his connection with the Chief of Police probably also saved him from eviction from his home. By Liberation, he was the only minister in Guernsey who had not been turned out into the street. Ralph Durand and Mrs. Cortvriend also lived in Guernsey. The former was Chief Librarian at the Priaulx Library, and the latter worked for the Controlling Committee. Soon after Liberation, both were given access to the Committee's wartime files to assist in the preparation of their books, which were published in 1946 and 1947 respectively. Ralph Durand, who died before publication, was actually commissioned to write his work by the Island Authorities, and Mrs. Cortvriend was helped by John Leale and the former Liaison Officer, Louis Guillemette. Kenneth Lewis was another diarist, who - like most of the others - left very detailed and usually daily accounts of events as they happened. He was Louis Guillemette's clerk, and as such had access to many letters which passed between the Controlling Committee and the Kommandantur. Copies of many of these are included

within the pages of his diary. Frank Barton, a septuagenarian, lived in the north of the Island, where his house, which was later demolished by the Germans, was close to a large number of billeted troops. Collectively he hated the invaders, but his grandson, Peter, was quite often given food by the friendlier soldiers, and at times these gifts constituted most of what the family had to eat.

Izette Croad was a Jersey undertaker's daughter, whose sense of humour and forthright diary entries were a constant worry to her father in case they were seized. Also in Jersey lived R. C. F. Maugham, Somerset Maugham's brother, and J. H. L'Amy, a retired British army officer. The former published his book in 1946, and the latter left a substantial unpublished account of the Occupation in the *Société Jersiaise*. This volume illuminates many areas of the Islands' wartime experience which would otherwise have been lost, and his extensive network of contacts, together with careful vetting of information, also instil a high level of confidence in the value of his work.

Of Leslie Sinel's diary, one can only say that this is one of the most comprehensive records of the Occupation period. Written under the very eyes of the Germans at the *Jersey Evening Post* Offices, this work was first sent to be published immediately after Liberation. Also quoted within this study is the diary of Adele Lainé, whose 'uncle Abie' was Sir Abraham Lainé, vice-President of the Controlling Committee and Officer in charge of Essential Commodities, who - she recorded - was evicted from his house the year after he famously objected to the registration of the first anti-Jewish Order in Guernsey. In addition, some of the other most prolific and detailed diarists were Ambrose Robin, who was also connected with Island Government, Elizabeth Doig and Dorothy Pickard Higgs, whose factual and often very human accounts, also add more dimension to the overall picture of Occupation life.

These are just a few amongst many more contemporary witnesses who also contributed to the fabric of this study, through a whole raft of documents they left behind. Much of the work is also unpublished, being either privately owned, or lodged in various archives. The age of those quoted ranges from twelve to over eighty, and although representative of many walks of life, yet it should be borne in mind that probably not many belonged to the poorest groups in the community, who were likely to have been even worse off, and less equipped to deal with the hardships of the time. I should also make clear that quite often only a choice of one account from several diaries or other sources will be given to describe events in the course of this study. This is entirely due to limits of space, since for almost all there is a huge amount of corroborative evidence, as well as supporting information available in wartime records or in later studies.

As Young concludes: 'By returning their voices and subjectivity to the historical record...we restore a measure of contingency to history, opening up the possibility of historical causes and effects otherwise lost in our projection of a hindsight logic onto events.'⁴²

Structure:

This study will first outline a brief history of the Channel Islands and their general status before the Occupation took place. Another chapter will explore the ways in which the Occupation of the 'Norman Isles' was different from the occupation of the many other territories which were invaded by forces of the German Reich during the Second World War. Bearing in mind the many controversies which have surrounded the way in which their subjugation was dealt with by the Island administrations, Chapters 4 and 5 intend to take a fresh look at associated matters, including issues relating to provision of labour and the supply of rations. Because of the uniqueness of the Occupation as it was

both introduced and implemented within the Islands, the position of the remaining Island officials must also necessarily be based upon a totally different premise from others, which variously applied to their counterparts in the rest of occupied Europe.

Next, in a series of seven chapters under the general heading: ‘The People’s Occupation,’ the experiences of ordinary Islanders, including the tiny Jewish population, will be investigated in detail. Records, memories, and contemporary diary accounts are all used to vividly portray the levels of hardship and wretchedness through which the general population passed, as months of oppression turned into almost five years of anxiety and suffering. Many of the main areas of controversy relating to each subject area are also discussed in context, and in some cases what have become received ideas in mainland Britain, or elsewhere, are discussed, disputed – or even refuted – as new evidence is used to clarify and identify conditions and events as they unfolded at the time. Also included within Chapter 6 is a brief examination of policing arrangements and action during the Occupation. This is because, once the Germans had taken control of the Islands in the summer of 1940, the Island administrations had very little actual control over either their own police force, or over their duties as prescribed by the Occupier, and the combined action of the Island and German police forces therefore became more relevant to the morale and general levels of anxiety felt by the Islanders, than to any other area of the wider Occupation experience.

There follows the presentation of previously unquoted information which I commissioned from the Moscow Archives about two or three years ago. This is especially relevant to the fate of many of the forced workers who were sent to the Islands to carry out Hitler’s grandiose plans for their fortification. As a hotly disputed area of the Occupation experience which was deprived of the benefit of information from official records for many years, this topic has been sensationalised particularly in the last decade, and is therefore long overdue for both re-examination and re-evaluation.

Lastly the study deals with the aftermath of the war years, with especial mention of the fortunes of the Island governments in the wake of Liberation, and a brief look at the development of interest in the war tunnels and artefacts which gradually provided an attraction for tourists. Later memorials and commemorative acts are also explored, and the final chapter then arrives at the only logical conclusion about the most likely nature of the Islanders' overall Occupation experience.

THE PRELUDE

'... You think of... windswept cliffs, of the winding water valleys rich later in the year with primroses, bluebells and gorse, of the deep bays with their clear water: you think of the granite churches, of the solid farm-houses with their arches leading to their yards and storehouse, of stone cottages with their gardens, of the towns with their narrow streets and flights of steps, of the harbours with their massive quaysides, and the villages with their grey houses and their gardens: of acres of glasshouses flashing in the sun, and of the little fields with the tethered cattle grazing in them, or being made ready for the early potatoes or tomatoes. At times you imagine you can almost hear "in the deep heart's core" the ceaseless murmur of the sea, the cry of the gulls, and the sound of church bells...'

Excerpt from the Broadcast Service for the
Channel Islanders at St. Martin-in-the Fields,
31 January 1943.

The Islands Pre-War

1.

‘If there are two qualities upon which Channel Islanders pride themselves it is their loyalty and their independence. These qualities they possess in common with all the British race.’ *Nos Isles, A Symposium on the Channel Islands, 1944.*¹

The Channel Islands are situated off the north-west coast of France, being around sixty miles from the most northern point to the nearest part of England, and only nine miles from Alderney to the Cap de la Hague on the French coast. The four best known Islands are Jersey, ‘which may be affectionately described as a pile of pink granite,’² approximately twelve miles long and five miles wide; Guernsey, described as not so pink, but with ‘twenty five miles square of granite rock;’³ Alderney, the ‘Cinderella of these lovely Islands,’ only around four miles long by one and a quarter miles wide; and Sark, a hereditary Seigneurie, which has an even smaller land mass, and which is rather intriguingly described by Peter Rivett as being ‘like a hall of mirrors where nothing is quite what it seems to be.’⁴ Lesser islets are Herm, Brechou, Jethou and Lihou, which are all to be found amongst a labyrinth of various rocks and reefs.

Before the Norman invasion of England in 1066, Les Iles Normandes, as they were then known, formed part of the Duchy of Normandy, and thus, when Duke William of Normandy also became King of England, they naturally became attached to the English Crown. However, they were never annexed to William’s new realm, and so, although they may be described as part of the British Isles, they are not part of the United Kingdom. Differences are still in evidence today, as many of the ancient institutions of government, which were in place in each of the Islands when the final separation of France and England occurred, retain their separateness and individuality, together with

many of their ancient laws and privileges, dating back to ancient charters granted by King John and King Edward III.

Apart from a brief seven year period, during which Jersey was recaptured by an invading force sent by the Seneschal of Normandy in 1461, which was subsequently expelled by the English, the Channel Islands retained their allegiance, and even when the rest of Normandy had become part of France early in the thirteenth century, they remained loyal dependencies of the English Crown.

Over the centuries, both Jersey and Guernsey have lived in fear of further invasions by the French. As a consequence, many castles and Martello towers were built to serve in their defence, and as late as 1781, Baron Rullecourt reclaimed Jersey in the name of France. His landing was unsuccessful however, and after a battle in St. Helier's Royal Square, both Rullecourt, and the British commander, Major Pierson, were killed. The Islands, described by J. Le Pelley in his article, which appeared in *The Trident* in February 1944, as 'the Malta of Britain's French wars,' have proved their gallantry and patriotism many times. As the author points out:

not a fleet has sailed, not an army gone overseas in all these centuries without an Islander, many Islanders in it. Of their blood were General Brock, who saved Canada for the Empire in 1812; General Le Marchant, founder of our military academy and hero of Salamanca; Nelson's Hardy; Admiral de Saumarez, whose name-ship, HMS Saumarez, was in at the kill of the Scharnhorst; and a host of Navy men...soldiers and colonists.

The reputation of the Islanders for marksmanship before the World Wars was also a matter of pride. For many decades in the Islands, every male from sixteen to sixty was liable to serve in the Royal Militias of the Islands. Musketry was particularly encouraged by the States and local officers, who provided trophies and cash prizes, and

both compulsory and voluntary training courses ensured that a very high proportion of Island men learned, and loved, to shoot.

As Jerseyman Lord Portsea explained in the House of Lords on March 7 1944, during the course of one of his many wartime speeches to raise awareness of conditions in the Channel Islands, the Royal Militias of Jersey and Guernsey were unique. Service was obligatory, universal and unpaid. Their title had been won for gallant deeds performed for the Crown, and before 1920 they were the only Royal Militias in the Empire. However, arrangements for conscription into His Majesty's Forces were not in place by September 1939, and ancient charters clearly stated that no man should be required to serve outside the Islands, 'unless the body of the King was in the hands of his enemies.' Notwithstanding this lack of compulsion, the Islanders reacted as they had done at the outbreak of war in 1914, when 'the whole youth of the Islands [had] volunteered... 17 per cent of the population... and [gone] to France. Again in 1939, about the same percentage [also] volunteered and fought in all those battles which culminated at Dunkirk... [after which time] defence of the Islands was left primarily, as it had been for centuries, to the Island forces.'⁵ They had arms, guns and munitions, and also the great rock fortress, Fort Regent, which had been built at a cost of one million pounds by Lord Palmerston. But although each Island was proud of its independent government, Norman names, and its own particular Norman-French patois, it was with England that responsibility for international matters rested, and it was to England that they looked with confidence for defence of their culture and protection of their liberty.

In 1939, the populations of the Islands were about 50,000 in Jersey, and 40,000 in Guernsey. Alderney was next in size, with about 1,450 residents, and Sark had still fewer, with around 600. The vast majority of the population had been born in the Islands, but there were also a large number of retired army and navy officers, expatriates from the United Kingdom who had been attracted by the good climate, idyllic scenery,

pleasant social scene, and very favourable levels of taxation, which were unequalled anywhere else in the British Isles.

Individual memories of the Islands also very largely support this picture of their attractive pre-war life-style. Alderney was simply described as 'lovely...a world without telephone, a sleepy world...a law unto herself, the friendly shop people... making you wonder how they existed. The few fishermen, the quarrymen - all simple, kindly folk.'⁶In Guernsey, self-styled 'shopkeeper' Ralph Palmer much later wrote that 'at that time, for most of us, life... was blissfully happy. Our pay was poor but our requirements were few...and we tried hard not to let business interfere with sport, which took a lot of our time and most of our energy.'⁷Jersey was similarly described by former escapee Peter Hassall in his memoirs, as being 'a wonderful place to grow up in. Its topography was conducive to many kinds of recreational activities, such as: rock-climbing, swimming, bicycling, walking or just lazing around in the sun.'⁸Crime rates were low, for example in Guernsey: 'the level of crime...was, by metropolitan standards, almost non-existent.'⁹In 1929 the number of 'actions' taken by the Guernsey police involved only 174 charges and 75 summons cases, and in 1930, the entire complement of Inspector Sculpher's police force was thirty-three Sergeants and Constables. In the smaller island of Sark, there were only two police cells. Both were damp and without running water or light, except through holes in the roof, and portholes which sufficed in lieu of windows. In fact this gaol 'is often quoted in conjunction with the charming case of a girl who stole a handkerchief and was 'locked up' with the door left open because she was afraid.'¹⁰

At that time, perhaps unsurprisingly in view of the previous descriptions, tourism was the Islands' main industry. In Jersey, the fine beaches, abundant sunshine, haute cuisine, duty-free cigarettes and perfumes, made it a favourite amongst British tourists. In response to demand, seasonal itinerant workers - mainly from France and Ireland -

flooded into the Islands, as did workers to help with harvesting potato and other crops. Other industries were mostly involved in agriculture, and although the Islands were heavily built up in places, there were many small, efficient farms, which produced tomatoes, potatoes or flowers, or which kept highly-prized dairy herds.

In Guernsey, the picture was similar, and before the War: 'the Island attracted over 66,300 visitors a year from the United Kingdom.'¹¹ Apart from tourism, the largest employer of labour was the horticultural industry, and normally 8,000 heated glasshouses were planted annually with tomatoes, with 'an average total weight of 34,960 tons...exported to England.'¹² Grapes were also shipped to the mainland, together with smaller quantities of flowers, potatoes and vegetables. Of great importance too was the breeding of 'one of the best strains of cattle in the world,'¹³ but a small fishing industry also thrived, as did the Guernsey Tobacco Company, two breweries, and three principal quarrying firms.

Dependence upon England was therefore not just relevant in terms of tourism, foreign policy and defence. Trade links - built up over many years - were also very strong. In fact, the sum total of all exported goods from the Channel Islands in 1939, as quoted by the *Channel Islands Monthly Review*, published in September 1943, reached a value of £4,700,000, and their collective imports from Britain, an even higher figure, at £6,000,000. As this article seeks to illustrate:

It is only in the enjoyment of all the economic activity which these substantial exchanges create that the islands can... maintain...a relatively high standard of living, and...the retention of the English market...is, therefore indispensable for the islands' future welfare.

From these figures, it is very easy to see just how devastating any loss of trade with England was likely to be, and demonstrates very well the economic as well as

governmental and personal crises, which were precipitated upon the abandoned Islanders 'at a stroke' in June 1940, when the German invader enforced a state of complete isolation from Britain, and the British.

**'It is known that... there are over 10,000 (islanders) serving
in the Forces, a proportion that is not excelled in any part of
the British Commonwealth.'**

Nos Isles, A Symposium on the Channel Islands,
March 1944.

Storm Clouds Gather

2.

‘By cruel irony of fate a proud race of proven fighters had to submit without a fight, all means of resistance having been taken away from them by a Mother Country that had, and has, no subjects more devoted in loyalty. It was all due to geographical position and the particular exigencies of the moment, a case of rapid acting for the best in a complex quandary.’

Channel Islands Monthly Review, July 1943

Thousands of Island men had volunteered for service in the Allied Forces when war broke out in 1939. Of those ready and waiting for enlistment in June 1940, very few had been called up by the Military Authorities before the Occupation began, but a large number got away in the evacuating ships at that time. In addition, the Royal Militia Defence units, which had been raised in 1939, had already become absorbed within the existing militia, and were also evacuated to England just before the Occupation. Amongst these men were many who would later distinguish themselves through their daring exploits, and many honours were won in divers theatres of battle. The wartime British Press carried details of their courage, and such men as Guernsey’s Brigadier Herbert Wallace Le Patourel, who won the Victoria Cross in December 1942; and Air Chief Marshall Peter de Lacey Le Cheminant, G.B.E.,K.C.B.,D.F.C., as well as Squadron Leader F.E. Odoire from Alderney, are particularly well-known. And of those from Jersey, amongst the brave who lost their lives were Major John Sydney ‘Jack’ Crill, Flight Lieutenant Peter Le Brocq and Captain George Herbert Laurens, whose lives and achievements are commemorated within the pages of the substantial ‘Second Book of Remembrance’ compiled by Victoria College.

By their courage and service, they have also influenced, and contributed to the fabric and history of the Channel Islands, as it has moved forward through the intervening years. But strangely, their dedication and the importance of their contribution seem to have been kept separate, and are seldom recognised in accounts of the Occupation experience so far. Yet it is worth noting, that many of these people - although in uniform - may be said to have lived and died offering voluntary, and very effective, resistance to the enemy, no less than the much celebrated 'Maquis Army' in the rest of Europe.¹ Neither does it follow that because their field of battle was not upon their native soil, that they were not part of the total Occupation experience, since their fate lay very close to the hearts of their many thousands of relatives and friends left imprisoned in the Islands. Unlike those servicemen with homes on the Mainland, there would be no home leave for these men and women, and the only means of contact was through the occasional Red Cross message.

What has also not been previously explored is the likely attitude and mettle of those Islanders who were left behind. This is now particularly relevant to any present picture of Occupation life, given the relatively recent accusation in Madeleine Bunting's work, that most of the Islanders left behind were passive and acquiescent in the face of the enemy. Information is somewhat sparse, yet there is sufficient evidence to suggest that many of those remaining in the Islands would have resisted the German landings if they had been allowed to retain their weapons, and call for some help from the British troops, especially given that more than 10,000 of this number had been recruited from amongst their own compatriots. According to various diary and other sources, there was definitely some strong feeling on the subject, especially in the heady days around demilitarisation. Firstly, in Jersey, a substantial Defence Volunteer Force - similar to the one in Guernsey - and roughly equivalent to the British 'Home Guard,' was quickly constituted in place of the traditional Militia. It had several platoons, with one or more to each Parish, and each varying in strength from 25 to 50 men. As J.H. L' Amy, a

retired British Officer, pointed out in his memoirs: 'Whatever criticism may be levelled at this force...it proved that the spirit of the Island's manhood was sound and that the word 'surrender' had not, as yet, entered into their vocabulary. Men of all ages, professions and trades, joined up...on the principle, no doubt, that it was better to join a suicide squad than no squad at all.' He concludes, rather philosophically, though not without irony: 'They would, at all events make use of the resources at their disposal and no man can do more.'²

In letters to his son, Ron, one of these volunteers, Arthur Harvey, throws more light on his fellow Islanders' thoughts and feelings as he described the events of May and June 1940. On 29 May, he wrote:

I have rejoined the volunteer defence and go on duty all tonight...Jersey has ceased to be the haven of safety the people thought...we must sit tight on our resolve to see this thing through. What is going to be demanded from us no one can say, but we can say that as individuals we are prepared to stand up to that demand. We have by no means lost hope but if it comes to the worst we can take it.

Next, as if to illustrate how closely involved with the British war effort - and with their fellow-countrymen already fighting abroad - each member of the population actually felt, the letter continues:

His father tells me that Dennis Williams has brought down 3 German planes; young Carey, I think he played cricket when on leave, has been killed, and Cooper's brother, the architectural student...has not been heard of for some time, and so it goes on.

Writing again almost four weeks later, the style of the letter dated 20 June is no less determined, and much more animated, as the shocked writer has obviously heard that

the Islands are not going to be defended. Mr. Harvey declares:

By the time you get this you will have heard what a smack we have had, The Channel Islands open islands ...over the weekend and up to Wednesday the arrival of troops both from France and England gave us heart. On Monday...we served twelve hundred meals in the hangar at the airport...Tuesday was no better and Wednesday they went again. Then came the announcement and now the general evacuation. I am staying! My God, why will they not allow us to put up a show I cannot understand. Several of us at the Club tried to start a nucleus...I don't mind losing but do let us go down with our flag flying.

As the war progressed, similar rumblings of this same fighting spirit would also appear in diaries, in spite of the fact that diary-keeping was illegal, and discovery could bring severe consequences for the writer. Izette Croad's entry of Wednesday, 27 February 1941 reads:

The spirit of 1781 is abroad again today, and given the chance and the weapons the Islanders would fight the invader as their forefathers fought...in the past. It is thrilling to hear men, and not always young ones, just asking for the chance, and I am sure they would give a good account of themselves...It was only a strong sense of duty that kept a lot of us here...and the situation seems to grow more galling every day.³

Kenneth Lewis, writing in Guernsey, also mentions several times his longing for action:

'I only wish I could be in uniform in England,'...'doing my bit for the war effort.'⁴

Later, on 28 August 1944, Dorothy Pickard Higgs writes 'We are all so thrilled because the Air Force have started dropping news sheets for the Germans...They say there will soon be leaflets for us telling us what to do. And we'll do it!'⁵

It is easy to pick up the strength of feeling behind these sentiments, and interesting to note the use of the plural terms 'we' and 'us' in the first and last quotations. This usage

clearly illustrates that the diarists naturally identified themselves as part of the Island community as a whole. It also lends credence to the argument that fraternisation and co-operation with the enemy, over and above what was strictly necessary, were not likely to have been the general rule, and supports the overwhelming belief of contemporary diarists, that the Occupation would only be a temporary ordeal. Whatever the case, there can be little doubt that they genuinely felt that they were accurately representing the collective views of the majority of Island folk, and the fact that there is not much more written evidence of such feelings can easily be explained by the fear of informers, and the real possibility of journals being discovered during the frequent house searches. Besides this, publicity given to the prosecution of young people like John Ingrouille, who was living in Guernsey in 1941, were also likely to have made others wary of being open about any hostile feelings they may have harboured towards the Occupier. Reported to the Germans for claiming to have eight hundred men ready to shoot them, he was sentenced to five years imprisonment for treason. Sadly, he later died in a hospital in Brussels, only a few weeks after being released from Brandenburg Prison by the British Army.

However, upon Liberation, when previously hidden feelings were free to surface, it became evident that many young Islanders had shared the feeling expressed earlier by Ken Lewis. As John Loveridge, Secretary to the Essential Commodities Control Committee, explained as he wrote requesting permission to resign from his position:

I have a deep rooted conviction that as a young man, physically fit, my duty in time of war is active service...I shall always in my life-time bitterly regret the five years I had, against my wishes, to stay in the Island under German occupation instead of fighting, and the only object I have now in life and ever had since the outbreak of war is to join H.M. Forces.⁶

Up until the middle of May 1940, as evidenced by Arthur Harvey's letters, the normal

busy life of the Islands had proceeded without much to remind the people that there was indeed a war raging in much of Europe. Apart from the casualties amongst serving Islanders, the First World War had very largely passed them by, and as Leslie Sinel pointed out during a later interview: ‘based on the previous war we felt it was so remote it wouldn’t affect us at all.’⁷ Outside events did indeed seem far away, and even in March 1940 the British Press had been advertising the Islands as ‘The ideal resort for war-time holidays this summer.’ Within the Islands themselves, there was nothing to foreshadow the approaching catastrophe, and local papers in Guernsey were still carrying lists of holiday hotels in Jersey and Sark until 18 June.

But, a sudden change was at hand. From the second week of June onwards, the peaceful ambience of the Islands changed rapidly. On 15th, eight British ships arrived bringing several thousand troops and equipment. Trenches were dug and anti-aircraft guns posted in various parts of the Island. The next day Air Raid Wardens were ordered to stand by, and for twenty-four hours observation posts were manned by Jersey Defence Volunteers.

Meanwhile, the Germans were advancing rapidly across the Cotentin Peninsula. On 14 June Paris had surrendered, and on Monday 17 the fateful news of the final French collapse reached the Channel Islands. Just the previous day, an increasingly anxious Alexander Coutanche, Bailiff of Jersey, was informed by the Lieutenant Governor, General Harrison, that the British Expeditionary Force was awaiting evacuation from western France in a Dunkirk-style operation. Immediately demonstrating once more the Island’s willingness to put lives at risk to help the war effort, the Bailiff proceeded to ask the Commodore of St. Helier Yacht Club if he could organise a convoy to assist. Details of what followed are mostly to be found in unpublished or obscure accounts:

During the night of 16/17th June an armada of yachts and fishing boats of all types and sizes

put out from the harbours of St. Helier and Gorey, arriving at St. Malo early in the forenoon. For two days they were busy ferrying troops and refugees from the port to the waiting ships anchored in the bay... They were only just in time, for... German patrols entered the town even as the last men were making good their escape.⁸

During the operation: 'Jerseymen performed countless acts of gallantry and expert seamanship,⁹ but even before they had set out on their mission, the British War Cabinet had already decided that the Islands were untenable, and since they were of 'no great strategic importance'¹⁰ they should be demilitarised forthwith.

The situation for the Islanders had changed dramatically. From the comforting interlude which followed the arrival of many troops, as noted by Arthur Harvey, they entered a period which was 'suddenly full of frightening, unexpected possibilities - of invasion, atrocities, bankruptcy and starvation.'¹¹ During the previous ten months, the Islanders had asked for nothing in return for their instant and unhesitating loyalty to the Crown. They had waived 'their traditional right of exemption from service overseas, and [sent] proportionately very large sums of money to the UK exchequer to help with the cost of the war.'¹² But, once having accepted this offer of men and money with appropriate gratitude, the British government - in spite of the reluctance of Prime Minister Churchill - proceeded to abandon the oldest British possession without firing a shot. The last troops left on 20 June, and the following day, at about the same time as Hitler was getting out of his gleaming Mercedes in a forest near Compiègne prepared to accept the surrender of the French, the Lieutenant Governors of the Channel Islands handed over their responsibilities to the Bailiffs, and left for England.

Immediately afterwards 'officials equivalent to county councillors were pitched into making decisions of unbelievable importance. The advice from Whitehall, usually so readily forthcoming, and which... the islands' rulers... had a right to expect - dried up

overnight.¹³In fact, communications between British and Island Government officials would remain muddled, and at the end of the day ‘they had to rely heavily upon their own resources...[having] the worst of both worlds - a chaotic partial evacuation left almost to chance.’¹⁴Still reeling in shock at the speed of events, and partly due to the lack of any firm British guidance, apart from the Home Office strongly advising that the population be encouraged to stay because of the difficulty of ‘absorbing them here’, the civil heads of the four main Islands reacted in different ways to the crisis.¹⁵ In Jersey the advice given by Alexander Coutanche, in spite of arrangements for voluntary evacuation already being in place was that people should stay. In an attempt to calm the rising panic amongst the citizens, he and other leading States members, ‘issued a public declaration that they were staying at their posts and that their families were staying...with them.’¹⁶As a result, out of around 20,000 people who first registered to leave, only about 10,000 ultimately availed themselves of the facilities. In Guernsey, there was some dithering, but first thoughts were given to evacuation of the children. This would inevitably mean the breaking up of families for an indeterminate length of time, and caused many people to fall into a cruel agony of indecision. At the same time, posters appeared with the following exhortations: ‘Keep your heads! Don’t be yellow! Business as usual! Why go mad? Compulsory evacuation a lie! There’s no place like home. Cheer up!’¹⁷Here, the original number of 13,000 registered to leave, quickly rose to 20,000, including it seems the writer of one of the posters, about whom the Reverend Douglas Ord has this to say in his diary on 25 June: ‘The “patriot” responsible for the posters “Don’t be yellow!” has had a sudden fit of...jaundice and has gone to England seeking a cure!’

In Sark, the Dame, Mrs. Sibyl Hathaway, had no intention of leaving. She held a meeting of inhabitants and told them: ‘Stop in Sark and if the Germans come...I will deal with them as I think best.’ She added: ‘Britain will win - Britain will win.’¹⁸She explained further: ‘I am not promising...it will be easy... We may be hungry but we will

always have our cattle and crops, our gardens, a few pigs, our sheep and our rabbits.’¹⁹

Following this speech, very few people did evacuate, but much to the Dame’s reported chagrin, the Island’s only Doctor, F.T. Fisher, was amongst them. In Alderney, Judge French first looked to Guernsey for advice. Since, after three appeals none was forthcoming, he sent a message to the Admiralty requesting ships to evacuate all residents. As he later addressed the Islanders, his advice was unequivocal: ‘Men and women of Alderney, as you value your lives, if that boat comes you get on it, for it will be the last touch with the outside world you will get...’ He added: ‘I shall be the last man to leave.’²⁰

And so it was that in the eleven days before 30 June 1940, about 30,000 left their homes and possessions of a lifetime, and set out with very little money, and only what they could carry, bound for unknown parts of wartime England. Their thoughts may perhaps be best represented within the essay of a Guernsey child who afterwards wrote: ‘Nous étions stupéfaits. Etre obligés de quitter les plages ensoleillés et l’air limpide de Guernsey pour aller vivre dans une atmosphere de fumée, de pluie et de brouillard, voilà un avenir peu attrayant.’²¹

In the British Parliament, there seems to have been little criticism of the way the evacuation was conducted, apart from the recorded comments of Charles Ammon MP in the Commons, and of Lords Mottistone and Portsea in the House of Lords. Lord Portsea particularly, made no attempt to mince his words, as he spoke out in terms of the Islanders being ‘left in the lurch’ by the British Government.²² Later, this same Lord is reported to have written an article in the *Sunday Dispatch* of 5 September 1943, in which ‘he tells the story behind what he calls the Channel Islands ‘betrayal.’²³ Even if these were only isolated remarks in Britain, such opinion seems to have been a very accurate representation of how the Islanders felt at the time, and although many memories have apparently since mellowed, it is noticeable that the anger caused by

these events has endured within the collective memory, and still exists today.

Substantiating evidence may be found in the remarks of many of my first random contacts in the Islands who, without any prompting, quickly expressed their feeling that the Islands had been thrown to Hitler by the British Government in June 1940, much as a bone to a dog, in order to delay the much feared threat of a German invasion of England.

But worse was yet to come. Not only had the Islanders been 'ditched,' and 'stripped naked,' as later described by schoolteacher, Harry Aubin, but it seems that the British Government, in seeking to avoid offering the Germans an invitation to walk in and take over the Islands, had been hoping to keep the demilitarisation secret, and so delayed making a direct announcement to the enemy. The policy was even extended - 'having regard to the interests of National Security'²⁴ - to instructions concerning the limited publication of a message from the King. This message, received on Monday 24 June, referred to 'strategic reasons' which had rendered necessary the withdrawal of the armed forces from the Channel Islands, and spoke also of 'the link between us... remain[ing] unbroken.' It ended with the assurance: 'I know that my people... will look forward with...confidence as I do to the day when...we...will reap the reward of victory.' Encouraging words, but as Frank Keiller wrote in his book published in 2000: 'It was read out in the States, but they didn't publish it. Nobody told us. We didn't know the King was thinking of us...It wouldn't have stopped the Germans. But we might have felt less bitter about being abandoned.'²⁵

However, British policy was apparently successful, and according to German records, they were genuinely unaware that the Islands were not defended. Thus, only a few days after they became 'sitting ducks' in the Channel, when German reconnaissance planes observed columns of lorries assembling in the dockland areas, they decided to attack. The lorries were actually carrying loads of tomatoes and potatoes for export, but on 28

June six Heinkel bombers attacked Jersey's La Rocque and St. Helier Harbour, and similar targets in Guernsey. Coincidentally, as the air raid began at 6.45pm, Ambrose Sherwill was on the telephone to the Home Office from his office in St. Peter Port. Holding out the phone so that the Assistant Home Office Secretary could hear the explosions close by, 'Sherwill tersely suggested that the British Government should lose no time in letting the Germans know that the Islands had been demilitarised.'²⁶

The impact of this attack upon the Island community, and news of the deaths and injuries which followed, should not be underestimated. Louis Guillemette, Sherwill's secretary, who was also at work in these offices later said: 'I was never so terrified in all my life as we gathered in the basement and waited for the building to tumble about us.'²⁷ He was not alone in his fears. As she was just about to leave the College close by, Miss Adele Lainé: 'threw [her]self flat in the passage where [she] lay more or less terrified for the best part of an hour.' Afterwards, she rushed down to the docks to see what she could do. 'The whole area was like an inferno. Fires were raging everywhere, and the road was strewn with glass from shattered windows.'²⁸ Closer to the Harbour, Frank Falla's account was even more graphic:

The tide was low and the crowds rushed for the only shelter available, underneath the pier. This certainly saved hundreds of lives, but others were not so lucky. Some tried to shelter under their vehicles only to be crushed as the fires started and the vans and trucks collapsed. The blood of the wounded and dying mingled with the juice of the tomatoes, and when I came on the scene...the sight was one I shall never forget: the flames, the bodies, the cries of the dying and the injured, and the straggling line of people emerging from their shelter under the pier.'²⁹

On the same day, Izette Croad in Jersey was no less frightened. In her diary - written

mostly in the form of letters to her friend in England, she records with some touches of humour:

We got to the Cemetery at about 6.45 and it is a wonder I did not stay there permanently for father had just gone in when... aeroplanes appeared overhead... Suddenly it dawned on me that it was machine guns I heard... and... bullets started dropping towards me... I wonder if you can realise what it felt like. We knew that we were absolutely unprotected, not a single soldier, let alone a gun on the Island, and the Nazi planes droning overhead with their deadly cargo³⁰

Cold comfort followed later that same evening on the BBC 9 o'clock news, when the stunned Islanders heard the announcement that their 'Channel Islands [had] been demilitarised and declared... "open town."³¹ The same Friday night, the news was confirmed and expanded, in a telegraphed dispatch from the London Correspondent of *The Star*. As Frank Falla recorded, the irony of the explanatory words towards the end of this dispatch, was tragically obvious: 'Since the Islands are of no strategic use to Great Britain - and for that matter to Germany - there was no further need for their continued fortification, which might only have exposed the inhabitants to unnecessary danger from German bombardment.'³²

Upon such foundations were future memories of the Occupation to be overlaid and built. Coming as it did, in shocking contrast to the peace and tranquillity of their previous existence, the earlier bombardment - which included the deliberate machine gunning of an ambulance and a lifeboat crew - provided an ominous introduction to the character of the invader, and gave considerable insight into the level of destruction he was capable of. Two days later the Germans entered Guernsey. Her sister Island of Jersey was occupied the next day, on 1 July, and Alderney and Sark rapidly followed. As J. H. L' Amy later wrote: 'The stage was set for a new experience in our lives and all we had to do was to "take it" whatever it was.'³³ On 1 July 1940, Frank Barton's

comment was even more immediate in this new topsy-turvy world: 'An awful fear seems to have gripped everyone - smiles and laughter are wiped out. The strain is almost unbearable - causing a horrible feeling of both mental and physical sickness.'

Threats within the first Communication from General Richthofen, addressed to the Governor of Jersey on the same day, would do little to assuage these feelings:

3. If...signs of peaceful surrender are not observed by 7am, July 2nd, heavy bombardment will take place...

7. Every hostile action against my representative will be followed by bombardment.

Then, on a more positive note, the notice was to end with an - as it turned out - totally erroneous assurance:

8. In the case of peaceful surrender, the lives, property and liberty of peaceful inhabitants are solemnly guaranteed.³⁴

'To pass five years in a small island whose reduced population was matched in the heyday of German arrogance by a garrison equal in size, widely distributed in and among the houses and workshops of the civilians, and constantly intruding upon the most jealously guarded privacy, is an experience sui generis. Even the most retiring and insignificant could not avoid almost daily contact...

implacable resistance and unswerving isolation were alike impossible...

so there came to be one wise rule governing relationships: watch every man circumspectly. Should he prove to be a decent fellow, treat him accordingly, otherwise be on your guard. No other rule is workable in so long a period of enforced contiguity. No other rule could guard against consequent misfortune. Here we touch reality, and reality in the long run dispenses with mere theory.'

Reverend Douglas Ord Diary, Preface.

The Unique Occupation.

3.

‘There seems little doubt that we get preferential treatment, I have been told that the French call us “the Nazi pets!”’

‘All wireless sets have to be given up on Saturday. I feel just about desperate, while we all hope for a miracle. Rumour has it that Schmettow...has gone to Paris to intercede on our behalf...No wonder the French call us “Les Cheries d’Hitler”... Dash it, we are not a defeated people, if the French are, and we have no need to carry on an underground war, our war is only too much above ground I should think after Cologne. And why the Germans bother about us, I don’t know, except perhaps because they like being here because it is the only place in Europe in which they feel safe.’

These diary entries of Izette Croad, dated 6 January 1941 and 8 June 1942 respectively, show that, even at the time, the occupation of the Channel Islands was perceived as being unusual in comparison with the experience of the rest of Europe. Although they were governed by orders issued by the head of the military government in Paris, German accounts also perceive a difference in attitude and instructions received from their superiors for application in the Islands, and Mr R. H. Johns, the Controlling Committee’s Labour Officer, recalled during a post-war meeting at the Royal Court House in Guernsey on Monday, 14 May 1945, that: ‘he had once been told that the German authorities had been instructed to treat the Guernsey people as being equal to the Germans from the point of view of culture and that they should, therefore, be treated with respect.’¹ In support of this, Count von Schmettow, when appointed to command the Channel Islands, was reported to have been told by Count Brockdorf, his superior

officer, ‘remember that it is English territory you are going to, not defeated France.’²These remarks seem to be in accord with Hitler’s own regard for the British, as he wrote in *Mein Kampf*: ‘For a long time...there will only be two powers in Europe with which it may be possible for Germany to conclude an alliance. These powers are Great Britain and Italy.’³In this publication, Hitler had also ‘already set out his plans for a new Europe, based on racial theories according to which the whole of Eastern Europe was to become a “service population” for the benefit of the “Superior races”’⁴Included within these races were the British. Whatever the reasons behind it, it is true that there was very largely an absence of racial tension in the Islands, except for specific ‘orders’ being passed against the few remaining Jews, and especially before the escalation of discrimination against, and later deportation of, English-born Islanders, which began in September 1942. There were even reports that freshly arrived German soldiers had entered the streets of their new acquisition, shouting for their ‘cousins’ to come out and greet them. As Charles Cruikshank concluded, ‘There is no doubt that the atmosphere was very different from France’,⁵ and it was a far cry indeed from the attitude shown by the German conqueror towards the Poles and Russians, whom they regarded as inferior, even subhuman people, fit to be starved or murdered, according to their whim.

Probably also linked to this special status accorded to the British, is the little-known record of Hitler’s attempt to secure a peaceful alliance with the British Government after the fall of France. Only two days before the Occupation of the Channel Islands began ‘on 28 June, a confidential message arrived for Hitler from the Pope, offering his mediation for a ‘just and honourable peace.’’⁶Subsequently, on 19 July, Hitler made official peace proposals to Britain, which were speedily rejected by Lord Halifax, who proclaimed: ‘We shall continue the struggle, until liberty is assured.’⁷In spite of its rejection, it is inconceivable that this overture made no difference in the initial stages of the Occupation of a British territory, when the invader would naturally wish to demonstrate to the British people that they were not cruel barbarians, but a highly

civilised and superior race, well able to rule fairly. The theory also gathers support from the fact that the first phase of the Occupation ended within weeks on 9 August, at which time the German Military organisation took over the administration from Captain Gussek in Jersey, and Major Lanz in Guernsey.

Only fourteen months later, records show that the Islanders' position had apparently become much more ambivalent, since in a Report compiled in September 1941, Professor Dr. Karl Heinz Pfeffer outlined and discussed the advantages of several available options for the future of the Occupied as follows:

The Islands are for us...an important test case for the confrontation with an English population...At the moment it is of course a matter of complete indifference what the English think of us. But if it was our intention after victory to get parts of the English population on to our side, the present stance of the German occupying troops could be used splendidly in propaganda.

More ominously, he later continues to explain that: 'a clear line of action as regards the population has not yet been found,' and that

the following possibilities exist...[first] To force the 70,000 inhabitants still present...to leave the Islands. Then a completely free field would be available for...German reconstruction ...[or second] the truly resident population would remain in the Islands, while the English immigrants would...be deported.⁸

Thus, not only did the Islands hold a unique position in the minds of their German masters, especially in the early period of the Occupation, but they were also subject to some very unusual policy and conflicting advice from their own government hierarchy. Records show that the British Government had not only abandoned them, defenceless at

the mercy of Hitler and his minions, but had also instructed each Island Bailiff to 'stay at his post and administer the government...to the best of his abilities in the interest of the inhabitants...[with the help of] the Crown officers [who] were also instructed to stay.' In turn, and directly in line with these orders, the Island Bailiffs had passed on such instructions as there were to their own populations. In Guernsey, Victor Carey issued a notice on 19 June:

I am instructed to inform the people...that the Government of the United Kingdom has decided that this Bailiwick...be entirely demilitarised. Accordingly, the Royal Court hereby gives instructions for...immediate demobilisation...Arms, uniforms and equipment are forthwith to be handed in...All... persons in possession of firearms will hand them in to the Constable of the Parish.

Shortly afterwards, when the Occupation finally took place, the people were left in no doubt of what was expected. In fact what has seldom been recognised in secondary Occupation literature is that as soon as these orders from the British Foreign Office had been implemented, both the Island Administrations and the population were in a situation where many of their options for possible action or resistance during the period of their subjugation had been determined in advance. Very soon, the front pages of *The Star* and *The Guernsey Evening Post* confirmed that there would be no deviation from the spirit of these orders, as they published the following signed statement from the Bailiff: 'The public are notified that no resistance whatever is to be offered.'⁹ Beneath these words, was a list of eleven 'Orders of the Commandant,' and for any who still doubted the seriousness of their predicament, point two of these 'Orders' would soon make it crystal clear: 'We will respect the population...but should anyone attempt to cause the least trouble serious measures will be taken and the town will be bombed.' On July 1, these events were very largely repeated in Jersey. The Bailiff, Alexander Coutanche read out the German ultimatum in the Royal Square, ending with the

assurance that 'the lives, property and liberty of peaceful inhabitants are solemnly guaranteed.' He added that 'they had no option but to surrender, since they had nothing left to fight with.' He then ignored some shouted objections from the crowd, and 'appealed to everyone to keep calm...obey German orders, and to go home and hang out...something to serve as a white flag.'¹⁰

In the coming days, the Occupation arrangements were settled smoothly and without complications in all the Islands. 'There was no attempt to impose oaths of loyalty to the Reich on professionals such as doctors and teachers,'¹¹ which had caused much heart-searching in other parts of Europe, and very quickly in Jersey the Attorney General, Duret Aubin, found himself carrying on his duties as usual, in complete accordance with German instructions, having already been directed to do precisely the same by the British Government. This proved particularly odd during the early prosecution of an Irishman, for 'punching a German soldier on the nose after a quarrel in a café.'¹² When the case was heard in court, the proceedings soon appeared quite farcical, as the alleged offender was charged in the name of the King of England, for striking one of the King's enemies! Perhaps not surprisingly, the relief of the Island authorities concerning the apparent tractability of their occupiers after the horror of the air raids was almost palpable at this time, and after passing sentence in the case above, Duret Aubin continued by saying that 'The Occupation had been carried out by the German forces with the utmost consideration for and courtesy towards the civil population of the island. It is therefore intolerable that any member of these forces should be treated with less consideration or courtesy.'¹³ Similar tones of sweet reason prevailed for weeks, and even as relations deteriorated, at least the veneer of co-operation and civility between Island and German officials seems to have remained for most of their intercourse.

Meanwhile in England, in complete contrast to instructions given out in the Channel Islands, the population was being vigorously exhorted to exhibit their 'indomitable

national spirit of which Britain has been, and still is so proud.’¹⁴ By June 1940 Ministry of Information posters were proclaiming:

‘The people of these islands will offer a united opposition to an invader and every citizen will regard it as his duty to hinder and frustrate the enemy and help our own forces by every means that ingenuity can devise and common sense suggest.’ Extreme measures were contemplated, and Churchill apparently intended using the slogan: ‘You can always take one with you’¹⁵

From these differences were to arise more consternation for the Islanders. On the one hand they had received official government instructions prescribing their required duty towards the Occupier, but on the other, they were still receiving - in common with the rest of the British Isles - very different instructions from Colonel Britton, via the BBC, encouraging them to join the ‘V-army’s underground front...[and] try to do something anti-Nazi every day.’¹⁶ Theirs was indeed a unique quandary to be in, especially since the vast majority of the Islanders were intensely patriotic, and for this dilemma and difficulty, the British Government - despite the mitigating circumstances of their decisions concerning the Islands - were directly responsible. These are more details which have since rather curiously been either marginalised - or completely overlooked - in most secondary literature.

Other, more tangible considerations pertaining to the conditions of the Islanders’ imprisonment are much less fraught with controversy, but are of no less importance upon the overall Occupation landscape. Notwithstanding their initial position of relative favour with the Germans, it was indeed to be a perilous occupation for the Islanders. Dangers were omnipresent, and the reputation of the invader for committing brutal acts in Poland and other occupied territory had preceded him, causing more apprehension and anxiety. But, apart from the historical and political differences already mentioned, many other aspects of the Channel Islands’ Occupation were also distinct from those

relevant to the subjugation of major nations abroad, and the circumstances, and characters involved were also atypical of German rule in other parts of Nazi-dominated territory.

Until the latter part of 1944, the German officers in charge of running the Islands were not S.S, neither were they devoted to Nazi party ideals. Many had a background in administrative affairs, and a large number appeared, on the surface at least, to be quite charming and cultured, from *alter Deutsch* aristocratic families, for example Baron Hans Max von Aufsess, and Prince von Oettingen. It was in the interests of these men, and many of their minions, that they should not fail in their task of keeping order in the Islands. They had found a haven from the storm of dangers attendant upon the war in Europe, and later on the Russian front, and had no wish to be replaced by rival, and often more ruthless officers from the S.S. Thus co-operation with the Island officials was as much in their interest as it was in the interest of the Islanders. They had reason to feel vulnerable, as one of the senior administrators, Dr. Casper, explained later; they were aware that when Hitler became upset by reports of sabotage in Denmark, he sent in S.S. Police. The same happened in other parts of Europe, and these Police ‘then made things worse.’¹⁷In fact, until starvation and Germany’s defeat were staring the Occupation force in the face, relations between Occupier and Occupied were remarkable in that they were generally tense, but not too desperate.

As time passed, the claustrophobic situation so clearly described in the diary excerpt at the beginning of this chapter was also very unusual. In the Channel Islands: ‘cut off and cooped up together, lived 35,000 German soldiers and 60,000 Islanders.’¹⁸ Although recorded numbers of troops vary, perhaps the most startling figures are provided by Charles Cruikshank, who states that: ‘When the strength of the Organisation Todt is taken into account, it seems that the heaviest concentration of enemy personnel was in the first half of 1943, when the total number, including 16,000

OT workers was 42,800.¹⁹ Always bearing in mind the absence of more than 10,000 young people of fighting age, and the resultant higher proportion of women and older residents, ‘this was equivalent to two thirds of the men, women, and children remaining in the Islands!’¹⁹To put this into perspective, had the Germans wished to match this ratio during an occupation of Britain, then an influx of around 30 millions would have been required. By comparison, it is also interesting to note that: ‘in France there was one German soldier to one hundred Frenchmen after the occupation of the Southern Zone, with German police concentrated in the urban centres.’²⁰

In view of this massive enemy presence, what is also remarkable, is the number of Islanders who committed offences against the occupying power, and were given prison sentences. This figure rose to above five percent of the population – these figures and associated matters are fully explored in Chapter 12 - and is considerably higher than anywhere else in Europe, where it was reported to be around three percent or less. Given the geography of the Islands, it is even more surprising. In the mostly flat and densely populated areas, without any mountainous terrain in which to find shelter, the possibility for a fugitive to evade capture was small, and as shores became increasingly mined and patrolled, with all boats and fishing trips strictly regulated, escape from the Islands also became progressively more and more difficult.

For them there were no weapon drops, no help from M19 for escapers, or from the S.O.E. for carrying out sabotage missions. In any case, there were no obvious targets in the Islands to bomb, and in the absence of main railway supply lines or munitions factories, it is hard to think of any possible plan of destruction that would have been worth the very high risk of capture, or general reprisals. As Charles Cruikshank explained: ‘Indeed the British authorities deliberately excluded the Channel Islands from their resistance broadcasts.’ It was their view that to encourage resistance would be ‘seen to be inciting...suicide, since there was not the slightest hope of

meaningful active resistance in the Islands.²¹ Although in retrospect this may seem the most sensible approach, at the time it meant that any brave attempt at 'resistance was hamstrung by British Government action, and could only be amateur and piecemeal.'²² In addition, the official policy of no resistance supported by the Island Administration, continued throughout the Occupation with few exceptions, and was also manifest in a general lack of support for offenders when they came to court. On the surface at least, there was no doubt that the condition of the Hague Convention, which stated that it was illegal for occupied people to take reprisals, was scrupulously adhered to by Island officials, even though the Germans flouted other terms of the Convention at will, especially when they exacted penalties from the general community in response to actions perpetrated by a few of their fellow countrymen.

After October 1941, the Channel Islands also became an enormous drain on the Reich, through the provision of fortifications built within their very limited acreage. The Wehrmacht, carrying out the personal orders of Hitler, had poured in one twelfth of the available resources for construction of the Atlantic Wall, into protection of the Islands, which actually represented only a tiny fraction of their responsibility. In fact, at the end of 1944, when construction of these defences had involved excavation of 255,000 cubic metres on the continent, an almost equal amount of 244,000 cubic metres had already been excavated in the Islands. If all of these materials and labour had been 'devoted instead to strengthening the Atlantic Wall, it would have been about ten per cent stronger over the whole of its length.'²³ This may have made a difference to the outcome of the war, possibly delaying the D-Day landings in 1944. Besides this, when one takes into account the number of enemy personnel cut off in the Islands after June 1944, it would seem they had another claim to uniqueness in Europe, since, as: 'it turned out [they] could not have done more towards winning the war than they achieved by the simple process of being occupied.'²⁴

Lastly, the position of the Channel Islanders was also unique because, as Izette Croad pointed out with spirit in her diary, they were living under the German yoke, but were not yet members of a humiliated and defeated nation. Unlike the position in France, where there was a conscious effort to keep alive some national pride in the face of what was seen as a crushing humiliation and defeat, their Motherland was still fighting Hitler with the help of their own sons, husbands and fathers. As a result, their national pride was intact, and even in the darkest days of Germany's many triumphs, many patriotic people fiercely held on to the belief that Britain would emerge triumphant, and that all they had to do was grit their collective teeth, survive, and wait for freedom to be restored.

However, as their circumstances slowly deteriorated, the Islanders' position essentially became completely analogous with residing in prison, and almost every diary reflects a sense of oppression and anxiety. Although without bars of the conventional kind, they were surrounded by guards and restrictions, barbed wire and guns, and in such a predicament that they did not know at times where their next meal was coming from, or even if there would be a meal at all. As Baron von Aufsess said in 1944: 'soon there will be nothing left we can forbid the people except to live.'²⁵

ISLAND GOVERNMENT:

June 1940-May 1945

'REWARD OF £25

**A reward of £25 will be given to the person who first gives the Inspector of Police information leading to the conviction of anyone (not already discovered) for the offence of marking on any gate, wall or other place whatsoever visible to the public the letter "V" or any other sign or any word or words calculated to offend the German Authorities or soldiers.
This 8th day of July 1941.**

**(Signed) VICTOR G. CAREY,
Bailiff.' [of Guernsey]**

Record and Interpretation: A Question of Paradigm

4.

‘With regard to the notice headed “Reward of £25,” I and I alone am responsible for it, as at that time I was very much alarmed at the reaction of the Germans when they discovered that in spite of the first warning, more ‘V’ signs were being painted up all over the Island and even on gate posts of houses in which German officers and soldiers were billeted. I had a very stormy interview with the Feldcommandant at which all kinds of things were threatened and I was afraid that they would take hostages (of which I understand that they had a list of 80) and either shoot them or deport them to concentration camps in Germany or elsewhere. I thought therefore that a notice of this kind would be the only way to stop the matter, which it actually did for a few days...I have nothing further to say on the subject except that I believe the majority of the civilian population realised that though these notices bore my signature they were really German orders.’

Victor Carey’s reply to questions, June 1945.¹

For many years - especially during the more turbulent first and third periods of Occupation history, as identified in the introduction to this study - there have been two schools of thought concerning the wartime record of the Island Administrations in their dealings with the enemy. The first more or less supports the view that they were mostly nest-feathering collaborators; the second, in full accord with the official British stance in 1945, that they did their best under difficult circumstances. An exploration of the developments affecting the post-War face of Island Government will follow in Chapter 14. But first, in view of the large number of criticisms which have been raised or reignited about their wartime conduct in recent years, the next two chapters will take a

fresh look at the relationship between the Occupier and the Island Officials, in order to seek out a better understanding of the situation as it unfolded on the ground. The fact is that many accusations of collaboration with the enemy have occurred simply as a result of the wording of various Government announcements made in the Islands' censored Press. Taken at face value, many do appear to have the interests of the enemy wholly in mind. Yet in recent years, a considerable amount of fresh evidence has become available, which clearly suggests that earlier judgements of collaborative intent are quite simply wrong and that, unknown to the public, all kinds of pressures were being exerted upon their Officials behind the scenes.

The quotations at the beginning of this chapter illustrate the point very well, and when the original notice of '£25 Reward' appeared in Guernsey, it aroused angry and bitter feelings amongst the civilian population. As a result, even though no-one seems to have come forward to claim the reward, 'a cruel cartoon was passed from hand to hand, representing Victor Carey in the role of Judas Iscariot hanging from a tree.'²

Of course at this time, without any hint or knowledge of later explanations, the actions of the ruling group generally appeared incomprehensible to many people, and their reputation, already damaged by the chaotic nature of the evacuation in June 1940, was not helped by cumulative incidents of this kind. In fact the public face of the Island administration would remain generally vulnerable to attack throughout most - if not all - of the Occupation, with passionate differences of opinion being expressed over many issues. In this case, some did take the charitable view that the Bailiff had been forced to sign the 'Reward' Notice, or that the Kommandant had simply used his name. But others felt it was inexcusable, and there is no doubt, as Reverend Ord concluded at the time, that 'the Bailiff's name is "Mud" with many.'³

Even from the beginning of the Occupation, the senior Island officials had often spoken out in terms which seemed to make them side with the enemy. Encouraged by assurances that the lives, liberty and property of peaceful citizens would be safe - reinforced by permission being given by 'good old Gussey,' as Izette Croad rather disrespectfully nicknamed Hauptmann Gussek in her diary to keep their wireless sets - the general feeling of relief was echoed by many similar statements made across the Islands. In Guernsey too, in stark contrast to the horror of the air-raids, the fact that German soldiers had confounded all prophecy by their excellent behaviour, meant that it was not long before the President of the Controlling Committee, Ambrose Sherwill, was telling people: 'There is a constant liaison between German Military Headquarters and the...Committee. Relations are not merely on a correct basis, they are cordial and friendly. Let no one jeopardise this by unseemly or unruly conduct.'⁴

Relations did indeed seem cosy. Less than one month into the Occupation - at the end of July - Sherwill suggested to Dr. Maass, the assistant to the German Chief of Staff, that the Royal court would pass a retrospective ordinance against 'dangerous speech' likely to offend the Germans in the Island. It was duly approved on 31 July, and the first prosecution was brought the next day against Mr. Collins, the elderly Manager of Messrs. Le Riche, who had apparently forbidden the use of the German language in his shop. 'To the general satisfaction the case was...dismissed,' but as Reverend Ord noted, it was also felt that this Ordinance, passed by their own people, was: 'the first truly sinister ruling we have had, and sends a shiver down the spine.' He continued: 'a milestone has been passed in the downward path of deterioration from the formal "courtesy" of the first week of last month.'⁵

Within days, and seemingly oblivious to the feelings of his compatriots, and to the possibility that he was assisting the enemy to the extent of overt collaboration, Sherwill proceeded to record a speech on 1 August, which was intended to allay the fears of the

Channel Islanders' relatives abroad. It was broadcast over Bremen Radio on 8 August, and contained such fulsome praise of the Occupier, that many people criticised it as lending itself too much to German propaganda. Even those who felt he had good intentions thought him very unwise. The speech began: 'I imagine that many of you must be greatly worried as to how we are getting on. Well let me tell you...The Bailiff, Mr Victor Carey, and every other Island official has been, and is being treated with greatest courtesy by the German Military Authorities...The conduct of the German troops is exemplary.'⁶

This apparently courteous and considerate relationship was to be illustrated many more times over the coming months and years. On 28 September 1940, after the rumoured escape of eight or nine men by sea from Havre Bordeaux earlier in the month, a notice was inserted in the local papers by the President of the Controlling Committee, to the effect that: 'Any further such departures or attempts thereat can only result in further restrictions.' In fact, fishermen in the northern and western parts of the Island had already been forbidden to work, and the population very soon felt the impact upon their already limited cuisine. The notice continued: 'In these circumstances to...attempt to get away is a crime against the local population, [and] quite apart from the fact that the German authorities will deal very severely with persons who are caught...there is also a grave possibility that, by way of reprisal, the male population of the Island will be evacuated to France.'⁷The notice concluded: 'The Controlling Committee views such incidents with the utmost disfavour for they tend to [negate] all the efforts to preserve good and courteous relations with the German authorities.'⁸

In the absence of any further information, it is not surprising that people in the Island drew their own conclusions about the loyalty of their leaders. Feelings varied according to the general mood, but as they stood around the Town in groups, especially in the early months of the Occupation, before they became aware of the growing number of

German spies and informers who mingled amongst them, it was natural that any gaps in local knowledge would be filled by speculation, rumour and even invention. At times there was strong censure of the Island officials, with another highly controversial incident occurring only a few weeks after the 'Reward of £25' had been offered. Within this latest notice, which concerned penalties for sheltering, or lending assistance to members of the Allied forces, the British were referred to as 'the enemy.' Many patriotic Islanders were incensed, and several diarists did not mince their words, as Frank Barton exclaimed: 'There can be no excuse for this!'

At this point, the all-important question must have been: what was happening? On whose side were the Bailiff, and other members of the Island Governments? Was it simply a case of 'cowardly subservience' to the German regime, an expression of support for, and collaboration with the enemy, which emanated simply from a desire to maintain 'peace at any price,' or out of 'meek gratitude' for their forbearance on the Islands?⁹ What were the motives of the Island Administrators, facing the same collective problems as the rest of the Island population, as they were all forced to adapt, and deal with their respective roles in an occupied territory?

This vexed question continues to provide a major puzzlement for most researchers today, and despite the furore caused in the 1990s by Press and other publications - which very largely tried to solve the problem by claiming that collaboration amongst the Island Officials was the general rule - yet such accusations are still being defended, and the debate goes on. Discussion of more recent controversies will follow later, especially in Chapters 12 and 14. Meanwhile, in the present quest to find a more balanced solution to the puzzle by returning to the Occupation period, various conundrums present themselves for consideration. If one accepts that the Island officials were likely to be at least as patriotic as their fellows in the Islands - if not more so because of their status in society, and previously strong connections with the British Establishment - how then

did some of their actions appear to represent a perspective on events, which was so diametrically opposed to that of the majority of the rest of the population? The key to understanding the puzzle lies within four main areas of consideration, by which most of these officials perceived themselves to be bound. They can be identified as follows: duty of office; loyalty to the Oath which was administered to the Bailiffs before the Lieutenant Governors of the Islands returned to England in June 1940; consideration of various specific German threats - whether real or imagined; and patriotism, including responsibilities towards family, friends and countrymen. In addition, some members of Government departments, including the Dame of Sark, the Bailiffs of Jersey and Guernsey, as well as Ambrose Sherwill, had more personal worries, in that they had sons who were absent from the Islands, mostly serving in the Allied Forces.

Government mechanisms

In the days immediately prior to the Occupation, both Jersey and Guernsey had centralised power in the hands of a small group of administrators. In Jersey, the Bailiff appointed a Superior Council of eleven men, with himself as head, but in Guernsey, both 'the Bailiff and the States fell into the background for the duration in favour of a Controlling Committee of eight...[with] each [man] responsible for one aspect of administration.'¹⁰ Victor Carey remained Bailiff and newly appointed Lieutenant Governor, but on 21 June, Ambrose Sherwill was appointed President of the Committee, and thus became the first man to receive the Germans onto British soil. The way in which the Occupation began, would then set the pattern of relations between Occupier and Occupied until the D-Day landings rendered a change in the German position.

Major Sherwill was 'an embodiment of the finest qualities of the traditional English gentleman. In the First World War he had won an M.C. by an act of reckless courage... which left him [severely] wounded...but still miraculously alive.'¹¹ When the first

German officer arrived at his house, Sherwill demonstrated his spirit when he requested that the visitor enter by the side door. On being asked 'why,' he replied: 'My children are asleep in the hall...we thought it would be safer.' The officer responded kindly: 'But certainly...I would not think of disturbing the children.' Later, when asked about stocks of aviation fuel left at the airport, 'Major Sherwill replied sweetly, "About 30,000 gallons," and having waited for the officer's face to light up with pleasure, he added: 'But the RAF did quite a good job before they left, mixing it with sand, sugar... and just about anything else you could think of.' The Luftwaffe officer did not appear to be ruffled, and 'said philosophically... "Ah well...it was only to be expected."' ¹² Later on, when Major-Dr. Albrecht Lanz arrived, 'Major Sherwill put down on the table all his medals from the First World War and said, "I have been a soldier. I bitterly regret that I am one no longer. But as there isn't a rifle left on the Island, I realise I must obey orders.'" There seems to have been no doubt of the effectiveness of this gesture, and 'he and Lanz...formed an immediate liking and respect for one another, which was soon reflected in the form taken by the Occupation.' ¹³ In any case, at this point in time, the Germans apparently thought that the war, at least with Britain, was not going to last much longer. As Captain Gussek said: 'This is only a temporary Occupation, only a matter of weeks. You must realise that the war is virtually over.' ¹⁴

In Jersey, on 30 June, Alexander Coutanche later remembered in his recorded memoirs that he was sitting at home when he received a call from May Sherwill in Guernsey to tell him that the Germans had arrived. His next call was from Alexander Maxwell in London, who told him:

It may be a long time before we talk again. There is nothing much I can say...I repeat that it is the King's personal wish that you and the Bailiff of Guernsey remain at your posts. He will not accept the position of being unrepresented in the Islands in their moment of danger... We know that we can rely on you to face up to the situation, terrible as it may be... There is no advice

one can give...in these conditions. But when we meet again I feel sure that...you [will] have worthily followed the example of Burgomaster Max of Brussels.¹⁵

This man, when threatened by a bullying German officer in the First World War, who ‘crashed his revolver down on the Burgomaster’s desk,’ was reputed to have done the same thing with his fountain pen, saying ‘that is all I have to fight with.’¹⁶In view of his first meeting with Major Lanz, it would seem likely that Ambrose Sherwill had been given a similar exhortation.

Later that same day, Coutanche was called to meet the Germans at the airport, and then unexpectedly at his home. On the second occasion, he was caught in his gardening clothes, but nothing daunted, he and Captain Gussek ‘took good stock of each other through their monocles.’¹⁷Here, relations were not to be as ‘cordial’ as reported in Guernsey, but still they were on a ‘correct’ basis for most of the time. The early attitude of the German bosses was most certainly different from that of many of their counterparts in the rest of Europe, where surface civility provided a thin veil over a whole range of cruel policies enacted behind the scenes. But in the Channel Islands - although no one seems to have doubted that the Germans would carry out their instructions from headquarters, even if this meant wiping out the population - there does appear to have been more fellow feeling between the Occupier and the indigenous population, than in many other occupied territories. In fact, Major Lanz was later described by Sherwill as: ‘absolutely straight and kindly,’ and the two men were reported to have been able to speak ‘openly to each other.’¹⁸This general *modus operandi* seems have been borne out by a later statement made by one of the Island girls, Betty Bois, who acted as secretary and translator to the Germans during the war, who said that many of the Germans were: ‘reasonable human beings and not at all fanatical.’¹⁹

As regards the question of civil administration, Alexander Coutanche remembered that Captain Gussek made it clear in July that he would be satisfied if government of the islands remained in their hands, subject to various conditions. But on 9 August, he was replaced by Colonel Schumacher, and then by Colonel Graf von Schmettow, who arrived at the end of September the same year. Meanwhile, the Islands became part of the Department de la Manche in Normandy, and despite the appearance of being in charge of their own affairs, possession of any real independent power was purely academic, as illustrated by a proclamation issued on 8 July 1940, which was to form the permanent basis of legal relations between the Insular government and the German Forces. In effect the relationship worked as follows:

the Germans governed in the Channel Islands by right of conquest and German Orders were registered in the Royal Court. All communications in Jersey between the German Field Command and States Departments were passed through the Bailiff's office, with the result that Island administration was carried on as usual, except that new laws were submitted or approved by the German Field Commandant instead of the King in council.²⁰

But, as may be expected, German Orders took precedence over any of His Majesty's statutes. As Kenneth Lewis wrote on 17 November 1941, this caused all kinds of problems due to 'the continual conflict between German Orders and... laws of the Royal Court.' Reverend Ord described the position in a nutshell on 28 October 1940: '[Two Orders issued]...the second...makes the Bailiff responsible for the execution of German Orders.' There was therefore no choice but to apply them, and concessions had to be won through good will, good luck, or appeals based on the Hague Convention.

Thus, whilst most surface dealings were characterised by courteous co-operation, behind the scenes, the grip grew ever tighter. Meanwhile the Bailiff continued to preside over the Royal Court, with its hybrid version of the Law, and variable background of

barbaric interrogation methods, with penalties fixed by consent of the German Authorities, 'thus degrading [it] to the ignominious status of a puppet tribunal,' whilst the States Assembly also continued only by permission of the Field Commandant, who also approved the minutes.²¹

Duty

From the earliest days of the German landings, because of their prominence and position, as well as their obligation to deal closely with the enemy, the Island Administrators were inevitably identified as a distinctive group of players upon the Occupation stage. The unique nature of their position in the beginning has already been discussed, but the way in which they afterwards dealt with their situation, effectively being recast as servants of the German Reich, was also dependent upon what were for many the habits of a lifetime. Long traditions and protocols of courtesy, known to be associated, not just with civil servants, but also with any elite, or group of people charged with responsibility of care for their fellow citizens could not easily be cast aside, but some of the associated courtesies only served to add to the feelings of disgust felt by some observers amongst the population. One example of this was when Victor Carey was noticed bowing before some German official at the public funeral of Allied servicemen, who had been washed ashore on the Islands from the wreck of H.M.S. *Charybdis* in October 1943. But the basic tenets attached to such duties continued to apply, and letters beginning 'I have the honour,' or 'I beg to inform you,' can be found in everyday correspondence between Island government departments and the Kommandantur, a fact which may also have enhanced the impression of 'cowardly subservience' gleaned by some.

In his book, *How Societies Remember*, Paul Connerton offers the following insight into the actions of a close-knit governing class:

when its leaders have to take decisions in crises which they cannot wholly understand and where the outcome...is impossible to foresee... it is then that they will have recourse to certain rules and beliefs which 'go without saying,' when their actions are directed by an implicit background narrative which they take for granted.²²

Maurice Halbwachs explains further:

In every major administration there are traditions alongside technical matters. Each individual who enters a profession must...open himself to this sensibility that may be called the corporate spirit, and which resembles the collective memory of the professional group... [This] sensibility is...fortified from age to age...and...[w]hen in the exercise of their functions functionaries enter into relations with other people...[to discuss the specific business of their encounter]...they do not consider it from the same perspective. The functionary wishes to fulfil the obligations of his function, which are imposed upon him as on all members of his profession.²³

The Oath

When these explanations are added to what we know of the instructions given to the Channel Island Officials by the British Government, the apparently inexplicable differences in paradigm between these groups and the various others which comprised the rest of the population, become clear. The key lies within the Oath, which the departing Lieutenant Bailiff of Jersey administered to Alexander Coutanche, on 21 June 1940. Extracts are very specific:

you will promise here in the Presence of God that you will faithfully fulfil the said office under our Sovereign Lord King George the Sixth... You will aid and defend all Jurisdictions...Liberties, Rights, Dignities, Laws, Customs and Privileges of the said Island with the welfare of the Public and advancement of the same.²⁴

Simply by repetition of this Oath, the duties of the responsible Island government officials were already prescribed, with little or no allowance for interpretation or alteration, unless those affected wished to be foresworn, and fail in their duty to both their office and their King. Their obligations also included a duty to observe International Law, in particular to honour the Hague Convention, which - although it was later broken at will by the Occupier - had been signed by His Majesty the King of the United Kingdom, as well as by the Emperor of Germany in 1907. As Charles Cruikshank points out, even though the Convention was not directly relevant, because no armistice had been concluded between the Reich and the British Empire, yet

since the Island administrations were subordinate to the occupying power the German authorities should [sic] conduct themselves according to the Convention. This was laid down on the assumption that the Islanders would obey laws made by the occupying power and that there would be no serious friction between [them].²⁵

Although no copy of the Convention was even available in Guernsey until the Germans had been there for twelve months, and the fact that it was 'not a very precise document when you [came] to apply it,' in the absence of anything else, it was to become the basis and mainstay of the strategy of most Island officials.²⁶ But unfortunately, although some articles of the Hague Convention proved a life line to the authorities in matters relating to the provision of labour, and requisition of commodities, such benefits were balanced by others, which imposed what John Leale later described as 'responsibilities' of 'good behaviour.'²⁷ These responsibilities are very specific, and even though officials have been taken to task for not supporting those who offended against the Germans, and for opting for what has been perceived to be the easier route of co-operation with the enemy for the sake of expediency, or even in support of 'Utilitarian' principles, the fact remains that their chosen course of action was apparently supported by the rules of International Law. 'To quote paragraph 384,

Section VIII of the Commentary on the Hague Convention (Manual of Military Law - Occupation of Enemy Territory,)' this article states:

It is the duty of the inhabitants to behave in an absolutely peaceful manner, to carry on their ordinary pursuits as far as possible, to take part in no way in the hostilities, to refrain from every injury to the troops of the occupant and from any act prejudicial to their operations and to render obedience to the officials of the occupant.²⁸

In accordance with this, as if to add insult to injury in the eyes of the general populace, nine months after the Occupation began Jurat Leale was evidently seeking to impose the Government paradigm on the population at large, when he condemned all behaviour calculated to annoy the Germans, claiming that those people who had decided to stay in the Islands, had already tacitly agreed to co-operate when they made the decision not to evacuate in June 1940. As several diarists pointed out, this was patently not the case, and as Mrs. Frampton recorded: 'Everybody is furious with him.'²⁹

Alexander Adam explained further:

On the Saturday [22 June] the panic became worse. Hundreds continued to leave homes, jobs and all that they possessed...[Around this time] one of our Jurats...advised all and sundry to return to their homes...and... persuade[d] many hundreds of intending evacuees to remain on the Island, in some cases against their better judgement...[Then] on the following Friday... H.M. Procurer ...advised any person who felt antagonism towards the Germans to leave the Island, as any expression of this feeling could only lead to the punishment of the remaining inhabitants. Unfortunately...the advice offered proved to be too late as we...had [already] had our last boat.³⁰

As time rolled on, this responsibility under International Law: 'which denies a population the right to attack the occupying forces,' was to prove a major instrument in driving a further wedge between the officials who felt duty bound to enforce these

provisions, and the rest of the population.³¹ The fear of the officials was of course, that any violation of part of the Convention could easily result in a refusal by the enemy to honour any, or all parts, of the rest. In other words, any law, even with flaws, was seen to be better than no law, and it seemed likely that to refuse to co-operate in the area of ensuring good behaviour, would remove bargaining rights of any kind, leaving the population even more vulnerable to the enemy's whims. In this way, the isolation of the Island officials was to become even more pronounced, but probably of equal importance in their decision-making process was the constant presence of German threats, and risk of reprisals being taken at random upon the rest of the population, if they were not seen to be accommodating the invader's wishes.

Threats

Threats of hostage taking, and the likelihood of other punishments being meted out on the Channel Islands, is yet another reality of the Occupation which seems to have been scorned, brushed aside, or simply ignored by some later writers who have sought to portray the face of wartime Island Government as mainly collaborationalist. Just one recent example, from an article in the *Daily Mail* dated 29 May 2002, well illustrates this attitude. Under the heading 'Our Darkest Hour,' adapted from their book, the *End of the Beginning*, the authors give their account of the mechanisms by which the Jewish population of the Channel Islands were first listed, and then deported to France in 1942. Towards the end of the article, the writers claim: 'Obstruction and protest might have lead to local compromise, and the worst the Bailiff and his officials could have expected was the loss of their jobs.' Bearing in mind that dealing with the Jewish question was one of Hitler's most fanatically applied areas of ideology, the suggestion that local compromise may have been achieved seems quite fanciful: matters relating to the subject will be discussed later in this study. However, claims about the 'worst the Island officials could have expected' as a result of disobedience, are not so easy to foresee. In spite of Sherwill's stated wish, that 'this occupation be a model to the world - on the

one hand tolerance on the part of the military authority...and on the other...the strictest conformity - with orders and regulations issued by the German Commandant and the civil authorities,' it is none the less certain that 'the territories occupied by Germany were administered in violation of the laws of war.'³²In fact, as Reverend Ord noted as early as 12 October 1940, 'we have lived long enough to know, if we did not previously, that the German military mind cannot be trusted to act liberally and to think other than crookedly... the initial 'courtesy'... now clearly appears as a veneer for calculated schemes.'

Next, perhaps John Leale, who took over as President of the Controlling Committee of Guernsey when Ambrose Sherwill was deported, should have the right of reply. In his Report to the States, delivered on 23 May 1945, he noted the following:

There seems to be an idea prevalent that if only one was firm enough the Germans would give way, I don't know on what basis this theory is founded... They were always at the right end of the gun and up to the last few months they were confident... that they would win the war. Underestimating one's opponents is a very common form of human error... [but] it brings its own punishment and is therefore just foolish. With governments the punishment is passed on to the community and... is therefore unpardonable.

He concludes:

Full marks for wishful thinking should be given to those who pathetically clung to the idea that the Germans would shudder if we showed our teeth and snarled.³³

So, how realistic were the German threats? Since the truth of John Leale's post-war Report could be doubted by any who wish to assume that he was just making excuses after the fact, one needs to seek actual evidence to support claims that German threats

were indeed real, and not just idle words included within copies of Orders and penalties, which although they were applied in France, were likely to be ignored by kindly German officials in the Islands. The German view is made clear by Dr. Casper, one of the senior administrators in the Islands during the first half of the Occupation. When asked in a later interview what would have happened in the event of the Island officials' refusal to co-operate, his reply was typical of later apologist distinctions, which were often made between the so-called 'good' German military and the S.S: 'if they had refused there would have come the S.S. Police to the Islands...S.S. Police would have been independent both from the Military Government and from...their Command...we were lucky that they did not come.'³⁴ Whether or not they were indeed 'lucky' is open to debate, but certainly at the time the Island officials were anxious to keep the S.S. out of the picture as far as possible.

On the subject of other threats made by the Occupier, the contemporary situation has also been vague. This is partly due to the fact that hard information has not been available, but generally it seems to have been assumed by posterity, that since large numbers of hostages were not seen to be taken out and shot, as they were for example in neighbouring France, then such executions could not have happened in the Channel Islands. Upon this deduction, then seems to have been built another assumption, that the Island government could and should have showed their collective teeth and snarled at the enemy more often. However, there is plenty of evidence that threats were made, and various lists of hostages taken. In fact, in 1942, apart from Victor Carey's earlier claim that the Germans had a list of eighty hostages, whom they were threatening to shoot or deport, it is known that around Christmas-time, people who refused to provide information about neighbours who may have had illegal wireless sets, were also placed on a list of potential hostages.³⁵

In John Leale's Report, he makes mention of another little known incident where: 'In the very early days of the Occupation the Germans threatened, unless they were satisfied that no one was harbouring members of the British Army, to shoot twenty of the leading citizens.' In addition, and maybe referring to the same incident, 'the Bailiff's grandson, Peter Carey, said in a letter to the *Daily Telegraph* that shortly after the Germans landed Sir Victor was told that unless he signed a proclamation he would have to select twenty people for execution.'³⁶In support of these assertions, and to illustrate that such measures were in line with German policy in general, one need only read some of the notices placed in the Islands' Press by the Commandant's Office. For instance, in 1941, Colonel Schumacher published a notice 'in which the public is solemnly warned against all acts prejudicial to the safety of the German troops...[It refers] to various incidents which have occurred in Guernsey during the winter' and concludes that 'the most severe penalties are to be expected in the event of a repetition.'³⁷In Spring 1942, another announcement signed by General Knackfuss after the attempted escape of Peter Hassall and his friends from Jersey in May, shows that the notices previously issued by members of the Island government were not exaggerating the risks involved in these ventures. It reads: 'In case of a repetition... measures will be taken against all persons of military age in the Islands, which measures may lead to their being interned in camps on the continent.'³⁸The severity of these measures was because escapes were treated as sabotage, since all escapees had the potential of carrying with them secret information about the status of the Islands to the Allies.

To clarify the general position of the Channel Islanders as potential hostages of the Reich, the Pfeffer Report of September 1941 has this to contribute: 'For the moment the inhabitants should be regarded as hostages for the British people.'³⁹This was to prove especially relevant when the deportation of British-born Islanders began in September 1942, as a reprisal for the detention of German nationals by the British in Iran. As if to make matters worse, and more frightening, only the month before these deportations, on

August 3, Reverend Ord noted in his diary perhaps the most chilling and ‘vilest “Bekanntmachung” [Order] from General Knackfuss, dated 27 July. It is quite specific, and should remove all doubts about the intentions of German Command:

As from August 1st 1942, all inhabitants of the Channel Islands who are held in custody for any reason by the German authorities, either in the Channel Islands or in France, are liable to the DEATH PENALTY if any attacks or acts of sabotage are made against the Occupying Power in the Occupied Territory.’ [The General adds]: ‘ In addition, I declare that henceforth I reserve to myself the right to nominate certain members of any Parish who will be liable to the Death Penalty in the event of any attacks against communications, as for instance harbours, cranes, bridges, cables and wires... The population of the Island are once more reminded that, in accordance with... German Military Law and in agreement with the Hague Convention, penalties are as follows: Espionage - Death... Sabotage- Death... High Treason - Death... or penal servitude for life.

Of course, the threat contained within the first few lines of this notice was in direct contravention of the Hague Convention, and as the Reverend points out: ‘Nothing is said about cold-blooded shooting of hostages.’ On this subject, the Islanders would have had no doubts about the likelihood of captives - whether hostages or otherwise - being shot, since they still had fresh in their minds the harrowing fate of Francis Scornet, whose execution on 17 March 1941, had also been in violation of the Convention. As an enemy national who had been captured when he landed on Guernsey, mistaking it for the Isle of Wight, from whence he and his companions had hoped to join the Free French Forces, he should not have been liable to the death penalty. In the event, he was tried in Jersey and taken to face his execution in a lorry, with a coffin placed beside him. He died bravely, and of his fifteen friends who received varying lengths of prison sentence, five of the remainder also died before the end of the year, as a result of ill treatment or torture. This young hero, and his gallant companions were taken to the

heart of the Island peoples, who were shocked by their treatment. It is not difficult to imagine the reduction of trust in German standards of human justice, and of their respect for the Law, which followed in the wake of such a tragedy. The Islanders were both touched and disgusted, in the same way as they had been during the first air raids on the Islands, when they learned of the deliberate machine gunning of their lifeboat and ambulance.

The implementation of Hitler's 'Nacht und Nebel' Decree of 7 December 1941, and of the 'Third Degree' method of punishment, which had been introduced after 12 June 1942, also took their toll when they were introduced not just into the rest of Europe but also into the Channel Islands, and both added to the climate of fear and uncertainty. Neither were the Island officials immune from these and similar dangers. Towards the end of 1940, Ambose Sherwill had been placed in solitary confinement in the Cherche Midi Prison in France, where, he told Alexander Coutanche during a secret visit to Jersey after his release: 'I have suffered malnutrition to the point of near starvation, and...solitary confinement until I was nearly driven round the bend.'⁴⁰In Jersey, Edward Le Quesne, of the Labour Department was imprisoned for keeping a wireless set, but he was sent to the local gaol, and is said to have almost enjoyed the break from dealing with endless German demands for labour. Both of these men had high-ranking German Officers to speak on their behalf, but neither was able to completely escape punishment for his offence, and Sherwill was very lucky not to be shot.

From the summer of 1942, penalties for even minor offences against the Occupier gradually became more harsh, and several prominent members of St. Saviour's Parish, including the late Canon Cohu, were given Court Martial sentences ranging up to four years penal servitude, for listening to and passing on BBC news. On 28 July 1943, J.H. L'Amy also recorded in Jersey that punishment had been extended to include 'the death penalty in certain cases, for the retention of wireless sets.'⁴¹As the months passed, more

officials amongst the Island administration teams would also be left with no illusions about the safety of their own position. Vigorous protests had been made about the deportation of citizens which began in September 1942, but officials in both Jersey and Guernsey were told that this was an order from the highest authority, and that there was no hope of appealing against it. Everyone was devastated by the prospect of so many deportations for no apparent reason, and the Island administrators considered their resignation on the issue. Questions were asked by Coutanche in Jersey; and by the Bailiff, Ambrose Sherwill and John Leale in Guernsey, about the destination of those people who were being sent away, but no answers were given. It was widely feared that they would be sent as hostages to Germany, or placed as human shields in German cities that were currently being bombed by the RAF. Their fate was completely unknown, and just as so many other citizens of Europe were being displaced from their homes with only a few hours notice, so more than two thousand people from the Channel Islands would eventually be selected and deported. In Sark, the Island's Agricultural Officer, Major Skelton, and his wife Madge, were amongst the eleven Islanders who had been named. The fear and uncertainty induced by these notices should not be underestimated, and for some the prospect of a journey into the unknown was too much to bear. The following day the Major was found to have committed suicide, and his wife was taken to hospital barely alive. In Guernsey too suicides were notified, as of Mr John Sibley, who was found gassed in his home.

In the months that followed, more selections were made, and on 27 January 1943, Louis Guillemette in Guernsey was asked by the Feldkommandantur to make arrangements for medical examinations to take place at the Regal Cinema. Included amongst those required to attend were British ex-Army Officers, and a large number of the Island's key administrators, most notably the Bailiff Victor Carey, John Leale, Ambrose Sherwill, the Health Officer, Dr Symons, and the Agricultural Officer, Raymond Falla. At the time, no one doubted that the purpose of the examinations was to

serve as a preliminary to deportation, and although not all on the list were actually sent away to Germany, it seems that any modification of the original list may have been due to the intervention of Baron von Aufsess, after discussions between himself and Messrs. Leale, Sherwill and Symons.

In Jersey, the position of Alexander Coutanche was hardly more secure. As he later recorded in his memoirs: It was

some time after D-Day, Aufsess told me, 'There are four people in the fortress who are under suspicion...von Schmettow...von Heldorf... myself and...you. The end is on the way and I have an idea that we are going to be eliminated. I should not like you to be under any misapprehensions in thinking that there is nowhere they can send you because they are preparing a concentration camp in Alderney for you, and a few others... We shall not all be taken at once...I will try to keep you posted...When I telephone...to say that we are now only one, that will be the time for you to look out.'⁴²

The Dame of Sark seemed to be more fortunate, but in spite of her own position which seemed relatively secure, her American-born husband, Robert Hathaway, was amongst twenty-seven additional Sarkese who were sent to internment camps in Germany on 13 February 1943.

Thus it becomes evident that simply to dismiss the possibility, or indeed probability of serious reprisals being taken against any official who refused to obey his German masters is totally unreasonable. Assumptions to the contrary are not supported by either record or memory. In fact, any serious resistance or disobedience would have much more likely carried the risk, as it did on the Continent, not just of unemployment, but the possibility of imprisonment or execution for sabotage, or inclusion on the list of undesirables, ready to be used as potential hostages or candidates for deportation.

During the Occupation, the whole population of the Islands was in a constant state of uncertainty and tension, especially after the trauma associated with September 1942, which as some diarists point out, was probably exactly what the Germans intended. Furthermore, over the years there were many occasions when matters could have taken a turn for the worse. One such incident illustrates very well how events could be totally dependent for their outcome on the sympathetic attitude of just one German soldier. When the second incident of a cut telephone wire was discovered in a field in Guernsey, two men were sent to investigate and report. The German military policeman at the scene was reported to have looked keenly at his opposite number, a Guernsey policeman, and said: 'I think the wire has been broken by a cow.' His companion 'solemnly agreed...and no more was said.'⁴³The significance of this exchange, although somewhat farcical in its surface triviality, lies in the fact that in neighbouring France, a man was shot for just such an offence.

The Islanders were to have similar good fortune in Sark, when a German Doctor, August Goebel, was found murdered in April 1942. At first security measures were tightened, but fortunately it was soon decided that the likely culprit was the doctor's own batman, whose body was later discovered down a well. Eventually this conclusion was proven to be wrong, but given a different interpretation at the time, events could easily have followed along the same lines as they did in France. There, the killing of two German soldiers in separate incidents between September 1941 and May 1942 resulted in the murder of ninety-eight French hostages. The situation escalated, and the result was even more killings. If such a scenario had begun to be played out in the Channel Islands, no one can predict what may have been the likely outcome. What is certain is that lists of hostages were ready prepared, and in addition, around D-Day a number of British ex-officers were removed from their homes during the night and held in custody with no explanation given. They were later released, but one must assume

that they had a lucky escape. After all, as the Jersey secretary, Betty Bois, said later:

‘These were men with whips and guns.’⁴⁴

Patriotism

Last, but not least of the considerations which undoubtedly helped shape the strategy and actions of the Island administrators, were their patriotism and family ties. As in many areas of life, things are not always what they seem, and behind the apparent surface intent of many actions, may lie subtle depths and unknown circumstances. Clearly, John Leale’s post-war Report is in agreement, when he says: ‘the apparent motives for the actions of an administration are by no means always, perhaps they are seldom, the true motives. To discover these one has to penetrate more deeply.’⁴⁵

Returning briefly to Victor Carey’s notice of £25 Reward on the facing page to this chapter, and to the notice which refers to British Forces as ‘the enemy,’ it must now be concluded that the apparent betrayal of British patriots and Allied service personnel in the relevant newspaper articles is not what it appears to be. This is not to deny the impact of the publications at the time, which without the benefit of the later explanations, was totally dependent on the perceptions and interpretation of each individual reader. No one would expect otherwise. As is the case with diary accounts; the diarist, or witness, mostly represents the truth not necessarily as it is, but as he honestly believes it to be at the time. Since few people had personal contact with the States members, it was relatively easy to judge their actions, and sometimes their apparent disloyalty to Britain, simply on the evidence as it appeared before them. Conditions during much of the Occupation were hard, and as survivor-witness Frank Keiller pointed out much later: ‘Living and surviving as we did, in an emotionally charged and hostile environment, it is not surprising that the States officials in particular - but almost everyone else as well - were considered fair game, especially if they were, or seemed to be better off than we were.’⁴⁶

Documents recording interviews with escapees from the Islands, now held within the Public Record Office, also reflect the main areas in which the Island administrators were criticised at the time. They are remarkably similar in their comments to those made within contemporary diaries, but - unlike many diaries - they represent only a brief snapshot of the witness' opinions, and are therefore generally uncompromising, having little or no chance for reconsideration or later development of views. They are statements made in front of an interviewer; coloured by the recent exhilaration of escape, and following personal exposure to whatever conditions had made them desperate enough to take the considerable risks associated with that escape. For example, taken on 17 November 1944, notes on the interrogation of two Guernsey men referred to States government members, who had been 'too passive in their attitude towards the German authorities.'⁴⁷ Other interviews a few months before had been even more damning. Indeed, one informant says quite frankly 'that there has been a good deal of nest-feathering...by the island bosses [who]...have not, by their example, encouraged any resistance to the Germans but rather the reverse. They have passively accepted the situation and have made what they could out of it.'⁴⁸

In spite of the obvious differences between many witness accounts concerning the activities of their government officials, history has always been comprised of conflicting narratives, and it is likely that each one probably represents an honest appraisal of the 'facts' as perceived by the author at the time. However, it is important to recognise that some opinion was coloured by prejudice, or even anger concerning some of the Island governments' perceived misdemeanours, both past and present, which stand out amongst what is otherwise quite reasonable comment. For example, one letter sent by Wilfred Renouf, a man whose father had been killed during the first German raids on the Islands, was delivered by escapees to Britain, and recorded during their interrogation on 17 November 1944. It reads:

There has been among some sections of the community a certain feeling that Statesmen have been too passive in their attitude towards the German Authorities...but...resulting correspondence and revelations have convinced them that in point of fact the States...did do all it could to mitigate conditions and stand up to the Germans...There remains, however a strong opinion that the Bailiff is too old...Jurat Leale is considered energetic, but it is remembered that he was foremost in opposing the evacuation of the Island in 1940...[I]t is in fact generally considered that the States behaved rather crassly at this critical moment... Informants cite the following episode as an instance of the poor side of the picture:-‘The Bailiff published the following notice in the...‘Press’ and ‘Star’ in July ’41...‘Reward of £25.’

The letter continues

Despite their...wilful misconduct during the evacuation... our States went ONE further by offering the above reward against their own fellow-countryman! Many decent thinking citizens be [sic] prepared to see that justice will be done. Before the war, we said, away with traitors...we must make sure this time.⁴⁹

This strongly worded conclusion, taken along with similar reports, could be very damaging to the government’s reputation. However, even though Mr. Renouf was active in trying to help his fellow Islanders to obtain extra food, and in offending against the Occupier to the extent that he was arrested several times, when one reads his unpublished memoirs, one is bound to conclude that he had a very particular view of some of the government’s more controversial policies. In fact, his opinions are delivered with such emotion, that the value of his judgement must be suspect in this area. In a letter to Victor Carey dated 16 March 1945, he wrote:

Dear Sir, re your recent appeal to farmers to produce more milk... I have spoken to a number of farmers...and they tell me they will not attempt to increase the yield...as it is mostly undesirables who get the extras. And especially as you with the Controlling Committee have

never really attempted to counter the enemy...How many people... have been treated 'free' for diseases contracted because of their filthy immoral habits ...To how many HARLOTS have you given 'full cream milk' and the best of other foods so that they could feed their little 'Jerry bastards,'...How many 'respectable incapables' have had to suffer through your wanton neglect.

Although this is later qualified by: 'Admitted the Germans must have some share of the blame,' Mr. Renouf concludes: 'but you also are not blameless.'⁵⁰

Returning back to the early days of the Occupation more explanation is now available to set against some of these specific accusations. First, in the matter of the Act against 'Dangerous Speech,' instigated by Ambrose Sherwill at the end of July 1940, Sherwill explains in his unpublished memoirs: 'I feared a stiffer sentence if the Germans tried him, [Mr Collins, in a Military Court,] so I hurried a law through the Royal Court...I drafted the ordinance and got Victor Carey's agreement.'⁵¹ William Bell explains further: 'Mr Sherwill believed that Mr Collins was a sick man and would not survive a prison sentence. He was sure that if he were tried by the Germans he would be found guilty and sentenced to a term of imprisonment, which could well be served on the continent.'⁵² It is also worth noting here that once the legislation had served its purpose, it 'was never invoked again.'⁵³

Concerning Sherwill's message which was later to be broadcast on Radio Bremen, there were also hidden circumstances involved behind the façade of bonhomie. The Occupation of the Channel Islands had been the cause of great humiliation to Britain. With her troops ignominiously evicted from Europe, Winston Churchill had been furious, and on 2 July, only two weeks after he had reluctantly agreed to let the Islands go without resistance, he minuted General Ismay asking for a plan to send in a reconnaissance mission. Only four days later, on 6 July, Second Lieutenant Hubert

Nicolle embarked in a submarine to make a one-man survey of his native Island of Guernsey. Nicolle left the Island as two more officers - who were incidentally, ex-members of the Guernsey Militia - arrived on the night of 9/10 July. They were Second Lieutenants Philip Martel and Desmond Mulholland, and it was intended that they should provide further information about the state of affairs in the Islands, in advance of a commando raid known as Operation Ambassador. In the event, the operation was doomed to failure, and Martel and Mulholland were left stranded. After failing to get away in a stolen fishing boat, they went to Sherwill's house early one morning to seek his aid. They were immediately invited in, and 'to save the two subalterns from being shot as spies, Sherwill took a course of action which placed his own life in jeopardy.'⁵⁴

With the aid of a friend, Donald Bisset, he stole from the Town arsenal two Militia uniforms whose buttons were replaced by British Army ones [and]...then produced the two...men, duly arrayed...before Dr.Maass...After prolonged interrogation in Dinard, the Germans eventually accepted... that they had landed in uniform.' They were lucky, and the outcome was that 'they were treated as prisoners of war and Sherwill heard nothing more.'⁵⁵

Apart from demonstrating without doubt where the President of the Controlling Committee's loyalties actually lay, the timing of the surrender of Martel and Mulholland is also relevant to the tone of the Radio Bremen broadcast, which was made within two or three days of them being taken into custody. As a man who knew how it felt to have a son in the Royal Navy, Sherwill had good reason to be anxious to create the right background atmosphere for the two young Guernsey officers, on the grounds no doubt, that cordial relations with the Germans were more likely to produce leniency, and that co-operation may bring reciprocal benefits.

Later on in the year, Sherwill's continued efforts to establish a good *modus vivendi* with the Occupier were again destined to be severely undermined by the presence of

more British servicemen sent as spies to the Island. This time Hubert Nicolle returned on 4 September 1940, with Lieutenant James Symes. They also became stranded, and after weeks of seeking shelter with relatives and friends, they finally gave themselves up on 21 October, when several escape attempts had failed. As with the earlier landings, Ambrose Sherwill already knew of their presence, and this time laid himself open to the charge of deliberately misleading the Germans, by contriving to manipulate the wording of a notice of amnesty in the Evening Press. First, he suggested that the time limit for the surrender of any British Armed Forces personnel who may be in hiding in the Island be extended, and secondly he contrived to include the statement that 'if this direction is complied with, such personnel will be treated as POW and no measures will be taken against any of their relatives.'⁵⁶ Everything depended upon whether the Germans would keep this promise, made in their name.

While a decision was pending, all sixteen persons who had been implicated in sheltering the two officers were dispatched to solitary confinement in the Cherche Midi prison in Paris, where James Symes' father died in suspicious circumstances. Sherwill was also arrested and sent to Cherche Midi, where his life lay in the balance for several weeks. At this point, his work in promoting good relations with the enemy from the beginning of the Occupation was to stand him in good stead, and may have already produced the good will which saved not only his own life, but the lives of the other prisoners. In the weeks that followed, not only Major Bandelow, with whom he had developed a special respect and friendship, but also Colonels von Schmettow and Schumacher, all supported his position, and Major Bandelow asked High Command to relieve him from duty if the amnesty promise in the newspaper was not honoured.

As a footnote to this story, 'it is a curious commentary on human nature that some people in Guernsey, instead of applauding Sherwill and others for the risks they had taken in helping Symes and Nicolle, reproved them for having jeopardised good

relations with the Germans.⁵⁷ In fact, in spite of this and many other criticisms which have since been levelled at Ambrose Sherwill, especially around the accusation which he later admitted himself - that with hindsight he felt that some of his letters to the Occupier were a 'a bit smarmy' - two conclusions stand out.⁵⁸ First, as Frank Falla later confirms: 'unquestionably two British spies owed him their lives,' and second, however 'smarmy' his correspondence may have seemed, his patriotism was proven beyond any shadow of doubt, by his actions in what were potentially life threatening situations.⁵⁹ In support of this, one only need peruse excerpts from the report of his interrogation by the Judge of the Feldkommandantur, about a week before he was sent to France. The conversation proceeded as follows:

Question: 'Was there a word in English corresponding to the German 'espionage?'

Sherwill: 'There was indeed.'

Question: 'Did I not appreciate that the entry of Nicolle and Symes in civilian clothes was an act punishable by military law?'

Sherwill: 'I had.'

Question: 'Why had I not reported it?'

Sherwill: 'Because I clearly could not betray my fellow countrymen.'⁶⁰

After the removal of Sherwill, it was the duty of the new President of the Controlling Committee, John Leale, and the Bailiff to set aside their personal feelings and re-establish a good working relationship with the enemy for the benefit of the people of Guernsey. That all such Island officials had their own private feelings and reservations in their dealings with the Occupier is of course natural, and various interesting insights into the underlying attitudes of some, may be gleaned from snippets of conversations recorded by Professor Pfeffer during his visit to the Islands in 1941. Of Duret Aubin, who may have been suspected of being sympathetic to the Nazi cause from his compliments about the excellent behaviour of the troops in the early days of the

Occupation, the Professor states: 'The Attorney General of Jersey bent over backwards to give information about the Islands...but at the same time...left us completely in the dark.' In another part of his Report, there is a rather curious description of how Alexander Coutanche also received the team of investigators 'very correctly,' and answered 'our tentative question regarding the working of the ancient constitution [in the Islands] under modern conditions...by saying things were running very well. For instance he had managed to pass a law on...painless slaughter...but afterwards an envoy representing the Jewish interest in England had visited him and asked for ritual slaughter to be excluded.' Obviously intending to make a point, the Bailiff added: 'As a respectable Christian I immediately made a compromise with this respectable Jew...so you see how a respectable Christian can handle a respectable Jew and at the same time follow an apparently ancient constitution.'⁶¹

It is beneath the veneer of such apparently pleasant and helpful conversations, that the difficulties of defining any level of collaboration begin to manifest themselves. Quite clearly, in instances such as these one is bound to ask, is it reasonable to class this kind of apparent co-operation with the enemy as helping their cause, or would it be more accurately described as sugar-coated obstruction, or even implied criticism bordering on contempt? Notwithstanding this, whatever may have been his reservations about German ideology, it is true that Alexander Coutanche managed to remain on good terms with most of the Island Commandants, from whom he was able to command respect. Relations were also described by Dr. Casper as 'correct,' although he added that they never extended into 'personal connections' or friendship.⁶² Like Ambrose Sherwill in Guernsey in the early months of the Occupation, Coutanche also endeavoured to put his connections to good use, often receiving a sympathetic hearing from the Military Commander for his complaints and concerns. As he records in his memoirs: 'the significance of [this] lies, not unfortunately in its result but in the extent to which Schmettow was at least prepared to listen to me... This set up continued right up to D-

Day.’⁶³One example of such an interview involved the treatment of forced workers about whose terrible plight the Bailiff expressed his revulsion. He explains what happened:

The Russian prisoners of war...were brutally treated. After witnessing some horrible incidents myself I asked to see Schmettow. He appeared to be as shocked as I was when I told him how I had seen these wretched prisoners being driven to work... when their feet were so sore that they were wrapped up in sacks. I had seen them take the weight off their feet by walking on their elbows on the walls which abounded the road. He...promised to do what he could. It was, perhaps, in the nature of things that he was not able to do very much.⁶⁴

In June 1944, there is also evidence that the Bailiff was involved with Jurat Le Masurier in an effort to secure the temporary release of the prisoners Harold Le Druillenec, Louisa Gould and B. Pitolet of St. Ouen.⁶⁵The attempt was unsuccessful, as set out in a letter to the Bailiff from the Kommandant, dated 26 June, but it is interesting to note that, contrary to later accusations that no effort was made to help those convicted by German legal action, representations were made in an attempt to help these prisoners, one of whom later died in Ravensbruck. However, various letters of Appeal made for the lives of three others were much more successful. In a carefully worded missive to the Kommandant dated 22 November 1944, the Bailiff stated that the sentence of death pronounced on Lucy Schwob and Suzanne Malherbe ‘is causing anxiety and distress amongst the population...because of a feeling of repugnance against the carrying out of a sentence of death on women.’ He continued: ‘In view of the great difficulties which are facing the civil population in the future and of my desire to avoid anything calculated to arouse passion, I desire strongly to appeal for mercy on [their] behalf.’⁶⁶ The appeal was successful, as was another made on 25 April 1945, on behalf of Alice Thaireux, ‘a young woman of twenty, who...[was] passionately in love with [a] German soldier,’ who had deserted from the army and who was later shot.⁶⁷

In Guernsey too, appeals were made by Victor Carey on behalf of the young John Ingrouille, and on a more general level the Island authorities also allowed certain forms of resistance to flourish within their institutions. For example, underground news sheets were reportedly circulated within many government offices in both Jersey and Guernsey, and ‘Dr. R. McKinstry, the medical officer of Jersey’s Health Department, provided many escaped slave-labourers with false IDs and ration cards. In 1944/45 this type of help was extended to Jersey people on the run.’⁶⁸

Speaking in the 1990s about Alexander Coutanche, Betty Bois gave more substance to the picture of his dealings with the Germans: ‘After the Second Front was opened, the Nazis were getting nervous...so it was easier to put pressure on them,’ and ‘Coutanche became very fierce.’⁶⁹This view is supported by a statement made during a Press interview by Baron von Aufsess after the war, in which the Bailiff is described as an experienced administrator, ‘cold and vulpine-visaged, a wily old lawyer... clearly determined to emerge...as the strong and popular leader.’⁷⁰Von Aufsess also gives information about the apparent enmity between the Bailiff and Admiral Huffmeier, who took over command of the Islands in the last months of the Occupation. In his diaries, he remembers that the ‘Admiral looked very sour,’ as he informed

me how he had heard through his intelligence service of the Bailiff of Jersey’s hatred of him, and his open avowal of this...[He said] that the Bailiff had falsely accused him, the Admiral, of wishing only to wipe out the population...At their last meeting...the Bailiff had threatened him, if in veiled language, with legal proceedings after the war.⁷¹

But even in the last days before Liberation, there was still scope for misunderstanding the Bailiff’s actions. ‘On 6 May 1945, Coutanche had to appeal for calm.’⁷²One can only imagine the impatience of the population who had waited so long for their freedom, but ‘no measures’ urged the Bailiff, ‘should be taken to antagonise the

Germans.’ Even at this stage there was still no positive sign that the enemy would surrender peacefully, and so ‘behind the scenes he secured the release of thirty political prisoners.’⁷³

As if to confirm and illustrate further the difficulties of making any attempt at accurate judgements about the behaviour of particular government characters, the relationship between the Dame of Sark and the invader is perhaps the most difficult to appraise. On the first day that Major Dr. Lanz and Dr. Maass arrived at the Dame’s house and saluted, Mrs. Hathaway ‘not only greeted them with composure but started talking to them fluently in German. After a while Maass said to her: ‘so you are not afraid?’ to which [she] replied sweetly: ‘Is there any need to be afraid of German officers,’ [and] they all had a pleasant time together.’⁷⁴ As the Occupation progressed, there was never any doubt that the Dame remained largely in control of the situation, but unlike Coutanche, Carey and Leale, she did not hesitate to go beyond the ‘correct’ behaviour adopted by them, and often extended pleasant hospitality to the Germans, in spite of the fact that her husband was amongst those deported from the Islands. As a result, ‘the Germans were ready to do favours in return.’⁷⁵ In practice this meant that a German doctor tended Island patients, and a German boat ferried more serious cases to hospital in Guernsey. Other benefits were also gained, and, depending on one’s perspective in such matters, the Sarkese may arguably have been very well served by their leader.

Whatever our conclusions today about what may have constituted an acceptable level of co-operation with the Occupying power, or whatever criticisms have been levelled both at the time and since, these were the basic realities of the Occupation experience for the ruling groups in the Islands. Furthermore, it was also true, however grudgingly admitted, that: ‘the idea that an accommodation with the invader could be achieved in order to avoid worse was widespread among the population.’⁷⁶ In these circumstances,

the difference in attitude of the ruling group towards the problems which beset the whole community during the Occupation was not just a fact of life, but was also to be a very necessary prerequisite to finding such an accommodation. For the Island officials to have resigned *en bloc* at any point would simply have seemed to abdicate their responsibilities, and thus fail in the lonely task allotted to them.

However, their isolation as a group was also exacerbated by other factors, which became evident as their dealings with the Germans progressed. The feeling became almost palpable, and this separateness would later be confirmed by Alexander Coutanche's remark after his speech in the Royal Square at Liberation: 'Then I told them that I had been unable to mix with them during all these years and that I wished to go down into the Square and be amongst them. I went down and it was a wonderful thing to be able to mix freely with my people once again in their great excitement and enthusiasm.'⁷⁷

'I am not unaware that at times (the Island Officials) had to take decisions which were resented by those affected. These decisions were taken only after weighing the private needs against the background of the interests of the community...We were not at liberty to explain many of our actions...and it was not altogether unnatural that a public tired, fearful and irritated, should at times take a somewhat jaundiced view of some of our activities...

They did not see the picture as a whole...

Of the overwhelming bulk of our activities no one but ourselves knew anything'

Jurat John Leale's Report aux Etats de L'Ile de Guernsey, 23 May 1945¹

Dealing with the Enemy: Labour, Commodities and Rations 5.

‘On the other hand, by not knowing everything that was going on behind the scenes, the public were saved the worries and anxieties, present and future, which were the daily lot of the Committee...[We were plainly told] “If you don’t carry out the orders, then we shall have to act and we point out to you that the consequences to the population will be more unfortunate than if you do as we order you. It is for you to choose.”’²

Apart from the vast gulf between the Island officials and the local population in terms of their perceived patriotic duty towards Britain, the former were also to encounter a more practical separation from the hearts and minds of their countrymen, when they endeavoured to explain their policies and actions through the German-controlled Press. These difficulties served only to compound their isolation, rendering their duties even more troublesome. In fact at times - as already discussed - the Island Administrations faced a barrage of criticism, particularly before they decided to take steps to vindicate their actions by disseminating some information privately. That this strategy seems to have been at least partly effective, is borne out by the statement in Wilfred Renouf’s letter, recorded in England late in 1944, which confirmed that ‘revelations’ have since convinced many people that ‘the States did do all it could to mitigate conditions.’

But relations for many officials had not run smoothly since the early days, and there are many recorded incidences of the stormier side of their dealings with the Occupying Forces, whilst polite letters, memos and minutes still continued to pass routinely between them. However, this study does not intend to exonerate the Island officials

from mistakes which were undoubtedly made, or to use their difficulties as a blanket excuse or justification for these mistakes, which some members of the Administration, and later writers have honestly admitted. However, it is intended to take a balanced look at the set of circumstances in which they had to function. In Guernsey, John Leale sought to explain the situation as follows: ‘If we had to live over those years again, there are of course a number of things we should do differently, but...decisions sometimes had to be taken in a very short time and without...full knowledge of all the relevant facts.’ Later, when discussing the call for lists of ex-officers and other groups, he says that at the time, it seemed the Germans wanted them: ‘merely [for statistical purposes, or]...to keep a watchful eye on potential evil doers like myself!’ He explains further: ‘In all these things one did not know what they were up to...Under such circumstances...though we sometimes guessed right, we also sometimes guessed wrong.’³

Snippets of information such as these, all help to shape a more accurate contemporary picture of the general position of the Island governments as they carried out their day-to-day business. They also provide a clear indication of the urgent need that was apparently felt to defend their position upon the imagined face of the Occupation experience, as it was first being shaped after Liberation. But clearly, life at the top had not always run smoothly, and there is no reason to doubt John Leale’s claim that there were ‘long periods of time when the atmosphere was so tense’ that officials were often to wonder before meetings with the Germans: ‘What’s the row this time?’⁴ They also sought to make clear that the Hague Convention, which they had highly valued and meticulously observed in accordance with its status in International Law, had been completely disregarded by the Germans as and when it suited their purpose. At such times the Island representatives were simply told that the Germans disagreed with their interpretation of the Article in question, or that in any case, the exigencies of war rendered it irrelevant. Furthermore, if any attempt was made to force them to do their

own 'dirty work'- as some critics have suggested would have been the better course of action - a worse situation usually resulted. For instance, in practical terms, it was found that to tell them "you must do your own requisitioning," was tantamount to saying: "go and help yourselves to as much as you like."⁵ In these circumstances, it was concluded that to retain some control was better than having none.

As already mentioned, neither had the Island administrators the satisfaction of being able to publicly explain their role in implementing German 'Orders,' or to defend their position as events unfolded. There is unpublished evidence that at least some relevant articles prepared for publication in the Press were either obstructed or removed, so that ration cuts were often blamed on their alleged incompetence. Of course such notions were hardly likely to endear the administrators to their suffering countrymen, but the newspapers had little choice. In an undated resume of conditions during 1943, a writer in the Editorial Department of *The Star* noted:

The policy adopted by Mr. W [the German censor]...from which there has been no appeal...has often, too often been deliberately anti-Guernsey and anti-local Government and, although the Editor and Assistant Editor realised that the publication of matter supplied by Mr. W was resented by local officials as 'obstructionism,' and by the public as unpatriotic, there was, as stated above, no appeal...[As a result,] there have been...instances when such interference at the last moment of publication have led to 'key' members of the technical staff refusing to carry on and walking off the premises.

The resumé continues:

in addition...Mr. W also submitted many articles and gave instructions for others to be prepared entailing attacks on various local government departments, which the Editorial Department considered unjustified... Obstruction to our insular administration was again evidenced when on July 10, [1943]...by Mr. W's orders, an article dealing with Communal

feeding was taken out...as this was being locked up to go to press. This article was one of great importance to the whole community, and on July 14, a further case of censoring... occurred...on the subject of fuel...although the matter was [also] one of vital importance.⁶

Labour

‘Requisitions in kind and services shall not be demanded from municipalities or inhabitants except for the needs of the army of occupation. They shall be in proportion to the resources of the country, and of such a nature as not to involve the inhabitants in the obligations of taking part in military operations against their own country.’⁷

There are many claims of collaboration with the Germans on the part of Islanders in the matter of work. Generally, many writers have agreed, as Charles Cruikshank concluded, that even though the Island authorities did their best to hold the Germans to the terms of the Convention, they ‘could, and did, get round the restrictions...by inducing people to work for them on military projects through offers of high wages, better rations and other benefits. Notwithstanding these facts, the argument is rendered mostly academic due to the near impossibility of drawing a clear dividing line between military and non-military work.’ As a result, ‘the Germans themselves reckoned that up to three-quarters of the civilian population were working directly or indirectly for them; and this is undoubtedly true...although few...realised the fact.’⁸

What also complicated the issue was the fact that the Channel Islands were in a battle zone, and it was argued that some areas of work, for example, those related to camouflaging military installations to guard against air raids, and others involving loading and unloading of some commodities from the docks, were as much in the interests of the civilian population as the military. However, many disputes took place over the finer details. On one occasion, Peter King writes that ‘Coutanche complained

that the raising of St. Aubin's Bay wall [would protect] a road used by military convoys and therefore the Germans must do the work.' On another, 'when a gun emplacement was flooded...the Jersey Fire Brigade [pumped] out enough water to prevent anyone drowning, but not enough to save the ammunition.'⁹

On 22 December 1941, Kenneth Lewis recorded in his diary that

the Germans had recently asked the Controlling Committee [in Guernsey] to assist in the collection of old metals for Germany, they also said that the Channel Islands would benefit as some of the metal would be used to mend ships and rolling stock used to supply [them]... The Controlling Committee refused to give any assistance saying that they did not feel that they could help gather up war materials for their enemies. The Germans did not like this non-collaboration but said they appreciated our point of view...[In 1943,] the Germans had ordered the recruitment of compulsory labour. We had informed them that the British Commentary on International Law did not permit [this] ...and asked for a guarantee that this would be respected. No reply had been received until Major Kratzer handed to the Controlling Committee an unofficial Commentary on International Law... [with a statement that] they would not employ any requisitioned labour in any work against their own country... They had however, paid wages with which the local authorities could not compete. Mr. R.H. Johns [of the Guernsey Controlling Committee] stated that had the Germans not employed local labour there would have been extensive unemployment...and stated: 'Generally, the men felt that they were not being unpatriotic if they worked for the Germans as they believed that the fortifications were quite unnecessary and totally inadequate to stop the British troops.'

He estimated that 'approximately 50% of local labour had remained in food production, refusing the high paid work for the Germans,' and concluded that 'on the whole the men had behaved excellently,' adding 'that the local authorities had never ordered a man to work for the Germans.'¹⁰

In this case it is difficult to see how such large numbers did eventually end up working for the Occupier, and to get an accurate picture of how many of these people were likely to have been volunteers in the usual sense of the word. It is of course impossible to say with any certainty, but the question can be considered in the light of various witness, and other accounts. As is often the case after such a long passage of time, a few witnesses must be allowed to speak for the many, and on 20 March 1943, pre-Occupation Special Constable Herbert Williams, recorded in his diary:

I received orders...that I must report myself at Summerland House...for compulsory work with the German Forces. Hundreds of Guernseymen were affected by this order and it was a blow to everyone. I...was given a job as Electrician at...the main German Hospital...The real snag is that once they have got you, you never know what they will do next...and the Germans complain that the Guernsey folk are not...friendly with them.¹¹

Letters in the *Jersey Evening Post* of 27 July 1946, throw more light on the subject. Bearing in mind that these accounts were written after the war was over, and therefore would be more likely to have a different perspective on such matters, nevertheless, the writers had little to gain by telling their stories, and indeed one was contributed anonymously. The first letter begins:

Dear Sir, Perhaps the following account of how I became a worker for the Germans will prove of interest...Until July 1943 I was working for the Labour Department on a tree-felling job [when] four of us were singled out to report...for a little gardening work. The timekeeper who brought us this order agreed that this meant having to work for the Germans, but that it was only...for a few days. When I objected, he replied...‘if you don’t take what is offered there is nothing else’... We...were sent to Noirmont Point...sowing grass seed as camouflage around the gun emplacements...We were kept at this and similar work for twelve months. It is all very well for those who have never been ordered to work for the Germans to say how heroic they would have been by refusing...and going to prison instead. I would point out to these people

that if a man went to prison his dependants had to be kept by the civil authorities, and they were not noted for their generosity.

This latter claim is supported by Ralph Durand, who states:

Refusal to work at these tasks would almost certainly have been punished with imprisonment. There was no umpire to whom a workman who objected to the nature of his task could turn... There was also the consideration, though this was only known to the Controlling Committee, that the German authorities threatened that men who refused to work for them would be deported to France.¹²

The letter continues: 'I might add that I and hundreds of others were more nuisance to the Germans than we were worth, but they wouldn't let us go.'¹³ In fact, in Jersey, J.H. L'Amy had noted on 5 December 1941, that 'A German order entitled "Safeguarding the peaceful carrying out of work" was registered by the Royal Court.' This Order meant 'in effect, that a person working for the Germans is not allowed to leave his employment of his own free will.'¹⁴

The second letter in the *Jersey Evening Post* has similar points to make. After explaining that he was employed as a driver to the Forces, the writer asks: 'How did the farmers do their ploughing and such people as the bakers and wholesale grocers and haulage men manage? Not on the ration of petrol... but by the boys who drove for Jerry... Jerry never made any progress from me.'¹⁵ Such unrest amongst the Island workforce was also recognised during the War: as noted with irritation by German overseers, who sent letters to various Island officials, complaining of laziness and absenteeism amongst the men. It is also known 'that at one time there was so much discontent among workers who felt that they were being compelled to assist the enemy's war effort that some of the bolder spirits tried to organise a strike.'¹⁶ But, as it

turned out 'there were not enough workers willing to take the risk...and in many cases a bowl of soup...given at midday [was] a great temptation especially during the winter months.'¹⁷

These last explanations in particular, are highly relevant in what seems to have been at times a blanket accusation of collaboration, since levelled at Island workers such as these. In fact this attitude may well have been responsible for the current unemployment of the anonymous writer of the second letter in 1946. Questions have been raised over the years about how such men managed to square their consciences, and apart from the obvious case that pressing need was a justification for many, Nicholas Doumanis seems to provide the most definitive answer. Writing about the Dodecanese Islands, which were also occupied during the Second World War, and in full understanding of the fact that the predominant discourse on collaboration tends to be uncompromising, he explains: 'that in many cases, dominated people could find the various offers from their colonial rulers attractive, without necessarily accepting the legitimacy of their subjugation.' He also recalled, that amongst the Islanders themselves, the 'off the record view' reflected an understanding of the limited choices available to these men. As one said: 'None of them did any harm...They had families to support...What could they do!?'¹⁸

Apart from this, on some occasions compulsion to work was completely unambiguous, as laid out in the last paragraph of a notice dated 3 March 1943. Referring to Alderney, it said: 'A requisition of twenty-one workmen has already been made to the States of Jersey. [The demand] having to be satisfied in this way in the absence of volunteers.'¹⁹ Tricks were also used to solve the labour shortage. According to one French electrician who had been working for the Organisation Todt in Guernsey, the number of local people working for the Organisation was only 'a very small

percentage of OT labour,' and there is evidence to show that many of these were not willing volunteers.²⁰

OT building contractors began to appear in October 1941, but in August...the best remembered of all...[arrived] in Jersey...this being the firm of Theodor Elsche... Adverts in the *Evening Post* became a familiar sight, and almost nightly there were placed almost identical adverts by a local builder. Now it appears...that this man was a foreman for Elsche who acted as a recruiting agent...[In this way,] anyone responding would pretty soon find himself working for Elsche,[and once in service there was no way out.]²¹

Having mentioned the duplicity of German practices on some occasions, it should also be noted that some Islanders carried out deceptions of their own. There was for instance a

Guernseyman who deliberately sought employment as a car driver with Festinab 19. For two years his daily work consisted of driving...officials to almost every defensive site in the Island, details of which he consigned to his memory [O]n 14 August 1943 he organised a particularly daring escape from Guernsey to England, where he handed over his information to British Intelligence.²²

As the Occupation progressed, in spite of the letters of protest, many workers were siphoned out of the work pool of the Islands and into service for the Germans. Unemployment in the early days, due to the sudden contraction of the potato and tomato industries, meant that the Islands' Labour Departments had an enormous problem with which to deal. They tackled it with many new schemes, such as road widening, tree felling, and some textile and clog-making work, but still there remained large numbers of unemployed, and they were an obvious target for German labour recruiting agencies. As a result of this the President of the Department of Labour in Jersey, Edward Le Quesne endured an often stormy existence. 'As the Germans tightened their grip...

Deputy Le Quesne would be summoned to College House... where he would be shouted at and bullied while resisting the endless demands of the Germans for more and more labour to work on the fortifications.²³ In his diaries, he paints a vivid picture of his difficulties, which at the time would have been unknown to the general populace. On Wednesday, 30 September 1942, he wrote: 'The nervous strain of the past few weeks has played havoc with my nerves and after reaching home on Tuesday night I had to go to bed and spent two days... unable to do anything, unable even to eat my food.'²⁴ Conditions were to become worse. On 15 December 1943, he recorded: 'Jerry is in a very nasty mood over our refusal to assist him in procuring labour. He is adopting a nasty attitude and we fear his putting into operation similar laws to those he has already adopted in France.'²⁵

Edward Le Quesne's diaries also give insights into the general policy of his department in its dealings with the Germans. On 1 July 1941, he notes: 'I have been ordered to provide three hundred men... to increase the size of the Airport. I am not inclined to give any assistance,' and on 1 August, he ponders the continuing problem of 'whether or not we are compelled to provide labour... on works of a military nature... [since] there is always the fear that if we become truculent they might retaliate against our young men.'²⁶ Also in August 1941, when it still looked very likely that Germany would win the war, the next remark is even more interesting, as he concludes: 'We are however determined that whatever happens, nothing must be done that would lay us open to a charge of dishonesty at the termination of the War.'

Ten days later, in critical mood, he is however understanding of what he perceives as the weakness of some Islanders who have taken up employment with the Germans. 'Men... have let us down by volunteering to work for the Army of Occupation... it must be said... the inducement of extra bread and extra butter is hard to resist. Once more the old saying is proved true; 'When patriotism touches a man's pocket or his stomach, it

often evaporates.’²⁷ Then, two days later on 13 August, he records with apparent pleasure that ‘many more men have come in today and informed us that they cannot any longer work for the Germans...and that although this means a financial loss...they would rather that, than feel they were traitors to their country. Such men deserve, and will receive our fullest sympathy.’²⁸

Incidentally, the fact that the Germans paid higher wages than the Island government is mentioned quite often in diaries and other accounts. In his memoirs, J.H. L’Amy explains why this state of affairs was allowed to continue, especially since anyone working for the latter, had barely enough for his most basic needs and modest ration bill, let alone the ability to pay Black Market prices as commodities became increasingly scarce: ‘The enemy consistently forbade the payment of higher wages by the Insular Authorities...Needless to say they did not advertise the fact publicly.’²⁹

As if their problems with the Germans were not enough, the Island government also had difficulty obtaining supplies for the people from some of their own farmers and growers. On 10 October 1941, Mr Le Quesne describes what he interprets as the ‘scandalous milching of the States cow that is being carried on by both the working classes and the farming community.’ He adds: ‘The farmers threaten to stop growing wheat unless the price they ask is paid.’³⁰ In Guernsey,

Efforts to produce food were also hampered by the activities of Timmer Ltd, [a Dutch firm] who from the first day of the Occupation were apparently given carte blanche by the occupying authorities to do as they pleased regarding growing, and whose supplies went exclusively to the Germans...Timmer...secured large areas of glasshouses through the Germans, who forced the owners from their properties.

In addition Timmer Ltd bought supplies for the Germans from all over the Island

offering inflated prices and all kinds of other inducements. 'Despite constant representations made by the States to the German authorities, Timmers continued to do exactly as they pleased, to the detriment of the Island and food production. At one time...with starvation facing the civilian population, Timmer...had flowers growing in greenhouses.'³¹ Unfortunately, the ordinary Islanders had even less chance of controlling this situation than their officials, and Herbert Williams vented his frustration and anger in his diary on 11 May 1942: 'While we are starving here there are fields...of bulbs... the growers...are allowed to grow flowers... [and] sell them to the troops at a good profit...the States of Guernsey allow this state of affairs to go on, while the poor people have to pay [very high prices for vegetables] ...and so the scandal goes on.'³²

In these circumstances, which soon deteriorated into serious hardship for many people who did not have the benefit of extras, there was bound to be criticism of the Islands' ruling groups, and they could not help but become aware of it. As Edward Le Quesne recorded on 25 September 1942: 'We are hung in a state of uncertainty that makes life hardly worthwhile and many people are becoming nervous wrecks. All sorts of rumours are in circulation and many people seem to delight in inventing false and exaggerated tales, or attempting to criticise officials, and anyone who thinks or acts other than in the way they themselves think best.'³³

Rations:

NOTICE: 'Wherever German forces have occupied enemy territory they have safeguarded the supplies of foodstuffs and essential commodities for the civilian population...The British Command on the other hand, does its worst to hamper and interrupt the steady flow of supplies to the isles...It is typical of their well-known ruthlessness...At least, however, the island population ought to

know the guilty party!’ Signed: “Der Oberbefehlshaber der Armee”

Jersey Evening Post 30/4/1943

Over the issue of providing adequate rations of basic foods to the population, the Island governments found themselves in desperate straits on more than one occasion. It was due to criticisms associated with these crises that they eventually began to take steps to circulate more information about their struggle with the German authorities, in an apparently successful attempt to salvage at least some part of their reputation in this area. The food situation fluctuated over the Occupation period between lean and sometimes desperate, and writing in Guernsey on 15 October 1941, Ambrose Robin raised general suspicions about the system of food production in neighbouring Jersey, which he said was reported to be ‘a perfect scandal...[with] quite a lot of persons [being] most anxious to serve on the various committees and apparently thriv[ing]... The Bailiff [he claimed] is said to be as straight as a die, but some of the Jurats and Deputies are the worst offenders in breaches of the food regulations.’ This report must of course be treated with some scepticism. Bearing in mind that the Guernsiais did not even have accurate information about the doings of their own Controlling Committee, it is not unreasonable to suppose that their information on the running of Jersey would be even more sketchy. However, it is an indication of the sort of censure which inevitably followed such hardships as the people were undoubtedly facing. It is also true that much of the population of the Islands had already experienced severe shortages of essential commodities just a few months into the Occupation, and during the winter of 1941/42, the death rate per thousand rose alarmingly. The seriousness of the situation is born out by a report, written in January 1942 by Dr Symons, the Health Officer in Guernsey, who claimed ‘that sufficient food was not available to maintain health.’ He calculated that the rations only provided 1,323 calories a day [and] declared that this level of nutrition ‘would not support life for long...[adding that] every endeavour should be made to provide more food.’³⁴

Conditions during the following year were periodically better, but to a population who had been enduring hardships for almost three years, it is not surprising that the Press 'Notice' of 30 April 1943, heralding further cuts in rations came as a shattering blow. On the same day in Guernsey, the Bailiff and Sir Abraham Lainé were summoned to a short meeting at Grange Lodge with Major Kratzer. When they heard of the proposed levels of reduction in rations, which were also to apply to Jersey, they 'reacted...with anger and disbelief.'³⁵ At a later meeting in the Bailiff's Chambers, 'Sir Abraham Lainé said that it should be pointed out to the German Authorities that the Controlling Committee might be obliged to resign if they were forced to carry out these orders.'³⁶ It was also suggested that attempts should be made to contact the Bailiff of Jersey, and to write to the Committee of the International Red Cross Organisation in Geneva. Contact between the two Bailiffs was allowed, and it was agreed that both Islands should write to the Swiss Ambassador in Berlin, as the 'Protecting Power,' asking him to intervene on the Islands' behalf. Probably with knowledge of this conversation, and following a strongly worded letter from Alexander Coutanche, formally protesting against what the Superior Council had concluded was a measure: 'of reprisal against British Subjects for legitimate Acts of War carried out by the British Government,' a letter was received from the Commandant's Office on 3 May, amending the severity of the terms of the original Order.³⁷ But in Guernsey, in spite of this apparent climb down, another letter of protest was sent by Victor Carey to the Feldkommandantur on 7 May. He wrote:

re Reduction of food rations. I have received your letters of 30/4/1943 and 3/5/1943 with the utmost consternation and alarm. It is my duty to the inhabitants of Guernsey and Sark to stress most emphatically that the result of your Order...will be disastrous to the health of these communities...Even with the present food rations the output of work is decreasing and workers continually complain that they have not sufficient food...Furthermore, I feel that the time has come when my duty to the inhabitants of Guernsey and Sark compels me to demand

an investigation of our position by the Protecting Power, namely Switzerland. I am therefore enclosing an appeal to the Minister of that State...together with a copy of the relevant correspondence, which I request you to forward to him with the least possible delay.³⁸

In the event, the letters of appeal to the International Red Cross and the Swiss Minister bore no result, and it is possible that they were never sent. On the home front, the Controlling Committee insisted that the Germans sign their own notice of ration reduction which appeared in the Press, and since 'the Germans would not allow the papers to publish certain matters on behalf of the States Controlling Committee,' at least 'one prominent States Official' waited to speak to Reverend Ord after the evening service at St Sampson's on Sunday, 2 May. He was asked whether 'perhaps I might do what I could to circulate the facts as discreetly as I might.'³⁹The Reverend then proceeded to record in his diary an account of events, which also contained some very interesting footnotes:

My informant added certain marginal notes to the above. The excuse for this attack on a helpless people whom they promised to respect is that the RAF is sinking supplies of food 'kindly guaranteed by the German Army.' Yet in Jersey the bread ration is cut, though Jersey has not needed to import flour. In Guernsey the butter ration is cut, though we have supplied ourselves and the Germans...Again, the Germans have been bringing over vast quantities of cement and other fortification material, while for months past they have lied about their lack of room for the foodstuffs bought by the States and now lying at Granville.

In fact, the Germans always maintained that they had done their best to supply the Islands with the necessities of life to the detriment of their own troops, who, they claimed had gallantly perished on food supply ships sunk by the RAF. As some of the diaries recorded with scepticism, the reality was often rather different. At least one such ship was known to have been transporting bricks to the Island, but was subsequently

reported in the Press to have been laden with flour for the inhabitants.⁴⁰

With information like this to impart, it is understandable that the Germans should wish to obscure the details of what was happening. Neither is it surprising that the population should only partially see through the deception of the Occupier, and criticise their own people for not doing more to ease their situation. Conditions remained very poor, and in December 1943 there were more altercations between the Commandant's Office and the Controlling Committee, this time concerning fat rations. The Germans wanted to reduce rations by 50%, to an allowance of 3oz per week for the general population, to build up their own reserves to 36 tons. Strong objections were made by the Controlling Committee, who once more considered their resignation, but eventually they were forced to agree.

The overall food situation was to remain very difficult, and on 23 February 1944, Reverend Ord recorded in his diary: 'I myself can testify to having heard Jurat Leale pleading for the 'poor people of Guernsey' when I was waiting to see Prince von Oettingen. Less than two weeks later, on 6 March, we have more insight into why this pleading may have been thought necessary:

This weekend there were long queues for vegetables in Town. Relying on the recent Order giving precedence to members of the German Forces, some soldiers strode up to the head of the queues and bought up most of what there was. Large numbers of women who had stood patiently waiting for some hours were turned away, many in tears since they had nothing to take back for their families. [He added]: What heartbreaks and tragedies there are amongst us. It is not surprising that...seven deaths [were] noted in today's paper.⁴¹

Conditions in Jersey were much the same, and after the sea links with the Continent were disrupted and finally severed after the D-Day landings by the Allies at the

beginning of June 1944, the food situation deteriorated still further, and it became a matter of life and death. The islands were in desperate straits, and the population faced starvation. By late August, Alexander Coutanche had become painfully aware just how serious the situation had become. He also knew it would soon be much worse, and wrote to the Platzkommandantur on 28 August.

His letter, included with a twenty-one page report, together with information provided by Dr McKinstry, was very much to the point. It stated: 'the Insular Government would be lacking in its elementary duty to the People of Jersey if it did not, at this juncture, place on record its reading of the grave situation with which the Island is now faced.'

The Report concluded:

The Insular Government has just heard, with unfeigned dismay, that the Occupying Authorities are of the opinion that the siege can be maintained until January 31st 1945... Sooner or later the clash of arms will cease... The Insular Government believes that on that day, it, or such of its members as survive, will stand with clear consciences born of the conviction that it has failed neither in its duty to the people of Jersey, nor in its... observance of the Rules of International Law. May the Insular Governments be spared the duty of adding... an allegation that, by an unjustified prolongation of the Siege of Jersey, the Military Representatives of the German Government unnecessarily endangered the health, and indeed, the lives of the people of Jersey.⁴²

In Guernsey, the Island officials considered their position. All appeals for help sent to the International Red Cross, the Protecting Power, or the British Government had to go through the German Authorities. So far, there was no evidence that any such letters had been forwarded to their intended destinations, and there was now a desperate need to make the outside world fully aware of their current situation. On 20 October 1944, Adele Lainé reported in her diary: 'We have heard today that 27 lads have escaped from

Jersey and landed in France. It is said that they have taken with them a copy of the letter written by the Bailiff of Jersey to the Germans regarding the shortage of supplies.⁴³

Details of the food and fuel situation in Guernsey were also included.

The following day, on 21 October, Victor Carey wrote to General von Schmettow, enclosing Reports on the status of the Island. The letter seems to have been triggered by a communication from Colonel von Helderff, which claimed that although ‘everything will continue to be done to avoid serious hardship’ in the Islands, ‘the responsibility... no longer rests with the said Occupier.’ As the Bailiff pointed out:

This is a matter of vital importance to us, because...this statement appears to mean, that should England, or...the Protecting Power or the Red Cross, not send us supplies, you will disclaim responsibility for the consequences. This is not our conception of the matter. To us the Hague Convention is one and indivisible...as long as you continue to exercise ...the rights of the Occupying Force, you cannot escape from the responsibilities thereof. The only way that you can divest yourself of your responsibilities is...by ceasing to be an Occupying Force.⁴⁴

The accompanying report from the Medical Officer, is equally hard hitting:

During the last four years the people have only just kept above the danger line, further deprivations must submerge the majority...Let us consider the position in December, the cold, nearly 16 hours of darkness...half cooked vegetables to eat if lucky, medical services almost at a standstill, no work to occupy the time...[and] the...[resultant] mental distress...If there are to be many weeks of these conditions the lucky ones will be those who die quickly.⁴⁵

The response was not encouraging. Two days later von Schmettow wrote his reply:

In the Islands...one did not know what war means. [The Islanders] are unable to realise the effects as felt by German towns, the whole of France, London and South England, nor the

sacrifice and sufferings through which the affected countries have to live... Compared with this the Islands have not felt a breath of it... The necessities of war can... not be disregarded... Now the Islands are cut off I can no longer provide for the population... With the further continuation of the siege... all consideration for the besieged... disappears. [He then confirmed what many had begun to fear]: The German Army does not build fortifications of such strength without holding them with the greatest bitterness and until the exhaustion of its power of resistance. Even the advent of a calamity for the population... will change nothing.⁴⁶

After this exchange, it becomes apparent that Reverend Ord was once more enlisted to help save face and disseminate the relevant information, as he wrote on 6 November:

Copies of the correspondence between the Controlling Committee and the Kommandant are being privately circulated. It has added immensely to the understanding of the difficulties with which our Civil Government have had to cope during these four years of suppression... Much misrepresentation has arisen from the fact that the Controlling Committee has often been denied the right to offer explanations of their actions when the Germans forced them into invidious positions. Exasperated and sorely tried Islanders have spoken harshly of the Island Government ... Could the whole story of the negotiations with the Occupying Power be made known I am sure none among us would withhold the tribute that is due to the brave men who did all they could in the most difficult circumstances.

But not everyone did have sight of the letters, and many other features of negotiations between the Occupying Power and the authorities in the Channel Islands are also likely to remain forever obscure. Posterity may only make its best judgement on the evidence now available, which over the years has become complicated or distorted, both by a few sensation-seeking writers, and by lingering memories of grievances amongst some survivors.

However, perhaps the last words to sum up the position of most Island officials as they perceived it during their dealings with the Germans, should be given to John Leale as he speculated on 23 May 1945, about what would have happened if the Occupation had continued longer: 'I am certain that we have been rescued only just in time, not only from a German Occupation such as we have known, but from an immediate future which would have made our previous experience seem uneventful.'⁴⁷ In the event, as he had already pointed out in the same Report: 'Our task was not an inspiring one: the most we could hope for was to make the best of a bad job.'⁴⁸

THE PEOPLE'S OCCUPATION

‘In reply to Sir Jocelyn Lucas in the House of Commons Mr Morrison said that on his visit to the Channel Islands [in mid-May 1945] he found the situation very much better than might have been expected - health and physique were better than he had dared hope, and he was particularly impressed by the healthy appearance of the children. On the whole...the treatment of the Islanders seems to have been comparatively favourable...’

Channel Islands Monthly Review, June 1945.

‘I was allowed...to fetch our parcels on Saturday!.. It was quite an experience. The Town was fuller of people than I have seen it since the early days. But what A shabby crowd!.. I was quite depressed, not just by the clothes, but by the pinched and grey faces. Impossible to believe it was a Guernsey crowd...’

Dorothy Pickard Higgs diary, 22 March 1945.

Morale, Make Do and Mend.

6.

‘It makes sense to distinguish popular memory (as reflected for example in the media, newspapers, aural histories, memoirs...) from official memory (as expressed in ceremonies and leaders speeches.) Public memory is the battlefield on which these two compete for hegemony.’¹

During the Occupation, the spirit of ‘Make do and Mend’ flourished in the Channel Islands, and developed in much the same way as it did in mainland Britain where, fortunately for the population the shortages did not become so acute. Islanders repaired their clothes until there was no longer any new cloth or cotton, and even the Reverend Ord felt called upon at one point to comment that ‘a man must go in fear of his trousers.’ Medical supplies were also in short supply until they ran out altogether in 1944, and repairs of bicycle tyres were effected through substituting garden hose or rope, with shoes being totally irreplaceable except by bartering for second hand, or settling for some kind of clogs. Most writers agree that times were indeed hard. Alan and Mary Seaton Wood gave a good summary of conditions in their general history, and Peter King another more detailed account in his 1991 publication, in a chapter aptly headed ‘The Wretchedness of Everyday Life.’ Other publications by the Islanders themselves are also very informative, but one often gets the impression that some of the old wartime stoicism has remained with authors such as Doctor John Lewis, since many hardships he suffered are largely hidden behind amusing Occupation stories.

Nevertheless, the general severity of conditions has been one of the most enduring and least controversial memories of the total Occupation experience so far, and still remains very much in line with the end result- that is: the ‘shabby crowd’ with their ‘pinched and

grey faces’ - as described by Dorothy Pickard Higgs in the quoted extract. And since Liberation, studies of the Occupation in schools have kept alive the enterprising spirit of those who gallantly tried to overcome their difficulties, as children today are still given the opportunity of trying out wartime recipes, and occasional visiting speakers from amongst the remaining survivor-witnesses add a more human dimension to their understanding of the war.

However, in spite of this general consensus of opinion within the Islands themselves, it is unfortunately true that on mainland Britain, impressions of the Islands’ wartime conditions have tended to remain more in line with Mr. Morrison’s version of events, as they also appear at the beginning of this chapter. To say that ‘treatment of the Islanders seems to have been comparatively favourable,’ and to later assert that they had little understanding of wartime privations, was indeed to add insult to injury. But it may be that the opinion of the British Government had been coloured by its own propaganda, since - always geared towards keeping up morale - many wartime news reports on the Mainland had stated that conditions in the Islands were ‘surprisingly good,’ and that ‘there is enough to eat.’² Some reported interviews with escapees presented a similar picture, and according to one statement taken on 23 August 1943: ‘Nobody has come anywhere near starving to death.’³ In addition, a false impression of the state of the Islands may have been encouraged through the contents of the inhabitants’ own Red Cross missives to their loved ones, which overwhelmingly consisted of remarks such as ‘all well here,’ and ‘keeping cheerful,’ which were also circulated through the *Monthly Review*. But, behind the scenes there were most definitely hints that all was not well, and some British newspapers did report fears and worries from time to time. Nevertheless, it seems that this kind of representation was mainly overlooked in favour of the more optimistic alternative.

As early as 4 July 1942, in a draft Report prepared for the Refugee Committee, there is clear evidence that there was cause for concern. It stated:

A very large number of messages...have been received through the Red Cross. The majority...would indicate a fairly comfortable state of things...however...there is...direct evidence...from Jersey in July 1941...that conditions as to food are hard for all...especially...children and invalids...unless the diet...is considerably improved there is grave fear of permanent injury to their health.⁴

Occasional voices were also raised in Parliament especially that of Lord Portsea, who tried to gain permission to take a supply ship to the Islands himself. But whatever was known in England, the Islanders had little reason to think that the extent of their difficulties was either known or recognised, and on 4 October 1944, Frank Barton wrote: 'We hear via the BBC today that there is "no hardship in the Channel Islands."' The entry concludes grimly: 'Ha- Ha!'

These conflicting images of the level of hardship involved during the Occupation proceeded to run concurrently for years, and have so far never been reconciled. But in 1974, the indignant feelings of some Islanders which followed upon Mr. Morrison's remarks, re-emerged and erupted into open controversy when the Press gave notice of a proposed book by Mr. Tombs, an author of Island descent, under the title of *The Traitor Isles*. The Islanders, now directly challenged on their very own doorstep, were outraged, and vented their anger in the *Jersey Evening Post*. In one strongly worded letter, published on 29 October, the said Mr. Tombs was quoted as having claimed that 'It was a holiday camp...[during the Occupation.]'

In 1995, Madeleine Bunting was less extreme, but whilst she recorded that 'a handful of people did die of malnutrition,' she pointed out in a rather perfunctory fashion that

‘hardships, shortages, queues and drudgery were the Islanders’ war.’⁵In fairness to Ms. Bunting, these remarks also represent the opinion of many casual observers, but taken together with impressions already prevalent in Britain, they served only to reinforce ideas of a moderate Occupation, and thereby carried a double indictment of the Islanders’ own collective memories of their actual experience. First, if such an assessment of conditions in the Islands were indeed true, then it very much belittles memories of stoicism, courage, and the idea that ‘we can take it,’ which popular myth has so long attributed to the typical British character, and with which qualities many Island people felt proud to be associated. Second, by extension, if conditions were proven to have been fairly comfortable, then there would be more room for accusations that the population might reasonably have been expected to have shown more resistance to the invader. The following chapters, which include much new evidence, are therefore very important, since they offer fresh insights into the realities of everyday Occupation life, with particular attention being given to health issues, and deteriorating conditions during the latter stages of the War in Chapter 9. Having then seen more of the texture of the period, the reader will be able to make a much more informed judgement about its ‘true’ nature.

The Early Days.

1940

[After the Occupation had begun,] **‘there was a general feeling that anyone who kept a stiff upper lip and made light of our misfortunes was doing his or her duty towards the British Empire.’⁶**

Similar feelings are echoed within many diary entries, but as Ralph Durand explains:

[there was also] a fairly large minority...[who] were more concerned with the British Empire’s duty towards themselves: ‘Britain,’ they said, ‘has let us down’...Such people read German communiqués and implicitly believed them...and...whenever British planes flew over...[they] wished [the RAF] would leave us alone, because their visits ‘annoyed the Germans.’[However,]

...the stout-hearted majority welcomed British air-raids as evidence of British air power. Some people not only refused to despond but even contrived to find a humorous side to our troubles.⁷

But for some it was more difficult. Many were alone, missing members of their families, and some of the relatives of the casualties of the first German air-raids fared very badly after their trauma. One young woman, whose husband had been working on the quayside, was escorted to the mental hospital shortly afterwards, having become temporarily insane. More anxieties landed with the vanguard of German troops. Within two days, all the British servicemen on leave in the Islands were required to register at the Town Hall, and by the end of July about ninety were sent to Germany as prisoners of war. They were to be the first of many sent into the detention centres of Europe.

Early indications of what was to follow in respect of food rationing were also available during these first weeks. On 17 August Reverend Ord wrote that: 'Further restrictions make purchases from butchers permissible on Fridays and Saturdays only...this now means four meatless days...[and] If supplies of fish continue to be as small as they have now become, we must live on vegetables for there is nothing else.' In Jersey, two days later, Izette Croad recognised the new position with some humour: 'We now have two compulsory meatless days a week...[but] I was told Dr. Avarne... said he had nothing to do...nobody was ill. They were all walking more and eating less...I went to Boots for some soap and they haven't a single tablet, so by the time the RAF come or the Royal Navy, goodness knows what we shall be looking like.' But on 21 September she wrote more seriously: 'Food is getting scarce. There is no more flour to be bought, not a cake or a biscuit. The sweet shops are empty... Practically no ham or marmalade...no oranges, lemons, grapefruit or bananas.'

But even though conditions worsened very quickly for the majority of people, it is important to remember that not all were equally affected, and a number of contemporary

accounts mention periodically that part of the population was simply not aware of the disaster which was slowly befalling the rest. Those who had gardens, or those who lived in the countryside, as well as others who had influential friends, tended to do much better for supplies, and as Charles Cruikshank wrote: 'their place in society, and their wealth or lack of it, were equally relevant.'

As time passed slowly on, the Islanders became more and more isolated from the outside world. Possession of a wireless set therefore became a lifeline, and was valued accordingly. As Izette Croad explained: 'The more stodgy folk, amongst whom...one never counts oneself, take the occupation quite philosophically and go on more or less as usual, but for some of us every day is just a day to be got through...and therefore if the news is not too good one is in the depths, but if it is good...one walks on air.'⁸ After practically three months without letters, or newspapers, a fact particularly mourned by R.C.F. Maugham in his memoirs, Ambrose Robin reported: 'Local newspapers [publish only] official orders, regulations and appeals to economise on food, fuel and other essentials...[As] for news of the outside world the only published information is the German communiqué.'⁹

Perhaps the best, and maybe the only way to recapture a more authentic flavour of the early Occupation, and to glimpse the effect of the most intrusive 'Orders,' is to read through a selection of contemporary accounts made during the latter half of 1940, as the Islanders were trying to adapt to the whirlwind of new restrictions around them. The sheer volume of these publications is underlined by Ambrose Robin, who wrote, after four months, on November 1: 'No new Orders today- what a change!' In September, the first anti-Semitic Laws had been received in the Islands, and they caused much comment when their content was announced in the Press. In this context, Izette Croad remarked on 29 October: 'It all seems so much like a bad dream sometimes,' and in Guernsey, on the same day, Reverend Ord offers some very interesting insights into the wider view:

The anti-Jewish laws have now been promulgated here. Thank God the few we had are safely in England... Every Jew must register. [Later, on 28 November he added]: With regard to the Order against the Jews, there is a feeling of relief that it falls flat in Guernsey. Decent people look upon it as the result of diseased imagination, and think of it with fathomless contempt.

At around the same time, and hardly designed to lift their spirits, came the official German announcement in the Press, presented without correction, to the effect that Marcel Brossier 'ha[d] been fusilated [shot]' at Rennes 'for cutting telephone cables.' Within weeks came another, this time informing the population that if they harboured any British soldier, they would be shot. This was a prelude to the Nicolle and Symes affair. Neither was their private property safe. In Guernsey on 8 October, soon to be followed by a similar Order in Jersey, all cars were required to be cleaned and overhauled ready for inspection by a German Purchasing Commission. The Order stated that the 'owner... is obliged to sell his motor vehicle at the price fixed... and many people were notified that "payment [would] be made after the War."' ¹⁰ Emotions ran high, and around this time Reverend Ord also noted that 'one "verboten" follows another in unbroken succession [and] the strain is telling more and more.' ¹¹

Another 'turn of the screw' appeared on 15 October, when 'All men between the ages of 18 and 35 had to register in their Parish Halls.' Izette Croad reacted immediately: 'We are all wondering what this means and are not feeling too happy about it.' Three days later, when registration commenced: 'all such persons were required to state whether they had served in the British Armed Forces, and whether they were Officers on the Reserve.' ¹² Shortly afterwards on 23 October, Reverend Ord reported [that] another 'elaborate regulation for registration of the entire civil population appear[ed] today in the Press.' Bearing in mind the frightening possibilities which such Orders intrinsically carried, and then adding the effect of rumours into the equation, these regulations did

nothing to reassure the already anxious population.

Control was extended into all aspects of life, and on 4 November: 'Meetings of Societies, Unions etc. [were] prohibited, also the wearing of distinguishing...badges or emblems.'¹³This Order - and subsequent others - led to the effective banning of the Scouts and Salvation Army, together with the Freemasons, which had its property seized in spite of objections made particularly by Victor Carey, who was Grand Master in Guernsey. On 21 January 1941, more Orders followed, and 'The Bailiff notified all clubs that they must apply for permission to carry on, unless they had already done so.'¹⁴Even prayer meetings for the dead had to be approved in advance by the Commandant's office.

On 7 November Izette Croad recorded that she got her identity card, and remarked that 'without [it] one is not allowed in the Military Zone.' Of course, even this gave no guarantee of safety, and she added that since she had no food for her cat, she must now 'risk my life on the forbidden beach to get him limpets.' Soon afterwards another blow was delivered to the Islanders' morale, when it was reported in the Press, that all wireless sets would be confiscated as punishment for reported offences against the Occupier in Guernsey. Afterwards, Ambrose Robin noted with sadness that the 'last link with old England has gone' and Frank Barton remarked that 'as far as news is concerned we might be on the Moon,' curtailing his next sentence with an already developed instinct towards caution: 'We get no news from the outside world except...'¹⁵On this occasion wireless sets would soon be returned, but the situation remained uneasy.

Meanwhile, the purchase of vehicles in the Islands was progressing into its next phase. As J.H. L'Amy reported in Jersey on 21 November, 'all cars - 1936 models and upwards, [are] ordered to be presented for purchase.' A similar Order was issued the next day for the handing in of all motor cycles. The campaign to rob the Islanders of their transport, and thereby restrict their ability to move around the Islands, was now well

under way, and it was estimated that eventually almost twelve thousand motor vehicles were seized, mostly to be sold abroad. Soon afterwards many bicycles were also appropriated, and by 1944, those which remained were often seen with improvised tyres or even with bare rims. In time, much of the cash from the sale of their stolen property was given to the Islands' Purchasing Committee in Granville, but as Reverend Ord realised later, when more Orders were issued to 'save objects of value...[to] provide cash for the purchase of food from France,' it was literally a case of 'help our war machine or starve!'¹⁶

At the same time as the Islanders were in receipt of all these Orders, they had many other anxieties. Since they still had their wireless sets until approximately mid-November, they were well able to follow the fortunes of mainland Britain under the Blitz, as well as the wider world news. On Sunday 8 September, they therefore heard of 'London's worst raid so far.' In Jersey on the same day, Izette Croad wrote eloquently: 'I don't know how to describe our feelings here when we heard of the terrible 12 hour raid on London. So far 400 deaths have been reported and between 1300 and 1400 injured. I feel almost frightened to listen.' The following Tuesday, she wrote again: 'another big raid over London...it seems awful to be cut off like this and not be able to do a thing.'

As time progressed, there were also dangers within the Islands themselves from bombing raids carried out by Allied planes seeking German targets. These carried considerable risks of collateral damage. Shrapnel and pieces of flak were commonly encountered in everyday life, and on 3 October: 'a civilian who went to his door to watch one of our planes attacking a German post was severely injured.'¹⁷ Another danger was associated with unexploded bombs; Reverend Ord lived with one embedded at the bottom of his garden for much of the war, and many other witnesses report similar narrow escapes.

Evictions

Almost as quickly as they had landed in the Islands, the German Forces had seized the empty homes of evacuees for the use of their men, and soon all property belonging to 'peaceful inhabitants' became liable to be similarly appropriated. The problem escalated, especially during the first three years, as troops and Organisation Todt workers came and went, relocating themselves around the Islands. Many people were affected, and in Guernsey alone, with a population of only about twenty thousand: '3000 houses were left requiring repairs before they could be lived in again.'¹⁸ Some had been almost completely gutted of plumbing, wiring, and even doors and stairways, which had been burned as firewood. No one

knew at what minute they would be turned out onto the street. The usual procedure was for a German billeting officer to go round a certain road he fancied...and instruct the people that they had to be out of their houses within 24 hours. Sometimes only 6 hours notice was given...[and] they could only take their personal clothing.¹⁹

These were all more examples of the violation of enemy promises. One official made his views on the subject very clear, as Frank Barton recorded on 5 December 1940: 'Saw Steve Duquemin today - he told me the Germans had commandeered his hotel...and other property, and when he complained to the Commandant he was told that Guernsey now belonged to Germany and that they could do just as they wished with the property or the population.' In the shops the position was just as difficult, and many diarists comment in autumn 1940, that 'Germans are buying up everything and get preference - they demand it. Civilians have little chance against them.'²⁰ By the end of the year, conditions had deteriorated still further, when 'goods of British manufacture [had] almost completely disappeared...and we have to depend upon goods from France brought over by the Guernsey Purchasing Committee.'²¹

In addition to these growing difficulties, on the last day of 1940, came an uncomfortable glimpse of what disobedience to Orders, and subsequent deportation might portend for the future, as relatives and friends of Nicolle and Symes were seen returning from Cherche Midi Prison. As Edward Le Quesne observed in his diary: 'They have terrible tales to tell...half starved and confined in cells 8x6...One of them lost 49 lbs in six weeks and looks like a walking skeleton.'²²

Red Cross Messages

When the Occupation began, 'life had turned topsy-turvy. Half our friends had gone, parents had lost their children, the husbands who had lingered to send their fruit [for export] were now frantic...but all were trapped.'²³ Ambrose Robin was just one among thousands of Islanders whose children were in England, and about whose welfare 'we all long for news.' Time passed slowly on through the Blitz of many British cities, but still Islanders knew nothing about the health or whereabouts of many of their absent loved ones. This general lack of news continued for months, and as Amrose Robin later noted, he received his first message with news of Marie and David on 7 March 1941. It had left England on 31 December, taking over nine weeks in transit. The first general news of the evacuated children, had been noted only a little while before by Adele Lainé in February. It was contained within a message from a teacher who had accompanied the girls of the Ladies' College, and had been sent from North Wales. 'As may be imagined,' says Miss Lainé, it was 'hailed with great excitement.'²⁴

Very early in the Occupation, and in anticipation of contact with the International Red Cross, bureaux were organised to deal with the sending and receiving of messages. In Guernsey, the office was first placed under the supervision of Mr. Bradshaw, assisted by Miss Leonie Trouteaud, and in Jersey, under Mr C.J. d'Authreau, the Assistant Postmaster. These schemes were particularly welcomed as the only link between men of the Channel Islands serving with the Allied Forces, and their families in the Islands.

Messages were sent on a sheet of notepaper seven inches by four and a half, and were not to exceed twenty-five words. Of course, some carried news of deaths, but for others, even just a few words, like 'don't worry,' were able to offer some small comfort and relieve anxiety.

When compared with Guernsey, the available figures for messages handled suggest that forms may have been more scarce in Jersey, but they are interesting for other reasons. Taken roughly, the number of messages sent from Guernsey, indicate on average for every year of the Occupation, that the equivalent of around three were sent per head of population. Since we also know from Ambrose Robin, that each family only managed to exchange about four messages per year, this means that the likely percentage of population engaged in correspondence must have been very large. In Jersey, the number of messages sent out per head of population was less, roughly two per annum, but still the figures lend support to the Islanders' own contention both during the War and afterwards, that the overwhelming majority were indeed loyal to Britain.²⁵

No Time to be Bored

1941

'Oh the first six months was boring but after that believe me there was no time to be bored...You had to make your potato flour...You could spend three hours chopping up wood for the fire and in three days its gone...there was too much to do.'²⁶

After the initial 'thankful[ness] that things have turned out as favourably as they have' - a thought replicated almost verbatim in Leslie Sinel's diary in Jersey - Reverend Ord summarised the feelings of the people around him after six months of German domination: 'Only those who have lived under such experience- "government by repression"- can measure the anxiety which grew as Order after Order poured forth from the Kommandantur. The worst feature was probably the unpredictable...while in the absence of genuine news, rumour unsettled many.'²⁷In Jersey feelings were obviously

running parallel, as Izette Croad remarked: 'Rumours have been going round all week that today a list of all Channel Islanders killed in air-raids was going to be given out on the Overseas News...Some poor people here have been very upset.'²⁸

Conditions were already difficult, and on 14 January 1941, Reverend Ord noted simply: 'A number of people have been admitted to the Mental hospital on account of...strain and depression.' On Monday, 3 February came more worrying tidings: 'Last night a young man aged 29 by the name of Turpin was shot dead for being in the Military Zone at St. Ouen's after hours,' and in the same entry it was reported that bread was going to be rationed'²⁹

March brought news of the shooting of Francis Scornet, and Izette Croad reflected the sentiments expressed by J.H. L'Amy in his account, as she wrote: 'It seems so awful I can't bear to think about it.' Writing much later, Frank Falla claimed that many other French patriots were also forced onto Island shores on their way to England, and that 'he knew of at least 50 who...[he] understood...had been taken back to France and shot.'³⁰ The news continued bad. On 18 March Izette Croad noted that 'a woman and two children [had] been badly injured...by a land-mine at Rozel,' and the next day 'John Ingrouille was sentenced to five years penal servitude for treason.'³¹ It is not difficult to imagine the effects of these incidents upon the morale of the Islanders.

By this time fuel rationing was also pending. On Wednesday 26 March, there were: 'Big notices in the *Evening Post*...no coal fires allowed after next Monday, no electricity... except for lighting and...no gas except for cooking and lighting.' Apart from the obvious hardships which this restriction would cause, it was also significant because it effectively banned the use of mains wireless sets. In fact, there was not much comfort at all for the Island readers. At the same time robberies from private houses and outbuildings were beginning to escalate, and many more items of value were being

hurriedly buried in gardens and greenhouses as the population tried to out-manoeuvre the thieves. But, happily for many, such difficulties fostered neighbourliness, and upon this feature of the contemporary face of the Occupation, most witnesses and later writers agree. As Ms. Bunting wrote, the feeling of collective suffering: 'provoked a remarkable sense of camaraderie which broke through the Islanders' deeply entrenched class consciousness. A measure of comfort was found in exchanging goods and passing on helpful tips to overcome the latest difficulty or shortage...Everybody helped everybody.'³² Ambrose Robin's diary entry on 17 November would obviously agree with this assessment of the situation, as he recorded: 'Exchange shops are [now] everywhere and the advertisement exchange columns in the Press appear to be growing with every week of our existence.' Social services were also offered by the 'Save the Children Fund,' the 'Children's Emergency Bureau,' and the 'Special Aid Society,' set up by Mrs. Owen Fuzzey, and many accounts describe 'friendliness and warmth in people's attitudes towards each other, a caring and sharing of problems.'³³ Of course, alongside this camaraderie were also some bitter divisions and resentments between groups who were perceived as being 'haves' or 'have-nots,' but serious differences seem to have existed only amongst a few. Even though this extraordinary spirit of co-operation died after Liberation, it was still a memory of which the Islanders could be justly proud. It therefore became firmly lodged within their collective memory of the period, and is one of the few bedrock 'realities' which has not been seriously assaulted since.

At around the same time there was more ominous comment in Reverend Ord's diary:

If anyone grumbles at home [in England]...let him change places with us. We feel from time to time our hearts beat slower and slower, not because we doubt the ultimate outcome, but because we can 'only stand and wait' without chance of serving. And all the time a dog that may turn savage at any moment is roaming loose amongst us. As it is, not a few have disappeared from their homes through the silent action of the Gestapo. No one knows who will be the next victim

or on what paltry charge, if charge at all...In addition, everyone feels hungry all the time.³⁴

Only a little while later, on 16 June 1941, the Reverend added, in full agreement with many other witnesses: 'Yet the spirit of the people is amazing, despite the bad news, the disconcerting rumours and lack of nourishment. The entire community is progressively being welded into one great family.' And the following Sunday, he amply demonstrated the strength of his own morale, when he took the considerable risk - one of many - of speaking out during a public sermon, as reported by Ambrose Robin who was in the congregation. 'After the offering Ord gave a short...warning against the acceptance of rumours and distorted news. He encouraged us with an assurance of...victory for right over wrong and [said] that this was a certainty.'³⁵

In June, more troops began to pour into the Islands, and the population realised that they were to have a very strong garrison. Traffic in the small hours was reported to have become 'unceasing [as] thousands of tons of cement [were] brought over together with much other material for fortification [purposes.]'³⁶The gloom deepened, and on 2 August the Press carried a notice that one, Louis Berrier, had been shot after being found guilty of releasing a pigeon with a message for England. More threats of the death penalty - this time for attempting 'to harbour any English crews of aeroplanes,' or offer them assistance - were subsequently placed in the Press on 6 August 1941, and the following week more depression resulted from German claims 'to have annihilated 4,000,000 Russians.'³⁷On 21 August it was also noted that 'fools who listen to Lord Haw-Haw say...Guernsey will be blasted from the air when the Germans have carried off everything they can lay their hands on.'³⁸

As the end of another year approached, conditions had deteriorated still further, and on 4 October Frank Barton noted that there would be 'no more tobacco or cigarettes 'til further notice.' On 4 November clothing was also running short, as Izette Croad wrote:

‘we have been issued with new ration books for clothing, the reason why beats me as there is next to nothing to buy.’ At the same time, harrowing tales of people being evicted from their homes continued, and serious accidents seem also to have become a part of life, as Kenneth Lewis noted on 5 November: ‘Mr. E.A. Brouard of St. Andrews has been fatally...shot...as a German was cleaning his revolver.’

Traffic Accidents

Another widely recognised problem in both Jersey and Guernsey, was the large number of road accidents caused by the invader and his cohorts. By mid-1941 incidents were regularly being reported in many diaries, and after June the numbers escalated dramatically, so that on 13 December Reverend Ord wrote: ‘One can reckon on an average of one civilian killed or injured each week by German drivers.’ Many diarists were personally affected in some way. Both the Reverend and his wife had their own narrow escapes on separate occasions, and the former was present when an old friend was killed outright whilst walking home beside him. One of the girls in Frank Barton’s family had a similar encounter which she fortunately survived, and Peggy Brock noted on 27 December 1941, that ‘it is...difficult to give anything in the way of parties, because...we hate cycling at night because of the Huns and lorries etc. It is not safe.’

Some explanation of this increased traffic is given within Leslie Sinel’s diary notes at the end of 1941, where he mentions that ‘lorries and vehicles of every description are...brought here from France...[and] rush all over the Island at breakneck speed.’ Details of accidents and deaths are commonly found. One of the victims was the elderly Colonel Stocker, a widower whose three daughters were living in England. His diaries reflect the bleak nature of his shortened Occupation experience, also giving insight into the quality of life shared by many other widowers, or grass widows and widowers, who often spent their cheerless days and nights alone, living in fear of the knock on the door, which heralded unwelcome visitors. After one such encounter, the Colonel describes

how: 'I felt like a jelly when they'd gone. The demands they are making now, and taking everything they want makes one's flesh creep and one's blood boil.'³⁹ One of his last entries on 17 May is quite poignant as he writes: 'what with one thing and another one feels life isn't worth living.' Ten days later he was knocked down and killed by a German staff car. Full accounts of the Colonel's death were published in the *Evening Post*, but 'the manner of his death and the inconclusive verdict at the inquest caused comment and unease.'⁴⁰

A large proportion of other accidents were also suspicious, and in many cases they were reported by eye-witnesses as being due to callous indifference, or even part of some deadly game, played out by the Occupation Forces. Reverend Ord's comment on 9 October 1941 is also revealing: 'Should a fatality occur it is hushed up. We now know how it is that people are being found in country lanes injured or dead.' And the German response to any claims for redress as a result of these apparent instances of lack of respect for the lives of peaceful inhabitants? This may be gauged by Dr Brosch's reply in a similar case involving an ARP vehicle: 'I beg to inform you that the Army never pays compensation for damages due to road accidents. Such damages are to be considered war damages and are to be borne by the local administration.'⁴¹

As 1941 was drawing to a close, Leslie Sinel wrote in his diary that in Jersey: 'the end of the year finds us quite cheerful...although local conditions have greatly deteriorated.' But Reverend Ord's summary reveals the foreboding of many, as he realises that 'hopes of an early release must now be abandoned since Japan's vicious and treacherous attack on Pearl Harbour...[We] must definitely face another two years at least. Yet [there is] that in us as a race that prevents us from imagining ultimate defeat. In this spirit we plod on, though sentence of death has undoubtedly been passed on many now alive.'⁴²

‘Things were pretty grim, but till America came into the war the Germans had illusions of a negotiated peace with Britain...Since last Spring their mood has changed.’

Daily Telegraph, 23 January 1943

In the early hours of New Year’s Day, came probably the first death sentence of 1942. It was visited upon George Thomas Fisher, aged forty-two years as he tried to stop a group of German soldiers from joining a party at his house. According to a Report from the Coroner’s Court, the deceased had answered a knock on his door, only to find ‘six German officers [who] walked in with...bottles of cognac.’ After an altercation, shots were fired:- ‘Mr Fisher fell and was caught by his daughter. He was in great pain [and] died at 4am on New Year’s Day.’ Such incidents as these were hushed up, but it seems to prove that German behaviour was, contrary to popular myth, not always as ‘exemplary’ as it might have been.⁴³

Later in January, the coal ration was halved in Guernsey, and in Jersey neither coal nor coke were issued after March. In his memoirs, Leslie Green described his spare time activities as a teenager living in Occupied Jersey: ‘We spent our evenings after school and weekends, trailing through hedgerows and woodland, trying to fill sacks with whatever wood we could find.’⁴⁴ Supplies of insulin also became critical, a fact of potentially life and death importance to Leslie’s brother, Maurice, who was diabetic. ‘Everything was rationed now...gas and electricity ...but on January 24, insulin also became rationed...In spite of being treated in a special ward at the hospital, one by one the patients went into a coma and died,’ and when supplies were eventually received, ‘Maurice was...the only diabetic alive on the Island.’⁴⁵

The population were fast learning to live with constant fear, but their lives could also be very tedious at times, and sheer monotony and depression also took their toll. On 8

April 1942, Izette Croad summed up the general community feeling after a short air-raid warning had sounded the previous day. 'We were all longing for something exciting to happen but nothing did.' Two days later she succumbed to gloom: 'One is beginning to feel really fed up. I have not even troubled to listen to the news today, and what there is, is bad so I'm told.'⁴⁶In early May, Ambrose Robin described much the same predicament in Guernsey: 'Useful work under present conditions is repressed. Life is from some points of view stagnant and uninteresting. I long and yearn for great and vital changes.' But there followed only more cause for concern and sadness, when it was reported in the Press that three boys had tried to escape from the Islands in a small boat on the night of Sunday 3 May. One of the boys, Dennis Audrain was drowned, and the co-conspirators arrested. There followed one more in the series of many threats to the general population, which have already been mentioned in Chapter 4, and there is no doubt that few were ignorant of the import of these menaces. Neither was there a respite in the notification of service deaths abroad, and even when the casualty wasn't an immediate family member, the news still produced wide-ranging sympathy and sadness amongst the population. On 25 May Miss Croad recorded just one such death: 'I felt so grieved about young Raymond, I can't believe that he is gone, it seems so awful at the age of 17, makes we older ones feel we have no right to be alive.'

Spring 1942 also saw the drama of the police trials in the Islands. Over a period of time, this involved the indictment of eighteen Guernsey police officers, who had been caught allegedly stealing goods from German and other stores. A great scandal broke into the public domain, but details of the case were obscure, and what was known had been presented through the apparatus of the German censor. Bearing this in mind, a Press cutting from late April 1942 reported details of the case as follows:

A crowded Court today heard the Guernsey Policemen on trial before the German Court receive their sentences. For two and a half days...there had been unrolled an amazing story of

systematic thefts by responsible local officers...[who] confessed...to a series of robberies from German stores lasting over a long period... Harper, Smith and Quinn received the heaviest sentences - 4 years penal servitude. All the others received varying sentences with the exception of...Sgt. Pill who was acquitted. Throughout the trial had been conducted with scrupulous fairness. Each man had ample opportunity of defending himself.⁴⁷

From this article the case appears quite straightforward, and at least one later writer refers to it as representative of ‘the collapse of morals [which] affected sections of the population which had previously been considered beyond reproach.’⁴⁸ But a fresh look at the original documentary evidence, especially records of the trial and later appeal, together with a study of much more recent material, shows that any such conclusion is patently unreasonable, since the circumstances surrounding the trials were unusual, and treatment of the case quite different from normal peacetime procedures followed by British police and justice systems. All the accused men appeared first before a German Court for the German offences, and ten were afterwards handed over to the Island authorities to answer civil charges in the Royal Court. From the account of ex-PC Bailey, who was eventually sent to Dachau, and evidence later presented by Deputy William Bell, the procedure followed by their captors after their arrest, was to reflect anything but the ‘scrupulous fairness’ later described in the newspaper article. The officers had considered their position carefully. They realised that if they claimed that ‘they were [simply] responding to the ‘call’ of Colonel Britton in his weekly pep talks to the people of occupied territories,’ they would be charged with sabotage and made liable for the death penalty.⁴⁹ They therefore decided, as Constable Fred Short recalled later: ‘that we should...[have] to admit stealing from their stores, making the excuse that we were hungry: which of course we were.’⁵⁰

The arrested men were ‘interrogated’ by Sergeant Major Oeser...and Franz Woolf, of the Geheime Feldpolizei. During the interrogation, one police officer lost five...teeth... and

Sergeant Jack Harper later recalled: 'when I refused to sign statements already prepared, I was brutally bashed about and almost lost my senses...then a fat Nazi officer pulled out a revolver...and threatened to shoot...I signed, I think I signed four times. I had no idea what was in the statements as they were written in German. I was then a physical and mental wreck and could neither eat nor sleep.'⁵¹

The other policemen were subjected to similar experiences, only to be made comfortable afterwards so that they 'were...in good physical condition when they appeared before their Military Court.'⁵²

The proceedings began on 22 April, and Ambrose Sherwill was allowed to appear on behalf of some of the defendants. But here too there was some obfuscation of the facts, and afterwards, it was revealed that the Germans threatened that if the policemen subsequently denied the statements they had signed for the Feldgendarmerie, then they would face all additional charges, including 'thefts committed at the expense of the English traders,' in front of the Gerichtsherr – Chief of Tribunal. One of the defendants, Fred Short later explained the dilemma they faced, and reported some advice given to the defendants in private by their own countryman, Advocate Jack Martel: 'Short, I would advise you to plead guilty, the war is going well...give it another six months [and] it will all be washed out.' Mr Short added: 'We all knew Martel and trusted him...if he said so; it must be so.'⁵³ And thus it was, before the second trial, that the men gave up their plan to deny that the statements that they had been forced to sign by the Germans were true. Later, at the conclusion of the Civil Trial which began on 1 June, they were not just sentenced but criticised by the Bailiff who, maybe upset because they had 'rocked the boat' of co-operation with the Germans, told them: 'I am filled with shame that such a thing should have occurred in this Island.' On 13 June they were shipped to prisons on the Continent, and there can be little doubt that 'The Germans [were] well satisfied with both military and civil trials and the resulting propaganda triumph.'⁵⁴ Meanwhile, the

Feldkommandantur had already seized the opportunity to place ‘the whole Island Police [force]...under [their] direct supervision.’⁵⁵

As for the convicted policemen, ‘they all paid a heavy price: Herbert Smith with his life and others with their health, reputations and livelihoods.’⁵⁶ And since Liberation, memories of the affair have remained confused, with many people holding ‘the view that the British judicial system was [afterwards] just not equipped to deal with the situation which arose in Guernsey during the...Occupation.’⁵⁷ Once again it seems that there has been conflict between popular memory - which was originally divided between the German propaganda version and local understanding of the facts - and later, between matured popular memories and the original German/ Island Establishment view. In addition, the last of these versions was apparently confirmed in 1952 by British Courts, when they decided to dismiss most of the appeals made by eight of the then ex-policemen against their original convictions. In fact, through repetition of tales of kindness to the needy, some Islanders still believe that the police acted along the lines of a modern-day Robin Hood, sharing stolen goods not only ‘with accused members of the force [but with others] not immediately concerned with the theft.’⁵⁸ It is also true that K. G. Bailey remembered that many Islanders were not ‘bluffed’ into believing ‘Nazi... propaganda’ at the time, describing how ‘many people...gathered to bid us goodbye with cheerful remarks’ before they were shipped away.⁵⁹ On the same theme, Wilfred Renouf also noted in his memoirs a letter from Fred Noyon, written circa 1950 to a Press post bag concerning ex-police officers: ‘Sir...I can produce at least one man who had a parcel of food given...by one...convicted policemen for the benefit of his wife who is an invalid.’⁶⁰

Police

Of the Channel Islands’ police force generally, the most enduring image which seems to have lodged itself within the memory of most people, at home and abroad, is based upon the wartime photograph of a British ‘Bobby,’ saluting a German officer whilst holding

open his car door. The picture invites the observer to assume a level of respect for that officer as for some high ranking visitor, and was used extensively by the Germans themselves for propaganda purposes. However, there is another side to police activity which is not so well known, but which needs to be added in order to create a more rounded and realistic picture. In his memoirs, Inspector Lamy stated that as time passed,

[and] we...had the measure of the German Police...wherever possible we played them off one against the other.⁶¹[He also commented that]: At one time the Germans issued an order that Police were required to salute all German Officers, failing which they would be punished. We had very little in our shop windows, but it was strange what attention that little had for the Police at the time German Officers were passing. They rarely had a salute, but of course there were times when this distasteful task could not be dodged.⁶²

During the trials more than half the Guernsey force had been lost, and deportations removed still more, including Inspector Sculpher and two other English-born officers recruited after the arrests the previous March. Of Chief Inspector Lamy himself, Frank Falla later recorded that 'the local people of Guernsey had a good friend in...[him],' explaining that 'he personally, with some of his trustworthy aides, tore up many of the informers' letters, lost vital anonymous communications, or gave the local men whispered warning.' He concluded: 'Not enough people are cognisant of the debt they owe Bert Lamy for his services.'⁶³ And as for the rest of the police force, some of whom were veterans from World War One, there is more evidence which suggests that their co-operation with the enemy also fell short of what was required. Various communications from the Platzcommandantur to the Bailiff of Jersey support this; for example the translation of a letter dated 15 August 1944 states: 'As already discussed with the Attorney General, the police must take a more energetic part in the search and reporting of...persons sought...In the event...of this notice being disregarded, the troops are considering certain measures of punishment against the population in general.'⁶⁴ This

particular search was being organised to capture two escaped Russians, and on 16 August a further request was received for the police to intensify their efforts in the parishes named. In a later interview, Jersey policeman, Albert Chardine spoke of the probable reasons for the reticence of his colleagues: 'They used to pass people [fugitives] around - hiding them. All the parishes were doing it. Just ordinary people who organised it among themselves... The honorary police knew, they couldn't avoid knowing really.'⁶⁵ As to Constable Chardine's own attitude towards German authority, this is also made clear by the following letter, sent to his superior officer in February 1945:

Sir, I beg to report that at the above stated time [6.50pm] I was instructed by...Sgt.Griffin to patrol Gloucester St and Newgate St [behind the local prisons]...On receiving the instructions I refused to carry them out, because I don't think it is the duty of a civilian policeman, and I have friends who have been put in prison by the Germans for very little reason, and I would not like them to know that I was outside waiting to catch them if they tried to escape. ⁶⁶

At this point, to give a better idea of what the Island police and the general population were up against, and of the duties required of Island officers, a brief résumé of German Occupation policing arrangements will also be illuminating. As early as 9 November 1940, Reverend Ord noted the 'presence of...newly arrived Feldgendarmes. These cold, merciless fellows patrolled the streets with insolent bearing.' Inspector Lamy takes up the story in his memoirs:

shortly after this in the early days of 1941 the German Field Police arrived in Guernsey... 'as a body' These could be divided into three separate sections. The Military Police...we had little to do with these; the Feldgendarmerie; something along the lines of our security force, and the...Geheime Feld Polizei; otherwise generally known as the Gestapo.'⁶⁷

These police included members seconded from the Gestapo, and among their duties was

the 'shadowing' of local people and Germans alike. 'Needless to say they were not popular.'⁶⁸Of the Island Police Force, although some writers have claimed that they were able to carry out their duties as normal, they were heavily bound by German orders and were not allowed to arrest either Germans or their allies. In fact, if a crime were suspected to have been committed by one of these persons, then instructions were to report the details to the German Police, who would then deal with the matter - or not - at their discretion. In practice this meant that many crimes were ignored, potential witnesses intimidated, and, as in the case of many road accidents and thefts - some involving violence - the guilty parties were allowed to walk free, in spite of evidence being available to make a case against them. Gradually, it was observed by the Island Police Force, as well as by members of the Government, that as the German hierarchy changed, there was a progressive hardening of attitudes and policy, which effectively meant that they were walking a tightrope most of the time.

As the war dragged on, few Islanders escaped the attentions of the German Police. The random searching of houses at all hours of the day or night was a frequent occurrence, and the residents of Sark did not escape attention either, especially after the two British Commando raids and the murder of the German Doctor. Many contemporary accounts describe personal experiences of this unwelcome intrusion. In his book, published in 2000, Leo Harris vividly describes his experience as a thirteen-year-old schoolboy, when he arrived home one day to find himself dragged from his bicycle 'into the large kitchen where the family lived.' There he saw both his 'mother and father and three or four of the 'Gestapo' in an evil mood.' He recalled: 'There was so much to take in, my stomach seized and I felt annihilated...My mother was smiling and nodding encouragement... but I could see her whitened face and know she must have been in deep shock.'⁶⁹The visit had followed closely upon the arrest of Mr Harris' brother, Francis, and some other friends, who had been suspected of committing various offences. Appropriated German supplies were still hidden in the house, and after a lucky personal escape, assisted by the

sympathetic actions of a German soldier, the author reported that his father was taken away for further questioning. Afterwards: 'the shock of it all came over me like a wave...and [I] broke down completely.'⁷⁰

Back in Jersey, whilst the progress of the Police trials was still being followed with great interest, life continued much as before. But towards the end, in early June, the Islanders were notified that all wireless sets must be surrendered within a couple of weeks. The news came as a very serious blow, especially since this time there was a feeling of finality about it. Their only link with more reliable war news and the outside world was being broken. Many were handed in, but it has been estimated that hundreds of sets were kept behind, and some people - still refusing to despond - took the view that the war must be going so well for the Allies that the Germans simply didn't want them to hear about it.

A little light relief for the remaining shoe leather, or clogs, presented itself later in the month in the shape of a twice-weekly bus service using charcoal fuel, which started in Guernsey. The reaction of people who had previously had to walk everywhere in all weathers may be imagined, especially since commodities were so scarce, that sometimes one had to venture over wider distances in the vague hope of obtaining something extra.

Nothing was ever wasted. Potato peelings were washed to make potato flour...we cooked with seawater [and] a seaweed called Carrageen moss was collected...bleached and dried to make jellies and blancmanges... On one occasion I went on an acorn expedition, for baked and ground acorns made a coffee-like drink. Large quantities of sugar beet were grown and there was quite an industry extracting the syrup. [This was used to make] our bread passably edible.⁷¹

Then, at the beginning of September came a health scare in Guernsey, when 'Cornet Street was closed...owing to an outbreak of infectious disease in a couple of houses

occupied by foreign workers.’⁷²It was typhus, and this outbreak was followed by another the following February.⁷³But the most devastating blow to the Islanders' morale was yet to come, when in September 1942, plans made the previous year to deport large numbers of British-born Islanders were finally implemented. R.C.F. Maugham describes the depths of feeling evoked by this latest and most cruel Order: ‘The [time] allowed for preparation...must have been the darkest and bitterest which those unfortunate people had ever experienced...Their departure was a heart rending sight...crowds assembled to cheer them on their way...[and I] went away from the scene burning with indignation and disgust.’⁷⁴Judging by many similar accounts, these feelings seem to have been almost universal. Not only had the Islanders lost friends, and in many cases family, but whatever feelings of security they had managed to keep by remaining in the Islands, had now been evaporated by this latest illegal act.

Diary entries towards the end of the year reflect the gloom, and on 14 December Kenneth Lewis recorded an incident involving forced workers, who had been breaking out of their camps to forage for food: ‘I saw in the Jersey paper that two Russians had killed a man...and seriously injured a woman. They had entered these persons property with the intention of stealing and had been disturbed.’ Yet all this time the population were still writing to relatives on the mainland with the constant theme of ‘all well here,’ and the same *Sunday Telegraph* edition of 23 January 1943 - which had announced the ‘growing privations’ in the Islands - continued its article with the following remarkable comments: ‘Those Islands...will win no George crosses in this war, but the confidence and cheerfulness which sorely-tried civilians put into every message sent to their anxious relatives here is as fine as any bravery shown in the field.’

‘We...Long For the End’

1943

‘It is nothing to see people of position and means wearing patched garments.

Shiny, threadbare attire and faded materials excite no comment, we have no

choice...Soap is something we find now only in the dictionary...The Health Services Officer issues a warning about vermin and disease, with special reference to lice as carriers of Typhus germs...but avoidance of contact is not likely to be so easy.⁷⁵

Also in February 1943, Ambrose Robin wrote:

We all yearn for more and better milk, salt, decent coffee, tea, chocolate, sweets, soup, tobacco and to see the last of useless substitutes...Bramble tea is awful stuff and...saccharins...useless – they have no food value. We miss our wireless sets and authentic news of the outside world; we long for proper and regular letters from our children, relatives and friends who are away...Most people after a day's work are glad to get into their own homes out of sight of the Germans and to stay there...Another anxiety is those deportations to Germany, who will be in the next group? As I write this the house is vibrating and the sound of gunfire and heavy explosions can be heard clearly from the French Coast.⁷⁶

Thus, even at this stage of the War, with more than another two years to wait for eventual liberation, all the available evidence very adequately supports the view that this was neither a moderate nor a model occupation. Conditions were already seriously difficult for most Islanders, and tragedies kept on happening with the regularity of clockwork. On 15 January Adele Lainé noted: 'Mr. J.A.de Garis...was knocked off his bicycle by a German lorry and received injuries which proved fatal. Cycling along the roads is no joke with such appalling drivers about.' Three days later, Reverend Ord added: 'Inquests on two well-known Islanders have been held today - one a suicide through depression, the other crushed to death by a German lorry. The German Police have been hunting for wireless sets again on the prompting of anonymous letters.' On 20 January there is more news of the same kind: 'Four civilians injured in accidents caused by German lorries were admitted to hospital this week. And I, coming away from the hospital nearly made a fifth. A car driven by a German officer...tore round a blind corner

missing me by inches. They [the Officer and passenger] laughed at what they thought was a huge joke.’ Thus the grind of daily life continued without respite, and also around this time, it seemed that for increasing numbers of people, the Reverend Ord’s fears the previous December had become all too relevant, as he noted on 7 June 1943: ‘A well known man has died – he was going for his rations and...collapsed in the hedge - one of many such cases.’ On 22 June he made another brief note: ‘of late we have had one suicide a week – the explanation being the usual - starvation, depression [and] over-strain.’

Meanwhile, things were looking up in the theatres of war, and not long afterwards came more good news concerning the resignation of Mussolini, followed by the invasion of Italy. News of both events ‘got around in record time...everyone of the civil population is in high glee...hoping that this is the beginning of the end.’⁷⁷ Also, as a result of the built up tension and fears, many cast caution to the winds:

In Town everyone was full of unconcealed joy. Jokes about macaroni, spaghetti and ice-cream are heard on all sides...In a public house the landlord was upset because the customers persisted in singing the National Anthem at the tops of their voices and would take no warning about the Gestapo. In this cheerfulness our deportees...[also] seem to share. One of them writes: ‘Have seen Miss Victor Rie!’⁷⁸

But the roller coaster of Occupation emotions kept on turning in its usual style. Only four days after this last entry, Reverend Ord and his wife were walking home with two friends, Mrs Pearsall and Mr. H.G. Jackson, ‘when without warning a powerfully built [drunken] Luftwaffe groundsman, weighing over 14 stone came round the sharp bend on a bicycle, quite out of control...The man struck Mr. Jackson full in the face with a terrific impact. Serious injuries were sustained and the neck broken.’⁷⁹ Four German officers, including von Schmettow got out of their car, which happened to be passing, whilst the

Doctor was awaited. They surveyed the scene but said nothing. Then they drove away.

Another year was drawing to a close, and in the cold and hungry month of November, Reverend Ord gave a literally chilling description of his own living conditions, which must have been replicated all over the Islands:

It is bitterly cold and fuel is desperately scarce. Never have I worn so many clothes and yet, with two jackets, a pullover, a British warm lining...a thick winter overcoat, and a warm Otterburn rug round me, I am so cold as I sit at work in the study that concentration is all but impossible. We dare not light even the tiniest of fires till evening...Apart from the BBC news which gets out, we pass the days of this dragging year one by one in what may be called a state of suspended animation...and the increasing grip of the Occupation tightens. Yet the BBC tells us of great events...during the past week Berlin has been raided incessantly...The raids...almost excite pity for the civilians. Yet we remember what has been done in Poland and elsewhere...in the name of the German people.⁸⁰

Quite remarkably, this diary entry then concludes on an up-beat note, with a story from one lady, who has heard some 'of our fellows' going to work singing at the top of their voices: 'There'll always be an England.'

It was also around this time that discussions amongst the Islanders began to turn to what would happen when the Second Front was actually achieved. The much longed-for end to the Occupation seemed within sight, but the main question which now began to trouble the collective mind during its quieter moments, was the likely nature of the endgame for possession of their Islands. The fear was that the Germans would 'seize all the eatables and leave us to starve as so many imagined.'⁸¹

'New Year's Day, (1942)...At the end of the news last night the Secretary of State for Scotland referred to us in passing. It is puzzling that so little mention is made of the Channel Islands and that we never get any more leaflets via the RAF. We try to imagine this is owing to 'policy' and that we are an infinitesimal pin-point in the map of world affairs. Still we are a loyal folk and would welcome the chance of defying Orders in picking up anything the RAF might drop, from a daily newspaper to a side of bacon.'

Reverend Ord Diary.

Relations with Britain

7.

‘In reality, the Channel Islands have not been forgotten; their best interests...are continually kept in mind...The Government...was in full sympathy with the islanders.’

Channel Islands Monthly Review, February 1942¹

Although assurances similar to those above were consistently repeated by British Government representatives throughout the war, such sentiments were simply not seen to be translated into any kind of action which the Islanders could clearly recognise. In fact, the omission caused much puzzlement within the Islands, and the sentiments expressed by Reverend Ord opposite reflect many similar comments made in other contemporary accounts. In addition, apart from the news leaflets which were dropped over the Islands in the very early stages of the Occupation, it seemed to some witnesses that the British Government was totally indifferent to their welfare. Many diarists felt abandoned; and in spite of the fact that the basic loyalty of most to the Motherland remained unaffected, the subsequent lack of broadcasts which made any mention of their plight, served only to compound this impression.

What follows is therefore an exploration of evidence now available to establish whether British Government policy was indeed reflective of a caring administration, truly taking account of the Islands’ best interests or, giving precedence to the exigencies of war, ministers and officials on the Mainland preferred instead to carry out policies as and when best suited the general war effort.

Already in June 1940, demilitarisation and hap-hazard evacuation had made a

considerable impact upon the Islands' psyche, but in Britain the same events were largely glossed over in news reports. In fact, news that the German Air Force had occupied the main Islands was not announced to the British people immediately after it had happened, and instead newsreaders made a series of simple announcements that communications with the Islands had been temporarily suspended. Back in the Islands, septuagenarian Arthur Mauger wrote in his diary on Saturday, 30 June: 'so we... are now under German rule... abandoned by the British Government. After all we've done for it in money and men.'² Later, R. C. F. Maugham summarised the situation: 'There was no emotion; scarcely any comment, but much deeply felt, if inarticulate bitterness.'³ Under these circumstances, it was inevitable that a good many Islanders would feel let down, and the failure to publicise the King's message on the eve of the invasion had not helped to dispel this feeling. Subsequent policy was also not designed to instil confidence, and the commando raids carried out over the next few years served only to reinforce the view that Churchill's overriding concern was 'to win the war in the shortest possible time... although he must have been well aware that they would put the civilian population in great danger.'⁴

Two years after the first failed raids on Guernsey, which almost cost the life of Ambrose Sherwill, as well as causing the death of Lieutenant Symes' father, there came three more in fairly close succession. The first of these, 'Operation Dryad,' took the form of an attack on the Casquets on the night of 2/3 September, and several Germans and code books were captured from the lighthouse. The second, 'Operation Branford,' was a reconnaissance mission of Burhou, on 7 September 1942. However, it was the third raid, 'Operation Basalt,' which was to produce the most widespread repercussions. This time the Commandos landed on Sark, where they were directed to the Dixcart Hotel by Mrs Francis Pittard, who told them that Germans were in residence. The annexe of the Hotel 'was attacked and prisoners taken, but on the way back to the boat four of them attempted to escape.'⁵ At first they were tied up, but when they tried to escape again, at

least one was shot dead. The incident infuriated the Germans, who seized upon the fact that the prisoners had their hands tied behind their backs. In retaliation, the Fuehrer ordered 'the chaining of 1,376 prisoners taken at Dieppe,' to which the British responded by chaining the same number of German prisoners in Canada. The matter escalated, and on 18 October Hitler ordered that in future captured commandos were not to be treated as prisoners-of-war, but 'ruthlessly exterminated, whether in uniform or not.'⁶ Later on, this raid was also 'to become the direct cause of the second wave of deportations from the Islands.'⁷

In Sark itself the garrison was reinforced, Mrs. Pittard was given eleven weeks imprisonment in Guernsey, and 'eventually there were 4,000 mines on the beaches, strung on wires across the bays and parts of the harbour, and down some cliffs on ropes.'⁸ After the attack German soldiers raided houses, 'the curfew was reduced... fishing was banned, and houses along parts of the shoreline were deliberately destroyed ... Then the Feldpolizei arrived and for weeks the Islanders went in fear of what might happen [next].'⁹

The last three raids on the Islands were launched first against Herm - 'Operation Huckaback' in February 1943; Jersey - 'Hardtack 28' in December 1943; and Sark - 'Hardtack 7' in the same month. The last two operations were designed to obtain prisoners and information in the run-up to D-Day, but no prisoners were taken, and the last attack ended tragically as the party stumbled into a minefield. Two were killed and the remainder had to withdraw quickly back to their boats. In fact, the aggregate effect of these raids was out of all proportion to any benefits achieved, and many years later 'a Sark lady still had an aggrieved tone in her voice' as she remarked to the Seaton Woods: 'We were... getting on all right during the Occupation, until the Commandos spoilt everything by coming and murdering... German soldiers.'¹⁰ This lady was not alone in her views. More than three years before, in the aftermath of the July 1940 raid, Ambrose

Sherwill wrote in an unsent letter to Markbreiter: 'I do not know what the object of the landing was but to us it seemed senseless...The object of this letter is to ask that you will make the strongest representations...to the effect that ...military activities of this kind... are unwelcome...and...likely to result in loss of life among the civilian population and... to make our position much more unpleasant.'¹¹ But consideration for the Islanders' wellbeing, in spite of claims to the contrary, seems to have been largely lacking in many aspects of British Government policy during the Occupation. Although reasons have since been offered in mitigation, it still seems inconceivable that more could not have been done, at least to alleviate the feeling of almost total isolation, which descended like a blanket over the Islands after the invasion.

At first, efforts were made to keep the Islanders informed of the situation in the outside world. On 24 September and 8 October, two leaflets, entitled 'News from England' were dropped. They were delivered by the RAF, and caused 'great excitement.'¹² Many diaries quote extracts, or even whole articles from the leaflets, and of particular interest and comfort was a message from the King, which read: 'The Queen and I desire to convey... our heartfelt sympathy in the trials which you are enduring. We earnestly pray for your speedy liberation knowing that it will surely come.'¹³ The first leaflet also included a speech by Winston Churchill, and a picture of the King and Queen inspecting bomb damage to Buckingham Palace. Morale in Britain was said to be high, and details of an escape from Guernsey were also included. However, these aerial deliveries of 'News from England' were to stop after just two, and many a wistful hope for more is recorded in contemporary diaries over the long years which followed. However, from October 1941, there came occasional drops of 'Le Courrier de L'Air' leaflets, which carried the news in French. Between 27 October 1941 and 26 April 1944, it has been recorded that eleven of these were dropped in batches over the Islands, but diarists were unsure whether these bulletins were actually intended for them, or whether they were just dropped by mistake en route for France. The suspicion is supported by Ambrose Robin,

who noted in January 1944, that one such leaflet drop by the American Air Force had produced only a few copies. Subsequently, after August and until February 1945, all news leaflets – about sixteen ‘Nachrichten Fuer Die Truppe’ - were directed towards the German Occupying Forces, in an attempt to inform them of the true progress of the war, and to persuade them that their position was hopeless. However, German troops were not the only ones interested in the contents of these sheets. On 31 August, within twenty-four hours of the first arrival, Reverend Ord recorded that ‘copies are [being] brought to the house for translation by people in various parts of the Island.’ He added: ‘What is especially welcome is the provision of a sketch-map...showing the Allied thrusts. It was just what we wanted.’¹⁴

In addition to these news bulletins, there seem to have been several others, which were recorded by Leslie Sinel in his diary, and by various other diarists at the time. Some are hearsay, but others were actually seen by the authors. For example, on 26 September 1941 Peggy Brock wrote: ‘The Island is fearfully pleased because one day last week a [British] plane came over and dropped newspapers...and in a corner of each [it said] “RAF Officers mess- not to be taken away.”’¹⁵ Writing on 7 February 1944, Kenneth Lewis reported another incident: ‘Tonight I saw a booklet that the RAF had dropped...it was called “Accord” and...had several pictures of the French Forces in Britain...also Churchill, Stalin and Roosevelt...It was very interesting.’

Now the official British position excusing lack of communication with the Channel Islands during the War seems to have been based on an assumption that any such communication may have annoyed the Germans. There was probably some justification for this argument, as Izette Croad noted on 24 September 1940: ‘The penalty for having [a leaflet] in one’s possession is 15 years imprisonment.’ However, at the same time as such care was apparently being taken to avoid antagonising the enemy, it is also true that the various Commando raids were allowed to go ahead regardless. The question of

broadcasting to the Islands was also examined on various occasions, and ‘in November 1940 the Home Office expressed the hope that the BBC would not make direct broadcasts because it might lead to trouble.’¹⁶ In particular, ‘it was feared that anything in the nature of ‘resistance programmes’ or programmes designed to keep morale at a high level would...perhaps lead to reprisals.’ Thus, in spite of the fact that the ‘Channel Islands Refugee Committee from time to time pressed for broadcasts...the BBC did not action their suggestions.’¹⁷ Apart from a message of sympathy broadcast to the Islands on New Year’s Eve 1944, this policy was not changed until February 1945, after the Prime Minister spoke to the Minister of Information shortly after he had spotted the following statement, included within a general report on the Islands: ‘Our only joy is the BBC, but they have forgotten us too. How everyone hopes that the King will mention us at Christmas or that the BBC will put on a programme for us. For...all the rest, oh yes...but for us, who are we?’¹⁸

The above statement also serves as an accurate reflection of the feelings of many other Islanders, as they unfolded in diaries during the long dreary years, and as they were later recalled in interviews and conversations. Just a few examples will illustrate the tenor of those feelings. On Monday, 23 September 1940 Izette Croad wrote: ‘I have listened to the King’s speech and could not help feeling disappointed that he did not send a word of cheer to us, though I know we are only a couple of dots across the Channel...A word from the King would have helped us...even if it were only...that the Germans would have known.’ On Christmas Day the same year, she remarked: ‘everybody gets greetings except the poor Channel Islanders. The King of Norway sent greetings to his people, the Queen of Holland...to hers, but the only British people in occupied territory are forgotten...I even expected a few leaflets.’ The tension under which the Islanders were living, as well as their desperate longing for news, is almost palpable in another entry by Miss Croad on 19 July 1941, after an appeal about the Islands was broadcast by the Bishop of Winchester. The programme was general; the response specific and emotional: ‘It was so

nice to be remembered after so long that most of us felt like having a weep...as you may imagine we listened to every word with rapt attention.' Similar observations pass like a procession through many diaries and accounts, and on Christmas Day 1941, Kenneth Lewis noted: 'we listened to a programme on the wireless in which the Channel Islanders took part, [but] on the whole it was disappointing as not one word of greeting was sent out to those still in the Islands.'

In February 1942, the subject of broadcasting was discussed again in the *Channel Islands Monthly Review*, where reasons for the policy were explained once more: 'As recently as 27 January, the Duke of Devonshire, speaking on behalf of the Government... said that a direct radio message might cause the Nazis to prohibit the use of wireless sets on the Islands and would have to be seriously considered.' Subsequently on 22 April, the question of the Islanders' predicament was raised in the House of Lords by Lord Portsea. Already known to be passionate in his support for the Islands, he raised several major issues, and some of his remarks are particularly relevant to the question of whether the Government was providing valid arguments for not doing more to help their beleaguered countrymen. The main purpose of the speech was to ask what steps were being taken to provide adequate food for the Islanders, and to 'reassure...the thousands of Islanders now serving in His Majesty's Forces that an effort is being made to save their parents and families from starvation.' His Lordship continued: 'For two long years...not one word of sympathy or encouragement, no syllable of regret...from any source whatsoever, has been sent to these poor loyal Islanders...this is a matter which touches the honour of every Englishman.' Next he proceeded to address the Government's professed concern about taking action which 'might lead to trouble with the Germans,' and the 'idea that sending food would annoy [them.]' He concluded powerfully, by making reference to one activity regularly carried out by the RAF: 'We have bombed the Germans on the island - I do not know whether we did that to please them!'¹⁹

His Lordship's efforts in the House were to no avail, but they were not unappreciated in the Islands, as Izette Croad jotted in her diary on 22 April: 'It was nice of Lord Portsea to mention us in Parliament today.' Kenneth Lewis also reported hearing the speech and made a special note that Lord Snell had 'said that the Government were confident that the Islanders realised that they were not being forgotten.' Three days later, another listener - Reverend Ord - expressed cynicism about this latter expression of confidence, as he exclaimed: 'An occasional leaflet would help greatly to that end, your Lordship!'²⁰

Such 'indirect' broadcasts continued, but even in these, the professed concern for the Islanders' welfare was not always evident. In fact, on 3 October 1942, Reverend Ord wrote of a 'wretched blunder on the part of the BBC [which] will assuredly have its effect on us.' He explains: 'Two men and two French girls were allowed to tell the story of [their escape]...to England a fortnight ago...One of the girls said the Germans were permitting civilians in billets to listen to London. Mueller will know just what to do to stop that leak! But why mention the escape at all...[and] rumour is already at work suggesting firing squads.' Ten days later, the Reverend's fears were realised, as he discovered that the wireless set belonging to a friendly German soldier at his friends, the Chilcotts' house had had to be removed.

The months rolled on, and still there came no respite from the Islanders' isolation. On 15 May 1943 Dorothy Pickard Higgs wrote longingly: 'If only Churchill would send us some kind of message explaining things, it would hearten people no end... Things look a bit black for the next month, but we'll pull through.'²¹ By the end of the year, similar feelings may be glimpsed through another entry by Reverend Ord: 'The last day of the year is notable for the activity of the RAF...a friend told us she counted eleven [planes] and her daughter...28 when the clouds gave them a chance. Doubtless [this] will seem ridiculous to our people at home...but we cherish the smallest glimpse as proof we are not forgotten.'²²

Of course, in some contentious areas of perceived British Government neglect, there were sound military reasons for the action, or lack of action, which have been largely accepted since. This is true of the planning stages for D-Day, where it became clear that the Islands would not be included in any attack, because the heavy fortifications and enemy forces therein would necessitate the use of large numbers of soldiers and equipment, which could not be spared from the major thrust of the landings in Normandy. This was explained to the Islanders by the Liberating party in May 1945, but at the time, realisation caused bitter disappointment, especially after they had listened to the swarm of planes passing overhead, and felt the tantalising breath of Liberation, which they felt must surely be imminent. They were not alone in their expectations, as von Aufsess wrote in his diary: 'Our situation is extraordinary: We and the Jersey people are alike, prisoners on the Islands...The dogs of war have passed us by. We joke at the forgetfulness of the British at leaving us behind.'²³ But the realities of being forgotten were not to prove a joke for anyone, and by September all rations had been drastically cut, and those without access to extras were in grave danger of losing their lives. It was at this juncture that Britain took 'four months to be persuaded to arrange food parcels through the Red Cross. Why had Britain forgotten them the starving Islanders asked?'²⁴ One theory was that information provided by the escapees, which was so critical of their fellows, had a significant impact on the attitude of the Government, and in particular on Churchill, whose lack of sympathy for their plight may be reasonably suspected if not proven.

On 19 September 1944, the German Government asked the Protecting Power in Switzerland to tell the British that 'On the...Channel Islands, supplies for the civilian population were exhausted. They added that they would allow the evacuation of all except men of military age, or would allow food to be sent in.'²⁵ The matter was discussed in Cabinet on 27 September, when the Chiefs of Staff and the Home Office stated that they were not opposed to sending aid. However, Churchill did not agree, and General

Brooke later recorded that it was decided not to send in any food. Later, 'when he approved the plan for eventual liberation Churchill scribbled in the margin: 'Let 'em starve. No fighting. They can rot at their leisure.''²⁶As Frank Keiller later pointed out: 'It is claimed that Churchill only meant the Germans and not the civilian population. Like others, I am not convinced.'²⁷Fortunately for the Islanders, he then changed his mind, and gave permission for the Red Cross to provide relief ships.

Meanwhile, came the BBC broadcast already mentioned by Frank Barton, which asserted that there was 'no hardship on the Islands.' This was seen as adding insult to injury, and Elizabeth Doig wrote in the wake of the same programme; 'We are indignant...If [our] rations constitute being well looked after...then I must assuredly beg to differ. Surely the British do not believe anything the Germans may say! There is now nothing [even] to be had in Black Market.'²⁸An anonymous diary seems to sum up the thoughts of many Islanders around this time: 'We feel as if we have been forgotten... Someone said that General Eisenhower will probably be marching past the King on Victory Day when he will suddenly say: 'Gracious! I have forgotten to liberate the Channel Islands.'²⁹Shortly afterwards however, more awareness of the Islanders' desperate situation was raised by the British Press. In an article by Bill Roland, entitled 'Can we save these 60,000 Britons,' published in the *Sunday Pictorial* on 12 December 1944, the author describes 'the most terrible problem.' He continues: 'Having commandeered all the food, the Germans can hold out for at least four months. The British on...the...Islands...are now down to a diet that consists almost entirely of potatoes - and even these will not last many weeks. Without soap, coal, gas or electricity, the plight of the islanders is pitiful...they know that unless help comes this winter starvation and disease will be their lot.'³⁰At last the British public were being exposed to the realities of existence in the Islands. Whether the Government could, or indeed should, have helped with essential supplies sooner may always be open to question, but their reluctance to offer moral support is much more difficult to understand, and eventually led

to widespread comment and censure. In his article, Mr Roland proceeds to quote the opinions of various

gallant men who have escaped from the island recently... 'All these years,' said one of them... 'we have listened secretly to the radio for... news from London, running the risk of imprisonment. Many of us have been caught and sent away, never to return. We have longed so much for one word of encouragement. There have been fine inspiring words for [other captive nations] ... But never one word, not one 'Hold on - it won't be long now' for us who are British.' They tell me that... a plane flies over and drops leaflets... to tell the Germans they are losing the war. But never... is one word of encouragement for the Islanders.

Whatever the true reasons behind the British Government's treatment of the Islanders during the Occupation, it now seems patently obvious that 'their best interests' were certainly not 'continually kept in mind.' Whether this was indeed due to some displeasure about their behaviour - one diarist wondered whether they were to be considered 'beyond the pale' just for remaining in the Islands! - or, whether it was simply to do with the pressures and exigencies of war, is unclear. However, it was certainly noted with anger by some, like R.C.F. Maugham, that aid was reportedly agreed to be sent to Greece and Italy before any was sent to the Channel Islands.

It would take years for such feelings to cool, and neither was this impression of unfair treatment confined within the Islands, or to their champion, Lord Portsea. In early 1945, the Channel Island Society of Vancouver passed a resolution at its annual meeting, which was published throughout Canada. The resolution implied criticism of 'Mr Churchill's apparent indifference' to the Islands, and expressed regret that no expression of sympathy for the[m]... had ever been broadcast by PM Churchill or any other representative of the British Government, although such messages had been directed to Greece, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Norway, Holland and France, all... occupied countries.'

The article concluded pointedly: ‘The resolution has been forwarded to Mr Churchill, with a request that the oversight be remedied at the earliest opportunity.’³¹

‘At first most of us were inclined to regard every German with whom we came in contact with profound dislike if not with actual hatred, and to regard him, if not as a war criminal, at least as an abettor of war criminals...in the same service as those who perpetrated acts of *schrecklichkeit*, such as firing on the crew of the Guernsey lifeboat. Yet it was difficult to hold quite aloof from them ...[A]s time went on most of us were compelled to admit in our own minds that many of the Germans were behaving very well...[and] the goodwill towards us shown by some individual Germans made it impossible to behave discourteously to those who made overtures of friendship...

[But] Honour and chivalry have no place in...the Nazi view as to how war should be conducted...and there can be little injustice in saying that this was accepted by many Germans who in their private lives may be both chivalrous and honourable... [The German is therefore] to be blamed in that he would rather implicitly obey an order than use his own judgement as to whether an order is lawful or unlawful.’

Ralph Durand, *Guernsey under German Rule*, 1946, p. 180.

A Paradox- The Dual Face of the Occupier.

8.

‘Those in any sort of public position soon found themselves compelled to lay down a principle governing relationships...on the one hand to the Wehrmacht as an engine of oppression, on the other to individual Germans. As to the former there was only one possible attitude, complete antagonism...Individual contacts were another matter.’¹

In the extract opposite, under the heading: ‘An Attempt at a Right Judgement of our Enemies,’ one of the main difficulties and dilemmas facing the Islanders during the Occupation is crystallised. In the extract above, Reverend Ord describes how many people chose to deal with that dilemma. All over Occupied Europe similar problems abounded. Yet the number of German personnel was so exceptionally high in the Islands, that unique difficulties were caused by their overwhelming presence, and many Islanders simply could not avoid daily contact with these ‘visitors’ who were also effectively their jailors. In diaries, and later accounts, there is a lot of detail about dealings with the enemy, and all provide insights into the deeply paradoxical nature of the position in which the Islanders found themselves. It was potentially a very dangerous situation in which the enemy, all powerful, sometimes cruel, and collectively hated by the population, could often be friendly and humane in his personal dealings, operating according to apparently familiar moral codes.

At first ‘everything was peaceful, and sweet reasonableness prevailed...The troops were in paradise. The weather was perfect...and the shops were full. The ‘visitors’ bought as much as they wanted...They commandeered...paraded...sang victory

songs...and relaxed. They were going to be in England before the end of August.’² Also, in spite of their abandonment by Britain, the Islands were evidently of great importance to Hitler. In fact, at times he seems to have been obsessed by them, and determined to hang onto them long after the War was over. But, of course, some of the Germans placed in the Islands did not share his perspectives or priorities, and later, those who had served on the Russian Front considered that they had found a haven of peace. Some of their memories have been reported on post-war television, and like many other German personnel later interviewed for Madeleine Bunting, their recollections were not only geared and shaped by questions asked - which always seemed to include enquiries about friendships with Island girls! - but also in the light of other personal wartime experiences. For instance, Wemer Grosslopp stated: ‘When we...were...going...in Jersey we all had the impression (of)...a country where honey and milk are flowing day and night...like on top of the world.’³ Another man, Meissen, said he thought ‘It was a ‘holiday for us...it was very beautiful.’⁴

For a German opinion of what happened next, Wemer’s account also provides a very good summary:

The population of Jersey...was shocked of course. They were in big distress and...didn’t know what the future would bring...And...they didn’t look at us, they were very shy and...it was very difficult to get in touch with the population, but after...months...all citizens found out... Germans are not so bad...they have seen that huns are a kind people and...we have been very disciplined.

But the German perspective was also influenced by an assumption of superiority, and belief in their right to occupy the Islands. Ralph Durand illustrates how they viewed the legitimacy of the Occupation, as they explained:

that the Germans liked and admired the British...[asking]...why Britain had...declare[d] war without cause. If told...they asked indignantly if the violation of treaties was a new thing in history...that the Poles were a truculent people...[and that] having been 'illegally robbed' of her colonies, [Germany] must seek living-room elsewhere. They seemed really to believe that such answers were indisputable.⁵

But at the same time, acts of courtesy, kindness and chivalry shown to the Island people were in abundance, and for five years 'with an ever-changing garrison made up of every sort of German,' the Islanders were able to discern, 'sometimes the best, and...at least enough of the evil in German nature.'⁶There were many examples of this anomaly, as Izette Croad mused on 29 October 1940: 'they bomb you one minute and shake hands the next...they seem to be as keen on the latter as on the former.' Of the 'evil' side, a private letter sent by the young Joe Miere, imprisoned for insulting behaviour, provides a harrowing first-hand flavour of similar and worse atrocities: 'Dear Dad, Just a note to let you know I am still alive, lips badly cut, one eye closed, head getting fuzzy, 53 days of this so far, feels funny without teeth German guards not bad chaps...but gestapo police real big soulless brutal pigs.'

On the other side of the coin, many kindnesses produced surprise and embarrassment in the recipients, partly because they were unexpected, but also because people worried that they would be branded 'collaborators' by any casual observer. Given reports of the invaders' behaviour on the Continent, the next story of initial fear on approach is fairly typical: 'Told to line up outside a...police station with...fellow officers' one man recalled: 'confronted by fully armed German combat troops...we began to wonder if we were going to be mown down in cold blood. Instead the [German] produced a camera and took a photograph.'⁷Many other incidents were also quite frightening, but 'the 'decent' German tried his best to be sociable and indeed... helpful to us civilians.'⁸On 30 August 1942, Elizabeth Doig recorded her opinion: 'we have a German Sergeant quartered in

this house. Quite an agreeable boy,' and an anonymous diarist later wrote:

Germans are in a bad way...[but]...Some...are very decent. One, on guard...recently to see no-one sawed down any trees...just watched a man saw one down, and when a woman got into trouble with her saw he...went to help...He [also] told her to warn farmers that the Germans were after sugar beet. There are a lot like that, and there are a lot the complete opposite.⁹

On the food scene, whilst they had it themselves, the Germans were also generous at times. On 16 November 1941, Frank Barton noted: 'Mother, Peter and I have had a...supper tonight [of] soup and German bread- brought to the door by German soldiers!' But, in spite of this, there was obviously no compromise with Mr. Barton's feelings of loyalty to Britain, and the paradoxical nature of his relations with the enemy are encapsulated within a typical remark, made to his grandson: 'Those b. Germans [Pause] Did they give you anything to eat?'¹⁰ A similar phenomenon was re-played later, at the end of the war with Japan, where Allied soldiers gave food to enemy civilians. They were quite clear that the recipients were in no way thought of as collaborators, but just starving people who wanted to live.¹¹ On other occasions, high-ranking Germans also helped the Islanders. The interventions of such men as von Aufsess and Bandelow have already been mentioned. Another, Dr Gunkel, Head of the Kriegsgericht, was instrumental in the acquittal of a young Guerseyman on a 'fabricated' charge, after the intercession of his friend, Reverend Ord. The Chief of Police was also reported as having 'done more than one good deed, especially in the matter of warning people who had been reported for wireless sets...to get rid of them...before search was made.'¹²

There is such a volume of other evidence along the same lines that it is impossible to do full justice to the extent of such kindness here, but one last example of chivalry 'of a very high order' was recalled by Ralph Durand:

[A] party of German soldiers... were at work at the airport, when a British plane arrived...and sprayed them with machine gun fire. All the men ran...but a Guernseyman...among them tripped and fell...whereupon a German private lay on top of [him] shielding [him] saying...that the airman meant his bullets for Germans, not...his own Countryman.¹³

There was also some sympathy amongst the Islanders for individual rank-and-file soldiers, since many were witnessed being very badly treated by their superiors. Men were seen performing gruelling punishment marches, and being forced onto boats at bayonet point, bound for the Russian Front. There were also many suicides amongst the troops, and it was frequently intimated to the population that, given the chance, many soldiers would willingly mutiny against their commanders, especially in the latter part of the Occupation. However, as Ambrose Robin noted on 19 April 1944: 'German officer told me yesterday that troops would down tools but for the Gestapo. [But] An act of insubordination in any unit is reported back to Germany and the wives, children and relatives suffer.' Two of Reverend Ord's German friends, Reinhold and Metlar, had both been forced into the German Marines. Metlar's brother was a Roman Catholic priest, and had been sent to Dachau. As the Reverend said, it would be very difficult to judge these men, and both would have been accounted good citizens in any normal society. But these and other outward signs of harmony between Occupier and Occupied served only to obscure the tensions which lay beneath. Generally, as a group, the Germans in the Islands were hated, and as Frank Keiller later pointed out, much has been said 'in defence of 'decent Germans' since the war - and rightly so - but we should remember that those...in command on the Island... knew very well what was going on in [their] areas...just as well as we did...[yet] They did little or nothing to correct the situation.'¹⁴

As the Occupation progressed, conditions worsened. German morale also deteriorated, and soon after the arrest of Rudolf Hess in 1941, it was reported that no more marching songs were heard. Defeats and setbacks in Russia and Italy also took their toll, and it was

noticed after two or three years that Hitler's previously smart young, well-trained officers were often now being replaced by scruffy, much older, or very young soldiers, who were mostly not so well disciplined or self confident. Apart from their own sufferings, exacerbated by ever dwindling supplies, the Islanders' attitude towards the Occupier was also influenced by witnessing some appalling treatment inflicted upon the forced workers in the Islands. Many diarists remark upon it, and Joe Mière explained later: 'We saw the way they treated the Russians, which before was all rumours...[and] people's attitudes hardened [They]... realised...they were against not just...Germany but against a menace.'¹⁵ So deep was the anger, that Izette Croad reported that a petition was sent to the Commandant by the people around St Brelade's Bay, protesting about the disgusting treatment of the forced workers there, but the reply contained only threats, and nothing changed.

Meanwhile, the struggle to survive continued, and many other resentments bubbled beneath the surface of Island life. Evictions, confiscation of radios, people vanishing from their homes, deportations and arrests for trivial offences, all contributed to the general feelings of frustration and uncertainty. 'How can we help hating them!' is a common remark made in diaries, as entries punctuate the Islanders' communal journey down the Occupation road, and gradually, as the previous entry continues: 'even the most broadminded people are forgetting to stand up for them.'¹⁶

With this in mind, it is interesting to compare the view of Baron von Aufsess on Island relations at the end of the Occupation. It seems to anticipate a whole culture of post-war differences between the German nation and its erstwhile victims, and has been described by Frank Stern in the context of post-Holocaust relations, as a 'discourse of antagonistic memories,' where the preferred German version of events lodged in their collective memory, was largely based on a 'history without guilt.'¹⁷ Similarly, in stark contrast with the expressed views of many of the Occupied, Aufsess asserted: 'There has never been

any enmity between the islands and the Germans. This may...be due to...their being spared the worst excesses of the War.'¹⁸

Such is the dissonance of memory, and contradiction of opinion within just one part of the historical narrative relating to the contemporary Occupation experience. Even today the picture is scarcely any clearer, being totally dependent upon the vantage point from which each observer wishes to view the War, as well as upon his perceptions of collective guilt for the atrocities committed. Yet whilst their ordeal continued, the Islanders were forced to experience, and sometimes deal with the full spectrum of violence and decency side by side in their topsy-turvy world. And afterwards, their individual impressions have gradually been shaped by shifting patterns and requirements within and outside the wider collective group, as well as by new generations and newcomers to the Islands. After Liberation, a few Islanders – including the Dame of Sark - kept in touch with Germans with whom they had made friends during the War, and help was sent to several 'decent' German officers who fell upon hard times after the Allied victory. Amongst the other Island administrators, Sir Victor Carey said he never wanted to see a German again, but his feelings were unusual, and others like Ambrose Sherwill were eager for rapprochments, hoping that the Occupation might help world peace and understanding.¹⁹

On Liberation Day 2002, it seems that these hopes were coming to fruition as 'the Bailiff, Sir Philip Bailhache, commanded the attention of his audience...by giving a welcome in...German...to the Mayor of Bad Wurzach, whose presence at the official celebrations was...[described as] a ground-breaking indication of changing relations between the Island and its former...enemy.' After the event many voices had been raised in powerful protest about the nature of this welcome, but in defence, the *Jersey Evening Post* article of 22 May continues:

In short, times change...the passage of time and political change have fostered a new understanding between...nations. Fifty-seven years after the first Liberation Day, the misery and terror of the Second World War are mercifully receding into history...Democracy emerged the winner and now, rightly extends the hand of friendship. For a small and dwindling number, for whom personal experience allows no room for forgiveness or forgetting, this development is deeply unwelcome, even baffling...and their views must be treated with respect and sensitivity. Those views cannot, however, be expected to reverse the process of reconciliation... There should be no question of minimising or glossing over what happened here between 1940 and 1945, and even less of forgetting its significance, but old hatreds cannot distort the outlook and opportunities of new generations.

To best explain the feelings of those who still cannot forgive and forget, there are many Islanders who will simply never come to terms with the anguish of seeing not only foreign workers, but also their own friends and loved ones persecuted, injured or killed by the Occupier on British soil. Such general anti-German feelings are mentioned at the end of the collaboration Chapter, and also come under discussion in the context of the preservation of German artefacts and fortifications for use as tourist attractions in 'Liberation and Beyond.' Also to be taken into account are the views of those individuals who returned from prisons or camps on the Continent with their memories irreparably damaged by sight or experience of unspeakable atrocities. For some there may have evolved a limited amount of natural relief, and studies of the aftermath of painful and traumatic experiences do tend to show that the intensity of such damaging memories may in time be governed by outcomes, or seen as 'mood-congruent.'²⁰It therefore follows that some of those who had suffered, but who experienced a generally happy, post-Occupation outcome for their lives, were somehow better able to come to terms with their more painful recollections, than others who had suffered similar trauma, but for whom the outcome had been irreparable loss of health, or loved ones. These latter are probably amongst the people whom Saul Freidlander would describe as holding their

pain: ‘unrepresentable,’ as already discussed in the Introduction to this study. It is such people who constitute the ‘dwindling’ group to which the Bailiff refers, and amongst their number may also be several who still feel that their sufferings have been overlooked by their own, and by the British Government. However, the place of their experiences in the collective memory is vulnerable, and quite likely to become increasingly marginalised since it is now becoming out of step with the present-day needs of the wider group, and the wish to promote reconciliation and accord with our partners in the European Union. Eventually, memorials for some of those who died for their courage will ease the memory of these unfortunate people out of the sphere of living collective memory altogether, whilst honouring and recognising their deeds within what Pierre Nora describes as one of the ‘Lieux [Sites] de Memoire,’ where they may forever rest.²¹

Meanwhile, the Liberation news article concluded its judgement: ‘For (all these) reasons [mentioned,] Sir Philip’s gesture...forward looking but also fully appreciative of what is now our shared history...was both timely and right.’

Reverend Ord Diaries:

'Had they put us on this fare right off we should have died before the first Christmas.'

10 April 1943

'swollen feet and legs are a common sight...with shock one sees people worn to skeletons, the skin tightly drawn over facial bones. It is quite possible to pass a person in the street without recognition-so great a change may have taken place in a few weeks...some doubt now if they will live to see their release.'

4 June 1943

'I saw a man sitting on the stonework outside the garden. 'I'm absolutely done,' he declared, and truly he looked as if he might die there and then. He had lost his job through increasing weakness. Not until he had spoken for a minute or two did I recall his identity, so vastly had he changed.'

24 February 1945

'I believe they are slowly starving us to death.'

Julia Tremayne Diary, Sark,

10 March 1945

Health, Malnutrition, and Deteriorating Conditions 9.

‘According to von Helldorf, Hueffmeyer was determined “to hold the island in a state of siege until 1947, whatsoever might befall the civilian population.”’¹

It is generally accepted by most writers that the most difficult period for the Islanders was during the last year of the Occupation, but not yet explored further is that by this time, they were already weakened by long periods of semi-starvation rations, interspersed by interludes of having a few extras. In fact, conditions deteriorated much more rapidly than is often realised, and as early as 4 December 1940 Ambrose Robin reported that he had ‘lost 9lbs since the beginning of the occupation,’ adding that ‘this loss...is very general, [with] losses of one stone quite common, [and] many have lost very much more.’ By early 1941, the food situation had become ‘more and more serious...eggs are rarities, fish almost unpurchaseable and bacon...has disappeared. Milk is so severely separated that it is called ‘whitewash’...[and] only iron self-discipline prevents hungry people from saying too frequently when they see a tin of meat or fish in their store: ‘Well, just this once!’²

These general conditions and associated stresses soon lead to widespread depression, and on 3 February 1941, Ambrose Robin made the sober note that: ‘over half our pre-occupation requirements are now unobtainable.’ There followed on 1 March his latest recorded weight loss of 18lbs. In Jersey, Izette Croad described very similar conditions: ‘One gets hungrier and hungrier. No extras have come our way for a long time now... when I... went to the market...there was not a thing to buy except root vegetables.’³On 8

April things were obviously becoming serious, as Dorothy Pickard Higgs wrote:

The Doctors are getting really worried...people who have no private resources are already on the borderline and some are already below it...there [have] already been...deaths which would not have occurred if people had been properly fed. People have to wait in long queues to buy half a carrot or a slice of swede. And most people have not seen a potato for weeks. The bread is AWFUL nasty, soggy dough and the only way to eat it is to make toast or rusks.⁴

Already by summer 1941, the effects of weakness were becoming apparent in public, and the rather 'inert' feeling reported by some, was just the introduction to more disturbing phenomena. On 16 June Reverend Ord reported that one woman, feeling 'faint and dizzy,' had been fished out of the sea, and that: 'Constantly people in queues have to receive first aid, whilst others are discovered sitting or lying down helpless.' The likely reason becomes clear on reading Dorothy Monkton's description of the general diet on 2 July: 'One gets more and more thin and lives on vegetables and a little fruit, mostly with the bread allowance, and...potato.'⁵Two days before, Ambrose Robin noted another weight loss. This time he was 9stone 9lbs, a loss of 23lbs, and in August several other diarists remark upon another affliction, which was to cause them great discomfort throughout the Occupation. Sometimes referred to as the 'fashionable disease,' this was: 'an epidemic of sickness...in the form of dysentery...[usually] attributed to...the milk or the bread.'⁶In fact, other rations were also unreliable, and Izette Croad reported on 29 September that when she 'opened [her] semolina ration...two worms popped up and said "good afternoon."' Nothing daunted, she sieved it and put it in the oven, remarking sadly: 'when I think how fussy I was in the past.'⁷

The effects of these difficulties were also obvious to outsiders. When Mrs.Tremayne's daughter visited Guernsey from Sark, she observed: 'They are well on the way to starvation...it is pathetic to see the hungry faces of the people waiting in...queues for

rations.’⁸As Ralph Durand pointed out, even at this stage: ‘There can have been few members of the community who did not suffer to some extent.’⁹But their difficulties escalated, and during the bitterly cold winter of 1941/42, with much rain and heavy snowfalls, Horace Wyatt wrote: ‘people are...feeling the cold much more acutely than usual, whilst subsisting on a diet almost innocent of meats, sugars and fats. Very few people have any superfluous fat of their own left...nearly all of us have lost a lot of weight...personally I have gone down almost 4 stone.’¹⁰Confirmation of such conditions abound, and on 31 March Alice Flavelle refers to ‘Months of slow starvation for so many,’ adding: ‘people are all so thin, except German Officers, and so weak that nearly every day someone collapses.’¹¹In May 1941, the Ministry of Health’s Report revealed current weekly rations:

Bread 4½lbs; separated milk ½ pint; sugar 3oz; fats 6oz; with meat 6oz; cheese 2oz; jam 1½ oz. The last three due weekly but not always available, and sometimes beans, barley flour and macaroni. This diet [pointed out] Dr. Revell is only a subsistence diet of a daily calorific value of 1500-1600 [sufficient for a man resting in bed]...There is also evidence of vitamin deficiency [which will become increasingly marked] as time goes on.¹²

More effects of this diet had already emerged. Elizabeth Doig recorded in March that a close relative had had to see the Doctor, suffering from very swollen ankles, hands and face. She concluded that this was due to protein deficiency, and noted that such swellings were becoming commonplace. This is not surprising when one reads in Reverend Ord’s diary on 18 April: ‘I called at a house where two invalids had had nothing but cold cabbage over the weekend.’ But at the same time, everything possible was being done to try and maintain the health of the children. Milk was provided by the States in school, and midday meals were served, but in spite of these efforts, the average height of a fourteen-year-old in 1940 was 152cms, whereas three years later it was only 147cms.¹³

However, because of some reorganisation of food production, recorded after the Occupation had begun, things began to improve towards the end of 1942. Rations seemed to become more regular, with crops of potatoes, beans and sweet-corn becoming available, and this improvement is substantiated by several diarists who report that they put back a few pounds in body weight around this time. Black Market and bartering activities also thrived, and many people had no hesitation in obtaining what they could, despite the uncertain legality of some transactions. As several diarists admit: 'We don't let a little thing like that worry us.'¹⁴ Having just managed to live through the Occupation, Ralph Durand is unequivocal in his view: 'A man who declares that he would sooner starve than steal is either a liar or has never been acutely hungry.'¹⁵ R. C. F. Maugham explained further: 'I have no hesitation in saying that...the Black Market proved a boon and a blessing to large numbers of people, many of whom I am well assured, would not be alive today had it not been for...[this] channel of supply.'¹⁶ There is no doubt that the Islanders had to obtain what they could out of necessity, and as Peter King also concluded many years later: 'It would be absurd to blame them for benefiting from the Black Market.'¹⁷ In such extremity there can be no conscience, and it would be well to remember that there was much similar activity in many countries during the War, including Britain where rations, compared with the situation in the last months of the war in Jersey, provided a relative feast, containing almost three times as many calories.¹⁸ As studies have shown, it would be wrong to brand use of black market as some insidious form of collaboration, but neither can it be subsumed under a general heading of resistance or defiance. However what is clear is that use of the illegal black market by ordinary individuals demonstrated an unmistakable will, not only to assert their independence, but also to make their own choices. At the same time it should also be recognised that: 'black market arose, first and foremost, as a reaction [- not to the presence of foreign occupation forces, but -] to the imposition of a controlled economy.'¹⁹ And for those who would still take a moral approach, it should be noted that in spite of their much better rations, it was also reported in Britain, that: 'When Hitler put

out our lights, he started a crime wave...when black-marketeers and...temporary crooks [of all sorts]...were as ubiquitous as temporary gentlemen.’²⁰

Furthermore, if the question of culpability should be raised in connection with Black Market supplies, it would probably be much more relevant to those who supplied and sold contraband goods, about whom Kenneth Lewis had this to say on 18 January 1943: ‘The Germans pretended to stamp out [such trade...but it was actually] they who promoted it.’²¹ Some sources claim that one of the ringleaders was Franz Woolf of the Geheime Feldpolizei, who no doubt intended to make a good profit, but for the Islanders involved, there was always the excuse that they were flouting authority, and depriving the Occupier of useful commodities, as directed by Colonel Britton. Whatever their reasons, after the war many people involved became part of a group which preferred not to be identified. Much later, Leslie Sinel explained his feelings on the subject: ‘Somebody said to me...you didn’t mention all the names of these people that were had up for black market [in your diary.] Well, I said, No...I live here. You don’t antagonise ...people...if it hadn’t been for a black market it would have been a poor do...no doubt about that at all.’²²

The Black Market continued to supply extras for those who could afford it throughout 1943. But, not many Islanders could take advantage of this facility on a regular basis. As Frank Barton wrote in his 1943 summary: ‘unrationed goods are dear and often attain prohibitive prices, usually far beyond our slender means.’ He gives examples: ‘May 1, eggs 8/- each...September 8, ¼lb Tea £4...December 14, £50 asked for a smoked ham.’²³ At a time when States’ wages were paying well under £3 per week, the difficulties for the poorer Islanders in obtaining such commodities is obvious, and on 7 May 1943, shortly after the Germans had ordered the swingeing cut in rations which had so shocked the Administration in both main Islands, Dr.Symons wrote in a letter, that the effects of this reduction would mean that ‘the daily ration for the ordinary individual will be...say 1500

[calories.]²⁴At the same time, Frank Barton described the real position for some of the poorest people as ‘pitiful,’ as they spent many hours ‘waiting in queues...to buy even the outside leaves of cabbages.’²⁵

As a footnote to this discussion, whatever criticisms may have since been raised by Ms. Bunting and others about the apparent subversion of the Islanders’ traditional law-abiding values, there was evidently no continuation noticeable after Liberation, when ‘the role of the Police Force changed dramatically...[and] the constant stream of...break-ins and thefts which had occupied their time and efforts in the recent past almost disappeared.’²⁶But in 1944 hardship was still increasing for everyone, and even the better off began to find that illicit supplies had dried up. As Elizabeth Doig remarked on 5 March: ‘Black Market sugar, flour and butter [are] not to be had... Everything [is presently] so well looked after [guarded]...by the German Authorities.’

Fears for the End

On Saturday 1 July 1944, a local Press article appeared entitled: ‘Four Years in the Channel Islands. The Time of the Test.’²⁷It described how the Islands fell into German hands, and concluded with an ominous statement of intent: ‘The brilliant construction...[and] military importance of the...Islands...[are] reason enough for them to be held to the last drop of blood...[and] when the enemy attacks...our Island fortress, the blood of murdered innocent women and children will come upon him.’

This is just one example of the rhetoric to which the Island people were subjected on a daily basis in their censored Press. It is hardly surprising that they were fearful; from their vantage point, and without the benefit of foresight, they had good reason to be. It is also interesting to note here, that their day-to-day living conditions and exposure to German propaganda in general, would have been described as akin to ‘brainwashing’ only a decade later. In the Islands, as already discussed, the power of the Nazi

propaganda machine could easily be seen in the attitude of many Germans, but it is very much to the credit of the Islanders, that although a handful of men reportedly worked in the German Forces within the Islands, none were known to have been recruited to form special SS, or any other army units - including the 'British Free Corps' formed from a small group of Allied prisoners - as they were in the rest of Europe.²⁸ Also, pertaining to dissemination of biased German information, many diarists clearly state that articles published in the local Press were simply not believed. But, the power of propaganda was at times difficult to resist, and general debility also contributed 'to mental depression [making] people the prey of facile rumour.'²⁹ This general situation highlights the importance of those selfless people who regularly passed around war-news from the BBC, as it often pierced the oppression, anxiety and gloom amongst the population, who were otherwise 'fed solely on the propaganda served up...by the German editor of our only paper...[which was] carefully calculated to breed pessimism, if not despair.'³⁰

But isolation and indoctrination were only part of the German plan for the Islands. Before D-Day, it was already evident that the Allies intended to try and starve out the garrison, and force them to surrender. It therefore became sensible to reduce the number of mouths to feed. Already, most of the forced workers had been evacuated from Alderney, and later

Admiral Krancke, commanding German Naval Group West, proposed that...any islanders not working for the Germans...be shipped to Granville... [However], by the time this proposal had been authorised, Granville had fallen to the Americans. The result of this failure to transport the population to the Continent was a directive from Supreme Headquarters dated September 18, 1944... signed by General Keitel, that civilian rations were to be reduced to the barest survival level. If this did not suffice, the civilian population had to be 'pushed over to the enemy' - apparently to be segregated in one corner of each island, giving the British the chance of removing them, sending food, or letting them starve.³¹

That this policy was going to be implemented as an integral part of the endgame for possession of the Islands - as suspected by Alexander Coutanche and various diarists - is supported by von Schmettow's letters to Coutanche and Carey on 25 September and 23 October respectively, in which he claimed that he could 'no longer provide for the civilian population.' It now became obvious, if it had not been before, that the previous general assumption that: 'If the Germans run short of food and munitions they must throw their hand in..[because] it is their duty to see that the civil population is fed and cared for,' was totally fanciful³²

Meanwhile, some knowledge of these policies filtered through to the people. As early as 11 March 1944, Ambrose Robin reported that: 'The change from Civil to Military control is leading to [a] whole crop of rumours - evacuation of civil population &c,' and on 5 November the idea was obviously still around, as Elizabeth Doig commented: 'Rumour had it this week that we are all to be evacuated from these Islands, excepting those in essential services and farmers.' Already, as D-Day had begun on 6 June the Fortress Commander, Oberst Heine had made his intentions clear: 'I expect the population...to remain calm...even should the fighting spread to Jersey. At the first sign of...trouble I will close the streets...and secure hostages. Attacks against the German Forces will be punished by death.'³³ Other rumours also began to circulate. Mention was periodically made of 'disappearances' throughout the War, and Reverend Ord had not been alone in his concern. One letter smuggled out of Guernsey, dated as early as 1 August 1940 spoke of 'a girl [who] disappeared' because she blamed the the Nazis for the scarcity of various commodities,³⁴ and later on 12 May 1945, Reverend Ord noted:

Here in sunny Guernsey, the Nazis had set up two concentration camps - one in Vale and the other in Petit Bot - where people have been tortured...Had this horror been divulged to us previously we should have had one more nightmare to fight down. [He added]: It is quite probable that some of our people who simply disappeared, came to their end in these killing

yards.³⁵

Another nightmarish fear was much later recorded by Beryl Ozanne: 'I had to pass along the road where the Germans were building their underground hospital...rumour was rife. There was talk of Gas Chambers. Knowing even the troops were getting short of food...Did they intend reducing the population? What thoughts went through our heads. Who could blame us?'³⁶ And on 17 June 1945, a jotting by diarist Alice Flavelle suggests that such rumours may have been quite widely spread, as she recorded in a matter-of-fact way: 'We learn now that the Germans had in their mind to kill all over 60 to save food, and later were prepared to drive every man, woman and child into prepared tunnels and there gas them.' Even today, several survivor-witnesses also recollect that tales of gas-chambers were indeed circulating during the latter stages of the War.

When one adds to these fears the fact that von Schmettow, thought to be a moderate man, was known to have written to Dr. Goebbels on 19 September 1944 promising that: 'The island fortresses...will faithfully hold out to the last,' and that his successor, Admiral Hueffmeyer, indicated as late as 7 May 1945, 'that any attempt made by the allies [to effect a landing] would be resisted, irrespective of what the consequences might be in civilian casualties,' it is not surprising that tensions ran high.³⁷ To make matters worse, the 'Mad Admiral' Hueffmeyer was also widely known to have made 'frequent statements to the effect that he would let the population starve to death, and if they revolted he would have them shot.'³⁸ Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that the population was anxious, and as noted in Chapter 12, increasing levels of unrest in the last months before Liberation led to more offences being planned or committed against the Occupier.

Health, Starvation and Memory

'We are the worse starved people the International Red Cross has had to

succour so far.'

Reverend Ord Diary 29 December 1944.

In 1944, as already noted by Ambrose Robin in March, subservience by German Command in the Islands to military commanders on the Continent had increased as civil and military leaders had had their authority reduced. There were also personnel changes, and fearing invasion, much more stringent policies were introduced. Soon afterwards, when sea-links with France were disrupted and finally severed after D-Day, the Islands were effectively cut off from the world. At this point the Germans intensified their preparations for a long seige, and the eleven month period which followed was indeed to be the worst part of the War for the beleaguered Islanders. In fact, the euphoria and hopes of speedy liberation which followed the opening of the Allied Second Front, were soon replaced by more apprehension about what would follow. In Jersey, it was reported that

special emergency rations [had] been issued to the people, as 'the military situation may at any time result in the declaration of a state of emergency...' Two consequences [were] said to be inevitable: 1)The civil population will be confined to their own dwellings and 2)the distribution of foodstuffs will be entirely suspended. The emergency rations comprise: 3lbs bread, 5lbs potatoes, 7oz breakfast foods, 3oz sugar, 2oz butter, 8oz macaroni and a tin of sardines... [In Guernsey] no such steps have been taken, except that dealers have on hand an extra week's rations which are not...to be issued.³⁹

Even in July, Reverend Ord noted that the general cut in rations was also beginning to affect the garrison. However, he added: 'genuine 'party' men do not share this slimming process. While the canon fodder grow daily thinner the others, some of whom are fat as pigs, are as sturdy as ever.'⁴⁰ Soon the dread of winter descended upon everyone, and on 5 November 1944 the Bailiff of Guernsey prevailed upon the Germans to send this urgent appeal to the International Red Cross:

Conditions rapidly deteriorating here. Will soon become impossible...bread will last till 15

December. Fat production much below consumption. Soap and other cleansers... exhausted. Vegetable...inadequate. Salt... exhausted. Clothing and footwear - stocks almost exhausted, wood fuel...inadequate. Many essential medical supplies [and anaesthetics] already finished.⁴¹

By the time this was sent, Ralph Durand explained:

most of us were suffering from chronic hunger that sapped our energies by day and made it difficult to sleep at night. It would probably be no exaggeration to say that for the next five weeks we thought more about the promised food - [announced on November 22 by the Commandant] -than we thought about the progress of the war. But a fortnight passed...[and] excitement gave way to despondency and some people believed that the promise of help was a silly German hoax.⁴²

Many diaries express similar mistrust of German promises, but on December 8, hopes rose again, when the Bailiff announced that a relief ship had sailed from Portugal the previous day. Everyone made calculations as to how long she would take on the voyage, but it was not until 'December 14, we learned from the BBC that the 'Vega' would leave Lisbon between the 17th and 24th of the month. [Subsequently]...the...Press announced that she was due to arrive on Christmas Day. But the day came and went and still there was no sign of the ship.'⁴³

Meanwhile, by Christmas, gas supplies had ceased in both Jersey and Guernsey, and electricity supplies were exhausted soon afterwards. Coal and coke were also finished, and there was no longer any household ration of wood fuel. Houses were therefore mostly condemned to darkness from sunset to sunrise, any cooking was done on the occasional, small, illegally-fuelled fire, and personal cleanliness was out of the question. However, the Guernsiais were allowed a little cheer for Christmas, when, after 'a protracted struggle with the German authorities,' the Essential Commodities Committee

was able to issue 'six ounces of beef - twice...the normal monthly ration - as well as six ounces of rice and a little cheese and cooking fat.'⁴⁴ Two days later, on 27 December the 'Vega' finally docked in St Peter Port, from whence she sailed on to Jersey a few days later. It was to be the first of six visits - roughly one per month - until June 1945. The parcels were unloaded and distributed within a few days, and J. H. L'Amy summed up the thoughts of many Islanders when he wrote: 'In [our] circumstances, had it not been for the Red Cross parcels...we should certainly have starved.'⁴⁵ So grateful were the recipients that special prayers of thankfulness were said in many churches throughout the Islands. To those who have never known a food shortage so severe that food becomes an obsession, the feelings of the population at this juncture may be a mystery. But this was a society living under such privation, that the loss of a potato could represent a tragedy, and the sight of a cup of tea, or some other long-forgotten item could trigger almost hysterical rejoicing or weeping. And so it was with the contents of the parcels. As Dorothy Pickard Higgs wrote on 5 January: 'For three days I have lived in a dream and could think of nothing else...there is such a marvellous feeling of contentment in having a meal that does not entirely consist of vegetables.'⁴⁶ So many diaries record similar feelings, that it is difficult to do justice to them all, but many people recall that they were so buoyed up that they carried their parcels everywhere, and few could remember being so thrilled by a present.

However, the immense delight of the Island folk each time parcels were issued, was punctuated during the intervening weeks by the stark realisation that these small boxes of gifts were now all that stood between themselves and starvation. As had been suspected, once the 'Vega' arrived, the Germans took more and more of their already meagre rations. Even the bread allowance was reduced until it stopped altogether, and the butter ration also ceased. In these circumstances, as Reverend Ord pointed out on 3 January 1945: 'The Red Cross parcels cannot hope to rescue certain people who have gone too far already in decline.' The desperate situation of many such people may never be known,

but as if to reinforce the point, J.H. L'Amy makes a brief note: 'A woman of seventy was found dead in her house. She weighed only three stone.'⁴⁷ On 23 February Ambrose Robin also reported: 'A tragedy today... Sigwart Hauteville...strangled his wife and afterwards committed suicide... This old couple were without a scrap of food.' Time passed slowly, and on 23 March Reverend Ord summed up the general situation for many: 'Tomorrow we get another parcel, but if it must last a month the prospects are not enticing. People are ready to drop now, but somehow just manage to limp from one parcel to another.' But the next day, the entry is upbeat: 'Parcel Day... The crowds in the streets showed their gratitude and took a fresh grip on life.'

Meanwhile, as the Islanders were struggling to survive on their parcels, plus bread when available, after a stoppage of about three weeks between mid-February and March, the Germans were also faring badly. In spite of the fact that their Command had seized everything they could from the Island stores - and even directly from the fields at times - the general condition of the rank-and-file soldier was deteriorating rapidly. In February 1945, Reverend Ord's friend Reinhold, told him that large numbers of men had become so weak that they were ordered to rest when not on duty, and one of his comrades had been reduced to a skeleton. Also around this time, stealing had escalated to huge proportions, and although the ratings were being blamed, Reinhold said that many of the thefts were being carried out by NCOs. Soldiers were reported as openly begging for food, especially in the countryside, and Adele Lainé had reported on 30 January that one such soldier knocked on a door in St Martins, 'feebly ask[ing] for a glass of water. The lady...asked him...into the hall while she got him a cup of coffee. When she returned... [his] head was bending forward...and he was taking his last breath.'⁴⁸ Much later, speaking of life in Sark, Hans Glauber also recalled appalling conditions, as he remembered losing '7½ stone in nine months.'⁴⁹ He also explained how 'desperate you can get,' when 'your whole being...thinks of nothing else except where to get some food.'

It was this desperation which apparently led to much more insecurity amongst the population, as violent crime mushroomed in the last months of the Occupation. Reported thefts of foodstuffs rose alarmingly. In 1942, in Guernsey alone, 1693 cases were reported, rising to 2945 in 1944, and again to 2054 in only four months at the beginning of 1945.⁵⁰ Many pets were also stolen, only to find their way into cooking pots, and several murders were committed. For example, in April 1945, an elderly couple had their throats cut during a robbery, and in another incident, a man was shot dead whilst protecting his potatoes. Starving men became bolder, and Reverend Ord describes one particularly despicable act which took place in Rohais Road, where a German deliberately shot a dog. 'The child whose pet it was cried bitterly [and] bleeding fast though the animal was, she carried it away in her arms, the blood running down her dress.' The German did not get his meal, but 'there was nothing for it but to be put down.' The Reverend next gives a glimpse of his own frayed nerves, when he added as a footnote to this story: 'Is there any wonder the hatred grows? Difficult though it may be, one must fight against this instinctive reaction lest one lose the power of sober judgement altogether.'⁵¹

Meanwhile, the German authorities consistently claimed that ' rations are quite adequate.' Already quoted as being around 15-1600 calories per day in both Jersey and Guernsey as early as 1941, the figure for January 1942 was estimated by Dr.Symons in Guernsey as only 1323. Later, at the end of December 1944 the figure had reduced still further, and was quoted in writing to Colonel Iselin, Commander of the 'Vega,' as being 1137.⁵² This document also compared the calorific value of rations in the Islands to what a person would normally expect: 'In place of 3500 calories, the ordinary man gets 1137.5. In place of 100grams of fat the ordinary man gets 16 grams. In place of 37grams of first class protein the ordinary man gets 13grams. Some undoubtedly get extras but many cannot.'⁵³ After the arrival of the 'Vega,' the weekly ration was to decline still further, and on 26 February 1945 it was estimated to yield only 624 calories per adult per day.⁵⁴

About three weeks later, on 14 February, Kenneth Lewis translated this figure into goods actually received: 'Our rations today consisted of 1½ ozs each of flour and macaroni and cost 2½d per head. One person had her groceries delivered through the letter box.'⁵⁵

Therefore, in spite of the fact that the relief ship did - as Churchill had feared - enable the Germans to expedite seizure of most remaining supplies in the Islands, and therefore hold out longer, in truth they may well have seized those supplies anyway. In either case, the 'Vega' most certainly prevented a large number of extra deaths.

The severity of conditions in the Islands, including the number of calories available through rations, has been mentioned in previous studies. However, what has not been investigated, is the extent of the shortages, and likely effects of this level of undernourishment over long periods of time. Many contemporary diarists independently report ailments and memory loss which have obvious connections with known symptoms of malnutrition, and most are also described within various post-war studies and medical reports which are discussed later. On the subject of the general effects of conditions upon the Islanders' intellective function, Alan and Mary Seaton Wood seem to have been the only authors who have so far recognised that there was a connection, as they wrote that what happened in the Channel Islands had understandably remained shrouded in mystery during the period of their isolation, but that more surprisingly, even after the War, it seemed that much of this mystery had remained, and that 'facts...were...hard to find under a haze of faulty memories.' The Woods concluded that 'hunger and constant mental anxiety' may well have been responsible for this aberration, and also noted that an official report made in September 1945, had stated that 'Lapses of memory of recent events were fairly frequent...the causes...[being] probably psychological.'⁵⁶

Much later, Madeleine Bunting seems to make little, or no similar allowance for wartime conditions, as she suggests that the Islanders 'feel guilty - they judge themselves.'⁵⁷ She expands the argument, claiming that their 'loyalty to the Islands

overrides their interest in telling the truth about the Occupation.⁵⁸ Strong words, but all seemingly based on an assumption that all haziness of memory is due to intentional ‘forgetting’ of known facts, with the deliberate aim of misleading those who wish to enquire about the ‘true’ circumstances surrounding the Occupation experience. Of course, some selective ‘forgetting’ is natural within all collective group memories, but in the case of the Islands apparent lapses may be proven to have a physiological, as well as probable psychological base, with short-term memory very likely being particularly affected or impaired. However, this is not to say that wartime diaries were more likely than peacetime accounts to be problematic as sources, since most entries probably did not require long periods of concentration, and were usually made within hours of the events they describe. As Kenneth Lewis wrote on 17 May 1945: “many of the events which took place I recorded within a few minutes so as not to forget...or omit any details.”

Returning to the ‘Food Front,’ a detailed examination of recorded information now suggests that ‘struggle and sheer grind,’ and ‘a handful’ of deaths from malnutrition, in no way adequately cover the original features of the people’s Occupation. For protracted periods over five years, the Islanders were suffering from recognisable symptoms of semi-starvation, as described by various studies conducted during and after WW2. These include the work of Julian Fliederbaum and his fellow researchers, who detailed the results of the desperate situation in the Warsaw Ghetto, and many more are summarised in a two-volume work, entitled *The Biology of Human Starvation*, by Ancel Keys and others.⁵⁹ The centre of interest for Ancel Keys is the condition of human starvation as it occurs most commonly under natural, but also under scientifically controlled, experimental conditions where there is a prolonged period of calorie deficit. It is now known that ‘most human beings can tolerate a weight loss of 5 to 10 per cent with relatively little functional disorganisation. [But] At the other extreme...severe famines are commonly attended by weight losses of about 15 to 35 per cent... [F]unctional changes are greatest in this range...[and]... have direct relevance to human life and

behaviour.⁶⁰In the Channel Islands, weight loss within the figures quoted for ‘severe famines,’ was almost universal, and many people reported it, sometimes with wry humour in their diaries. To lose two stone was common, even seven to nine stones was not unheard of. Various examples of such losses have already been recorded, but it is also interesting to note that of those Island officials who have been vicariously accused of ‘nest-feathering,’ Alexander Coutanche lost more than two stones; his wife, three and a half; with the much-maligned Victor Carey being even worse off, with a reduction of five stones. These details, reported by the Seaton Woods, speak for themselves.⁶¹

During various studies detailed by Ancel Keys, the value of the actual intake of food ‘during the period of semi-starvation was estimated as 1400-1500 calories,’ in comparison with a pre-war level of about 3400. It is therefore fair to assume that the basal criterion for judging the presence of semi-starvation conditions in the Islands are clearly met, and the reported effects of such conditions are therefore extremely relevant. In addition, there are other parallels between victims, in that most of the weakened subjects observed during the natural studies abroad were also dealing with various levels of wartime anxiety and privation, which only served to aggravate their weakness. The studies all report similar findings: ‘The first indications of deficiency of food...are languor, exhaustion, and general debility, with a distressing feeling of faintness...chilliness, vertigo...unsteadiness of movements, the voice weak and tremulous.’ In more progressed cases: ‘The depression of all the vital and mental powers is fearfully augmented ...Dizziness, transient dimness of vision, staggering and syncope are common ... However, the patient sometimes manifests a highly nervous state; [and]...is...worried by...trifling occurrences.’⁶²In addition: ‘Feeling high is inevitably followed by low.’⁶³

At this point, one is bound to recall descriptions of fainting in queues and on the beach, the fearful anxiety caused by even the most unlikely of rumours, and the incidence of people collapsing dead in the streets. Sensitivity to cold is also mentioned on many

occasions, even in summer, and so are inexplicable aches and pains: 'many say they feel as if they had been beaten with truncheons all over.'⁶⁴ Reference is also made to a general impairment of mental ability, and Reverend Ord makes a series of remarks about the deterioration of memory function throughout the Occupation. Incidentally, his own weight loss is mentioned on 11 April 1942, when he found himself 'two stones lighter than at the beginning of the year.' He goes on to mention 'faintness and strain' whilst in the pulpit. On 28 November 1942 he makes a further observation: 'Our memories are not what they were by reason of lack of vitamins,' adding on 12 February 1943: 'Once again we find ourselves growing tired quite early...and struggle to keep awake...coping with ordinary duties is enough to tax one's energies to the full. A young girl has been complaining of failure of memory - how then shall we who are older recollect?' Similar comments in other diaries become more frequent in 1944. On 17 January, Reverend Ord continues: 'On all hands one hears of failure of memory,' and on 20 June he seems a little bemused as he writes: 'Strange that so many people cannot remember a sentence or two accurately.' During these times there could have been no reason to dissemble on such matters in a private diary, but it is interesting to note that the consequences of such inadvertent 'forgetting,' were apparently to have many far-reaching effects. Not only would the Islanders be open to more accusations of intentional obfuscation of the facts than would have been expected under normal conditions - as has indeed happened on occasion - but also some details of their experience must simply have been lost for ever. This being the case, it also follows that later recollections of the Occupation, as viewed from so many vantage points over the intervening years, have also been deprived of that extra information. However much or little, this may - if retained - have rendered more clarity to areas where memory has often been perceived to be somewhat hazy.

Furthermore, studies of semi-starvation reveal that this phenomenon is a quite usual result of the condition. In G.B. Leyton's observations of the slow starvation of prisoners-of-war in German camps in Libya, Italy and Germany, he summarised the reactions of

the soldiers to a sudden reduction in diet as follows: Apart from describing how ‘the half-starved man would go to the greatest lengths...to obtain small amounts of extra nourishment,’ he also noticed that there was increasing ‘fatigue in mental and physical effort.’ He cites an instance where an ‘experienced card-player...would forget the cards which had been played. Part of this was...[due to] lack of power of concentration, but the major portion was a lack of memory for recent events, though the memory for distant ones was still normal.’⁶⁵ This observation, and similar findings in other studies do indeed suggest, that ‘there is little doubt that definite, prolonged vitamin deficiencies...will eventually result in mental deterioration,’ and although there seems to be no impairment of intellectual capacity, with subjects remaining ‘rational and precise...they [did have] difficulty in maintaining attention for any length of time.’⁶⁶

Of course, in studies of populations experiencing famine, there is also much evidence of other illnesses which thrive in such conditions, and augment the number of deaths. Tuberculosis is one such associated malady, and during the Occupation there were many other less serious, but no less related problems. Bones became brittle, resulting in more fractures; and the number of hernias increased dramatically. Chilblains of the fingers and toes were also frequent, with the swollen, black and blue - sometimes gangrenous extremities - being treated with hot water soaks. ‘Occupation ulcers’ were common - with ‘minor cuts...taking about six weeks to heal...almost certainly develop[ing] into ulcers,’ and ‘sutures...normally [removed] at eight or nine days [being] left in until the fourteenth day...[In addition, the] lack of soap and water lead to the infestation of scabies.’⁶⁷ The incidence of impetigo, ringworm, lice and septic skin diseases also increased, as did VD.

‘The main causes of death during the Occupation other than heart failure were [recorded as] TB, Diphtheria and Whooping cough,’ although many of these cases were probably aggravated - if not directly caused - by malnutrition.⁶⁸ Death rates are also difficult to interpret, mainly because of a larger proportion of more elderly residents.

However, in Jersey, out of a population of around 41,000, there were approximately 2,825 deaths over a four year period between 1941 and the end of 1944.⁶⁹ In Guernsey, the proportion was higher - taking the same four years - out of a population of about 23,000, the number of deaths totalled at least 1,810 persons, with figures for January 1945 being given as more than 80 for that month alone.⁷⁰ Given the unusual composition of society, it is difficult to reach any definitive conclusions, but to give an idea of the relative increase in mortality in Guernsey, the number of deaths per thousand of the population in January 1939 was 17.8, whereas in the same month in 1942, the number of dead was 40.1. This is a large increase by any standards, and even though it occurred during the Islands' worst winter, the recorded death toll throughout the Occupation was consistently higher than pre-1940 figures.

Whatever doubts and controversies may have surrounded the death rates from lack of food in the Islands, conditions were so bad that even the enemy was seriously affected, and in August 1945, the *CIMR* reported that '300 [German troops had] died from malnutrition...at the Vauquiedor...hospital in Guernsey.' But the Germans always consistently denied that any deaths in the Islands could be attributed to this cause, and maintained that they had done their best to supply food. Yet, on the other hand, many Islanders felt that preserving as many of the troops as possible and leaving them to starve was indeed part of Admiral Hueffmeyer's 'endgame' plan to hold onto the Islands, even when the war in the rest of Europe was over. Certainly, contemporary witnesses were untroubled by any doubt that many deaths were not just due to unavoidable wartime shortages, but tantamount to murder, and within days of Colonel Iselin stating that the Islanders were the 'worst starved people' the Red Cross had succoured so far, Reverend Ord gave further insight into the human dimension of this remark. In his diary summary for 1944, he wrote: 'The volume of suffering, misery, anxiety and strain who can measure?...And for those who had...no means...of supplementing the exiguous rations, it proved a year of terrible distress, and in so many instances of fatal consequences.'

‘Island Leaders helped Nazis to trace Jews.’

Independent, 6 January 1993.

‘Julia Pascal...has written a controversial radio play...broadcast last August, about a Jewish girl who was stranded in Guernsey at the start of the Occupation. She claims she was sent to a concentration camp in Germany, where she died, with the knowledge and connivance of the Island’s authorities.’

Jersey Evening Post, 2 December 1996.

‘I believe that the actions of the Bailiffs, Law Officers, local lawyers and bureaucrats were always informed by indigenous and widespread anti-Semitism.’

The Jews of the Channel Islands and the Rule of Law, 1940-1945

David Fraser, 2000.

‘Politeness, smiles and genocide...how British officials sent this girl (Therese Steiner) to the gas chamber.’

Daily Mail, 29 May 2002.

The Jewish Experience

10.

“No Blame” over Occupation Jews...Mr. Cohen...concludes that the Chief Aliens Officer, Clifford Orange, who dealt with the registration of Jews treated them no differently from other Islanders.’ *Jersey Evening Post. 9/4/1997*

These quotations opposite and above illustrate very clearly the wide division of opinion concerning the culpability of the Island governments, long after they agreed to register and implement the first anti-Jewish measures introduced by German Command into the Islands’ legal system in Autumn 1940. Controversy, particularly since the release of the Public Record Office files in the early 1990s, upon which the first extract on the opposite page is based, has raged sporadically in the British and Island Press ever since, and still continues to attract comment today.

Of the horrific conditions experienced by the Jewish forced workers sent to the Islands from the Continent, more will follow in chapter 13, but for the few Jews already in residence when the Germans arrived, their Occupation would also soon become an entirely different kind of war, as they were immediately sought out for 'special treatment.' Once identified and registered, such people were legally separated from their neighbours by additional, sometimes cruel restrictions, which were mostly enacted through a series of nine anti-Jewish Orders, and various additional measures similar to those introduced into the rest of occupied Europe. Very quickly, what Izette Croad called those 'poor things' affected, found themselves living with sustained levels of fear and persecution, over and above the rest of the community, who were also struggling under the considerable burden of many other life-changing 'Orders.'

Although around sixty years have now elapsed since three Jewish women were

deported from Guernsey, and subsequently murdered, the circumstances surrounding their particular departure still cause very real emotion whenever they are discussed. At the same time, as often happens in the wake of such painful events, there is also a temptation to question the ‘rights and wrongs’ surrounding the case, and to apply the wisdom of hindsight before apportioning blame. However, contemporary folk had no such insights and from their vantage point, bombarded by Orders and uncertainties, their local judgement of German rule was tempered only by recollections of World War One, and occasional news reports of German policy at home, and abroad in conquered Europe. However, they would also have had more particular information about the German-Jewish attitude, since ‘In the months of January and February 1939 alone, the *Jersey Evening Post* printed more than fifteen articles detailing the anti-Semitic measures then being implemented on the Continent.’¹ Even so, amongst the myriad of uncertainties, Izette Croad probably reflected the scepticism of many, who remembered what turned out to be false atrocity stories circulated between 1914-1918, when she wrote on 17 September 1941: ‘One of the things I detest most about this war is the propaganda on both sides... On our side we are told of atrocities in Poland which are supposed to be too horrible to mention. Perhaps some of them are no more true than such tales... in the last war.’

Also, just as Reverend Ord stated in his diary, many Islanders truly believed that all their Jewish fellow-citizens had evacuated during the exodus of June 1940, and it is hardly surprising that other prominent citizens shared the same view. Thus, when Ambrose Sherwill explained his reasons for not raising objections to the registration of the first anti-Jewish Order put before the Royal Court in his post-war memoirs, he probably stated in good faith: ‘I made such enquiries as I could and learned... [all] had evacuated.’ He continued that he had therefore ‘felt no purpose would be served in... advising the Royal Court to refuse to register it.’ Mr Sherwill was already under pressure. The Order was presented to the Court only two days after Nicolle and Symes

had given themselves up - on 21 October - and the repercussions of their surrender were anxiously awaited. His memoirs continue: 'If I had [objected] presumably the Germans would have threatened the...Court by marching in soldiers. Nevertheless, I still felt ashamed that I did not do something by way of protest...[But] Sir Abraham Lainé...openly and categorically refused his assent and stated his grave objections to such a measure...As I sat listening to him, I realised how right he was.'² Speaking about Jersey after the War, Alexander Coutanche recalls: 'The Jews were I think called upon to declare themselves. Some did, some didn't...those who didn't weren't discovered. I've never heard they suffered in any way.'³ But these expressed beliefs of both Sherwill and Coutanche later turned out to be wrong. There were four Jewish people in Guernsey - another was identified later - and twelve in Jersey, who registered under the First Order. Of these, three later died in Auschwitz and another, John Max Finklestein, was transferred from Laufen internment camp to Buchenwald, and then to Theresienstadt, from where he was liberated on May 8, 1945.⁴

Not surprisingly, during the War, no publicity was accorded to such incidents, and only a few friends and contacts knew about the tribulations these people had to face. For more than forty years after Liberation the situation remained much the same, and during that time little information seems to have entered the pool of collective memory about the lives of any of the Jewish citizens in the Islands, largely because - as Madeleine Bunting pointed out - after the war, even the wider Jewish community presumed that there had been no Jews remaining during the Occupation. However, as Peter King recorded, it seems some opportunities for commemoration may have been missed, as Senator Wilfred Krichevski - who had evacuated to England in 1940 - apparently made no effort to investigate the fate of the Islands' Jewish population on his return after Liberation. In fact, he reportedly 'played down their loss,' declining to 'support a request to the Board of British Jews for a memorial because he could not see why they ought to be specifically remembered...separately from...other foreign labour.'⁵ Whatever the case, any reticence

on the part of Senator Krichevski, could have been due to a general worry 'that remembering the Holocaust too well would complicate Jews' relationship with non-Jews,' or maybe enflame anti-Semitic feelings, but in the Islands the Jewish citizens who returned were mostly able to resume their lives much as in pre-War days.⁶ Many it seems had at least some part of their property returned, and Ms. Bunting records that in the case of one, Mrs. Sennett, Alexander Coutanche was known to have rendered his personal assistance. The years rolled on, and first comment about the anti-Jewish 'Orders' appeared briefly in Charles Cruikshank's work in 1975: 'The Island authorities could have turned the anti-Jewish laws into a test case...There were few Jews left...If [they] had refused to register the legislation it would have been promulgated by decree, but at least they would have made a stand. At what cost we cannot tell.'⁷ However, although the presence of Jews in the Islands had been confirmed by Joe Mière in the *Jersey Evening Post* on 11 June 1981, and mentioned by Solomon Steckoll in his book, public awareness does not seem to have been raised until the arrival of the Anne Frank Exhibition, which was organised by the Jersey Museums Service in 1988. This was attended by over five thousand visitors, and introduced a new consciousness of the human dimension attached to all forms of wartime suffering, back into the Islands. The scene was set for change, and the features of the Jewish Occupation experience, which had been so long largely missing from any representation of its public face, were about to be revealed.

The release of previously classified PRO documents soon followed, and thereafter served as another part of the catalyst apparently needed to fill the void. Around the same time, members of the Jewish community also began their painstaking research into the subject, and it has since become one of the main areas of Occupation debate, disagreement, criticism and concern. Mr. Cohen's discovery of new archival material in 1995 was soon followed by his comprehensive work, and in the wake of its publication, much more is now generally known about specific Jewish difficulties during the Occupation years. Meanwhile, debate and controversy outside the Islands still rage on,

and Julia Pascal's little-known but more extreme views on the subject - quoted on the facing page to this chapter - have appeared in newspapers as far afield as Los Angeles and South Dakota. However, for those wishing to explore such 'facts' as are available, it is now possible to be extremely well informed about all conditions experienced by Jewish citizens trapped in the Islands, including those who were deported, and those unfortunates who were sent to serve as forced workers within the Nazi war-machine. What is not so easy is to establish the likely level of culpability of Island Government in the eventual deportation of the three Jewish girls to France, and to find out what happened to them afterwards. With the aid of new material, in the form of privately held letters, and other relevant accounts which are presently available, this study now offers a much clearer picture of their tragic ordeal.

Anti-Semitism

For hundreds of years, anti-Jewish feelings - fostered by the Roman Catholic Church, as well as by the teachings of Martin Luther - had been latent in many European circles. Sometimes erupting into violence, these feelings were given new life in the early twentieth century, by the proliferation of a set of documents known as the 'Protocols of Zion.' Although exposed as fake - being probably the work of the Ochrana in Russia at the end of the 1890s - these completely fictional protocols were read and believed by enormous numbers of people, including many founding members of Hitler's National Socialist German Workers' Party. Famous men, like Henry Ford in America, paid to have the document reproduced and widely circulated in the 1920s, continuing with its dissemination long after the work had been proven as fiction. The result was an increasing mistrust and suspicion of Jewry in general, and associated resentment gathered like a mist around them for decades. Partly as a result, and especially after the economic crisis following the Wall Street crash in 1929, anti-Semitism festered and grew stronger in much of European society. Therese Steiner, whose family had lived in Austria, was just one amongst thousands who had been affected. Possibly still haunted by her previous

experiences, she told her friend Mary Ogier, as they sat in the hospital dining room in Guernsey just before the Germans came to take her away: ‘All my life, because of my origin, I’ve been persecuted.’ Similar prejudice had also tainted some communities in Britain, though not apparently so deeply as her neighbours on the Continent.

However, even though anti-Semitism was not so virulent in Britain, it is true, as Professor Cesarani pointed out in an article in the *Telegraph* dated 17 January 2002, that ‘We can never know how [the mainlanders would have acted under German Occupation, and] so we should be wary of now laying claim to some special ingrained tolerance.’ Certainly, Richard Breitman has found evidence of anti-Semitism in Churchill’s government circles. He notes that Sir Anthony Eden was consistently unhelpful when plans to help save various European Jewish communities were put before him. In fact, on one occasion, after immigration into Palestine had been discussed, his private secretary wrote in his diary: ‘Unfortunately AE is immovable on the subject of Palestine. He loves Arabs and hates Jews.’⁸ However, it is also true, as Andrew Roberts commented about Madeleine Bunting’s conclusions on the subject:

[She] assumes that the British people and police would have co-operated in the rounding up of Jews, or at least looked the other way. [But] this ignores the fact that the British did not blame the Jews for the war or their social troubles in the same way that so many Frenchmen did. The relatively small size of the British Union of Fascists... would also suggest that anti-Semitism was less widespread than in France. [He continues]: Examples of Britons protecting Jews - as working people did against Mosley’s thugs in the East End - would surely have outnumbered the cases of those denouncing them.⁹

Whatever may have been the case in Britain, there seems to have been very little in the way of overt anti-Jewish feeling in the Channel Islands, and David Fraser, who identifies a number of instances of over-zealous investigation into the affairs of some Jewish

persons by various Island lawyers and officials, is also scrupulous in pointing out 'that there is little, if any evidence in Jersey that non-Jewish Islanders...took any real initiative in identifying Jews.'¹⁰ As Dr. Fraser also makes clear, there can be little doubt about the Island administrators' general Utilitarian approach to the problems of the Occupation. To achieve what amounted to the greatest good for the greatest number of Islanders was paramount in most of their considerations, and this policy was consistently followed. That they did not intervene as much as they might have done to protect their Jewish citizens may well be true, but as John Leale explained, the Island officials did not know what the enemy was up to, or at what cost to the rest of the population would be any refusal to follow Orders. He honestly admits that mistakes were made. Later, Alexander Coutanche also explained his understanding of the situation in similar terms, stating 'that they were bound in general to register... orders...otherwise the Germans would have governed by direct action...He [therefore] thought it would have been hopeless to take up the line...that they would have nothing to do with anti-Jewish measures.'¹¹ But this does not mean that Mr Coutanche was necessarily enthusiastic about the persecution of Jews. Indeed, in 1944 when he wrote his 'appeal for mercy' on behalf of Mesdemoiselles Schwob and Malherbe, it was in full knowledge that both women were Jewish, yet he still saw fit to exert whatever subtle pressure was possible on the German Authorities, by suggesting that their execution might 'arouse passion.'

Whatever the reasons for not doing more to resist the promulgation of the anti-Jewish measures, with hindsight the Island governments may be said to have largely failed those affected, simply by not making more of a stand on their behalf. However, it is also arguable that this was not as a result of discrimination, but only due to the same kind of uncertainty about the likely result of upsetting the Germans, which also meant that not enough was done for many other citizens who offended the Occupier in some way. For all of these people, the future consequences were similarly unknown. In fact, during the Occupation, many British and American citizens were also singled out for deportation

and, or degrading treatment. On 8 September 1942, Ambrose Robin described how an elderly British couple were 'compelled to strip stark naked' before boarding a ship to sail from Jersey to Guernsey for a short visit. The same process was repeated upon landing, and when they complained they were told: 'we trust the Channel Islanders but...not the British.' Also amongst the most hated groups were Freemasons, and ex-First-World-War officers and men, who also became targets for discrimination. In fact, Ambrose Robin noted on 8 December 1941 that 'under orders from Berlin the Masons and Oddfellows' were instructed to 'be dispossessed of their properties, [with orders that] these must be transferred to the States.' Even the Salvation Army was banned, and one of its most ardent supporters was imprisoned for her defiance, only to die shortly after her release.

At the same time it was realised in the Channel Islands, as Nicholas Doumanis later wrote, that 'Conquering powers often [do] look to minority groups to support their new regime,' and there is plenty of evidence that the Germans sought to gain more support amongst the Island-born and the Irish, whilst making efforts to play off one section of the community against another. This became more noticeable around the time of the deportations in and after September 1942, and various incidences are noted by diarists. Meanwhile, all Americans had been required to register on 17 December 1941, and later Ambrose Robin remarked that: 'Efforts to create dissension between Britain and the USA [were]...one of the principal features of all news dished out to us.' Later he concluded his diary entry on 11 April 1944 by describing the whole German nation as 'racial maniacs,' and 'bigger fools than I ever thought them to be.'

However, a seemingly endless series of lists was requested and supplied, many of which contained questions not just about religion, but also country of origin, previous employment, and even details of any criminal convictions. At times the population became almost blasé, as Izette Croad casually mentioned on 10 March 1943: 'Hear that Germans want a list of all persons under the Social Assurance scheme. Told father [I]

shall probably soon be working in Germany as I am one of them.’ But, not all felt able to joke, and on 4 July the same year, Kenneth Lewis noted with resignation: ‘The Germans were asking for the number of men born in 1922, that is the year I was born in, it is probably only for statistical reasons. However it is no use worrying about it but only trust in God.’ There was even a request on 4 November 1941, ‘to ascertain particulars of all British born children attending schools in [Guernsey] – their age, birthplace etc.’ This Order also ‘came from the German Authorities’ and people were told ‘not to worry.’ Unfortunately, as Frank Barton concluded in this same diary entry: ‘We have heard soothing words like this before.’ At this point, an observer is bound to pause and wonder; if some of those children had been later selected and sent away to be brought up in the Reich, as were many from Poland and elsewhere, who would have been held culpable for that? As it turned out, many others amongst the categories of persons listed were indeed at high risk of deportation, and when they left the Islands their destination was also completely unknown. In fact, Ambrose Sherwill had every justification for later claiming that at the time the First Order against the Jews was issued, he was disgusted but had no premonition of what registration might mean. Later, in relation to lists which had been required and produced in Jersey, Clifford Orange stated: ‘As from September 1942 when it became obvious the purpose to which lists of persons supplied... were being put, I refused to supply any further lists to the German authorities.’¹²

It is also worth noting that where lives were strongly suspected to be at risk, the Island officials did resist German requests. In Jersey, when the German Commandant visited St. Saviours Mental Hospital with Dr. McKinstry, he commented: ‘We have a better way of treating these people and we would not be keeping them.’ Subsequently, in early 1944, came an ‘Order’ demanding a list of all the patients in the Hospital, ‘together with a list of all... “cripples” since they were... to be moved out of the Island. After strong protests from the Medical Officer of Health and the Bailiff this order was “deferred.”’¹³ Obviously smelling the same rat, it seems the Guernsey Authorities resisted similar overtures made

to them on 26 November 1941, when the Germans announced that ‘They now required the block [of the Vauquiedor Hospital] that housed 63 mental patients.’¹⁴ At first Dr. Symons and Louis Guillemette invoked the Hague Convention, and said that there was ‘nowhere to transfer the patients,’ but when told ‘that if no alternative accommodation ... could be found... they would have to be sent to France with the nursing staff’ ... Dr. Symons reluctantly agreed that the Town Asylum... be reopened.’¹⁵

Specifically in relation to aliens, however, there had been some discrimination in the Islands’ immigration policy for years, and in Alderney in 1939, the transient presence of nine Jewish refugees had instigated quite heated discussion in the local press. However, much of the general policy of the States was of necessity in line with strict controls exercised by the British government on the mainland. As a result, applications from stateless German refugees to take up residence were routinely met with refusal. In February 1939, Victor Carey explained: ‘[I] feel that if once we create a precedent it will be very difficult to stop a wholesale influx,’ and Alexander Coutanche stated that since ‘they had had a large number of applications ... their policy was to refuse as they felt that the Island was too small to absorb the influx.’¹⁶

However, there was evidently some flexibility, which was applied in the case of Marianne Grunfeld, a Jewish girl from Poland, who advertised her services in a farming magazine in early 1940. The advertisement was spotted by H.E. Ogier in Guernsey, who promptly requested a permit for her to work in the Island. At first refused by the Bailiff, who later explained: ‘it was felt at the time that it might be dangerous to alter the policy... of discouraging as far as possible the introduction of aliens into the Bailiwick,’ Mr. Ogier decided to make a more direct approach, asking him to reconsider.¹⁷ With the request, he enclosed a letter of recommendation from a friend of Miss Grunfeld’s family, which also included details of an excellent testimonial. This time the Bailiff ‘consulted the States Agricultural and Fisheries Committee, who unanimously supported granting...

a permit...[and then] wrote to the Lieutenant Governor saying that...he now raised no opposition to her application.'¹⁸A permit was granted, and Marianne arrived in Guernsey on 1 May 1940, after which date she stayed in the Ogier family farmhouse.

Throughout the war years, there is little evidence of any ill-feeling towards Jews in the Channel Islands. In no diary is there a derogatory comment, and only remarks of sympathy, and occasional exclamations about the ridiculous nature of anti-Jewish propaganda, appear upon their now ageing pages. This is even more noteworthy, when one considers the proliferation of the sort of virulent anti-Semitic material on which Germany and the rest of Europe were already being fed. Damning Press articles were commonplace, for example, there was one on Jewish Bolshevism on 7 October 1941. Another, entitled 'Jewish Bolshevism Danger,' appeared on 27 April 1942, and another discussing the role of 'Jewry in the USA,' in November 1943. Caricatures of Jews were also featured, striving to show what was purported to be the evil side of their character, in accordance with bigoted Nazi ideals. They were depicted as trying to make extra money out of supplying war equipment, or threatening to harm some innocent woman. Captions underneath such stock images naively asked: 'would you have such a man for your pal?' Anti-Jewish films were also shown in the Islands, the most notable being 'Jew Suss,' which was shown at West's Cinema in Jersey, and the Regal in Guernsey in October 1941. This film, shown with English sub-titles, was dramatically acted, and the potentially dangerous influence of all such propaganda for inciting racial hatred may be gauged by Peter Hassall's later recollections: 'The final scene...depicted the German damsel struggling to protect her virtue [from the Jewish villain] while the Aryan prototype ran up dozens of castle steps...The film ended in thunderous applause, when the Jew met his end.' Mr. Hassall continued: 'I hate to admit that I came away... somewhat influenced by it [H]owever the Germans' conduct against the handful of Jews remaining on the island, quickly washed away any anti-Jewish sentiments I may have unconsciously harboured.'¹⁹

Propaganda against all things Jewish also extended into other local entertainment. In December 1945, Reg Grandin wrote how the German censor attempted to interfere in the production of the 'Merchant of Venice' two years before, as he sought to use the play for propaganda purposes. After the first night's performance the actor who played 'Shylock' was summoned to German Headquarters and told that his delineation of the character of the Jew was not sufficiently repellent, and that this must be remedied at subsequent performances, or further measures would be taken. 'We would add,' continued the author, 'that this diatribe was completely ignored.'²⁰ Even the music of Jewish composers was either banned or restricted. In Jersey, Izette Croad remarked that at a children's concert, Mendelssohn's 'Song without Words' was forbidden in April 1941, and on 4 November 1943 Reverend Ord reported his own brush with the censor. He recorded: 'At the Church last night a huge congregation assembled... The previous week I [had] made the announcement... with some show of innocence: "next Sunday we are to listen to Mendelssohn's 'Hymn of Praise,' which is the work of a great master known the world over. I am not however permitted to tell you who wrote it.'" He concluded with some satisfaction: 'THAT went home.' But in spite of all these attempts to stimulate anti-Semitism: 'there is no evidence that islanders were spurred into a general denunciation of suspected Jews... [and] in Jersey, none of the residents of Jewish origin who had not registered under the First Order were denounced.'²¹ In Guernsey, the only documented case of denunciation was that of Julia Brichta, but that seems to have been informed more by her suspected illegal activities than by any Jewish connection.

However, given the publicity about the persecution of Jews in Germany before the war, it was natural that the majority of the Islands' Jewish population had decided to leave in June 1940. Indeed, one such resident was actually sent away on the pretext of a mission by Ambrose Sherwill, who gave him a letter to Markbreiter in London. The letter explained that the future for the Islands looked 'extremely gloomy,' and that: 'The bearer... Dr. W.J. Montague is for racial reasons being directed to proceed to England and

not to return until after the cessation of hostilities.’ It continued: ‘I much regret losing him for he is a very able doctor, a close personal friend and a man of the most sterling character...[who] had volunteered to remain regardless of the consequences to himself’.²²

Dr. Montague had intended ‘to take back a store of medical drugs and appliances to the Channel Islands,’ but was unable to return before the German landings. In fact he would never return, since he ‘died suddenly of heart failure, aged 49,’ in Sussex on 14 February 1944. In March, the *Channel Islands Monthly Review* concluded its notice of death as follows: ‘Apart from his professional skill his sympathy for his patients made him universally loved, and he was held in great respect by his professional colleagues.’²³

Such sentiments hardly support accusations of anti-Semitism on the part of Ambrose Sherwill, or for that matter amongst the editors of the *Channel Islands Review* in England. Nevertheless, there is still no doubt that most of the anti-Jewish legislation was registered in the Channel Islands without hindrance. Apart from the later explanations of Messrs. Sherwill and Coutanche, some additional insight into how this came about may be gleaned from the memories of Betty Bois. Bob Le Sueur explains:

She sat in on all manner of meetings and translated...and she said that this instruction came. [The Island Government] were first asked for a list of Jews, and they said ‘well we don’t have one and we don’t go round asking people their religion ...[In the last census] there was no question about “are you a Jew?”...and they said: ‘as far as we know they all went away’ [in June 1940]...Then came the question [from the German representative]: ‘Well if they’ve all gone away you’ve nothing to bother about...have you.’²⁴

Later in the interview, Mr Le Sueur says how angry he has been about accusations of ‘outright collaboration,’ which have since been made in the context of the Island Authority’s co-operation with the Germans over the identification and deportation of Jews. He is not alone in this view, as many other survivor-witnesses who gave interviews

agreed with his sentiments. Miriam Mahy, the author of two books about the Occupation also went on record in *The Times* on 7 January 1993, when she said that she 'did not believe that the names of Jews had been given willingly.' This may be so, but as Mr Le Sueur succinctly points out: 'denials can be issued afterwards, but... who will know the denials were ever made?' These remarks are of course also relevant to the development of any public face of collective memory generally, since it is often widely shaped by those who shout their opinions with the loudest voice, or who are given the most media publicity.

The Orders

The first Order relating to measures against Jews was registered in the Royal Courts of Jersey on 21 October 1940 and in Guernsey two days later. It had been preceded by various requests for information regarding aliens resident in the Islands, as on 1 June the same year. Unfortunately on 4 June two of the girls later sent to Auschwitz had already been amongst a group of twenty-eight persons listed, and - on the instructions of the Lieutenant-Governor's Office - had been interned as enemy aliens, only to be released three weeks later. Very soon afterwards the Germans arrived, and required the Authorities to provide details of all resident aliens, including their nationality and religion. As suggested by the account of Betty Bois, it would seem that at least some Island officials at first made efforts to side-step questions about religion, since after the request had been passed to Inspector Sculpher by John Leale on 24 August the subsequent lists were scrupulous in providing all the information requested, except on the question of religion, which had been ignored. Therese Steiner and Auguste Spitz, both from Vienna, as well as Marianne Grunfeld, who was later identified as Jewish, were naturally included on this list which contained 407 names. Within weeks, Doctor Brosch required Police Inspector Sculpher to inform all Germans - including four Austrians - and Italians to attend for interview at the Feldkommandantur on 21 October. Thirty-three persons were affected, and Therese Steiner and Auguste Spitz were among them.

Subsequently, on 24 October the First Order against the Jews, to which Sir Abraham Lainé had raised his lone voice of objection in the Royal Court, was published in the local press. This contained instructions for any person identified as Jewish, to register with the police. Four persons came forward. They included Therese and Auguste, and two others who were British by marriage - Mesdames Elda Brouard and Elizabeth Duquemin. Another woman registered in Sark, but after much discussion, and the support of the Dame, she later claimed to be of Aryan descent.

A whole series of further anti-Jewish measures followed, and all were duly registered by the Island Authorities, except the Eighth Order which was registered in Guernsey on 30 June 1942, but refused in Jersey. This was apparently the result of an intervention by Alexander Coutanche and the Attorney General, who 'visited Dr Casper...[and] advised that this order should not be registered or put into execution.'²⁵ Since further details of this and all other related measures are covered very fully elsewhere, particularly within Mr. Cohen's book, it is unnecessary to repeat the provisions here. However, this is not to belittle their import, since 'most of the orders had a direct impact on the lives of the registered Jews and resulted in great suffering. The effects...included loss of employment, forced sale or closure of businesses, restriction of shopping hours, special curfew, interview...[as well as] fear and...threat of deportation.'²⁶ So great was the strain that one - John Davidson - was driven to mental illness, and another - Victor Emanuel - to suicide. John Lewis recorded another such suicide, which happened only days after the Occupation took place, and showed how drastically fear had affected the only other Jewish patient he had left, 'when her name appeared on the second list for deportation.'²⁷ He describes how 'the change in the woman was quite unbelievable...[when in] place of her [usual] arrogant entrance...she crept [into the surgery] and...[wept] as she came into my consulting room.'²⁷ For this person, the Doctor did his best, explaining: 'I agreed to perjure myself...by a written report to the German Doctor enumerating all the terrible illnesses from which she had suffered, and the present precarious state of her health,'

thereby saving her from the dreaded deportation.²⁸ Other Jews were also living in constant fear, and in the *Jersey Evening Post* on 9 April 1997, Freddie Cohen cited 'one couple who lived in Grand Vaux with their curtains drawn all day.'

Of those people with Jewish origins, like Mesdames Brouard and Duquemin, who were British subjects, some were subsequently deported to internment camps in Germany along with other British-born Islanders, whose names had also first been routinely supplied by the Island Authorities upon German request on 16 September 1941. Again, at the time, there was no way of anticipating the possible fate of these individuals, and still it was thought that to refuse to supply the information could prove more dangerous for the population in the long run than following orders. However, most of the people involved in this exodus were lucky, and returned safely to their homes after Germany had been defeated in 1945. The transfer of Mr Finklestein from this group into the horror of the concentration camp system was therefore exceptional, and because most of these deportees survived, their treatment has not seemed to make very much impact upon the Islands' collective memory even to this day. In fact many of those affected regret the tedium of their existence-in-exile, and feel that some compensation would have been suitable, but many are grateful that they did not witness first-hand the horrors of the concentration camps, which could have been one alternative destination. However, by comparison, the case of the three murdered girls from Guernsey still features very much in the spotlight of public gaze, and therefore looks likely to remain the main feature of the Jewish Occupation experience for posterity, this being mostly due to its inevitable link with the Holocaust in Europe, where the most cruel face of Nazi insanity had been revealed.

Auguste, Therese and Marianne

After declaring themselves under the First Order, Therese Steiner and Auguste Spitz

appeared on yet another list of Jews, which also intended to identify any Americans living in the Bailiwick. In March 1941, events took a more sinister turn, as their 'Foreigner's Cards' were marked with a capital 'J' in red, and the following year, on April 20, they both received orders to report to the Harbour next day for deportation to France. At no stage did the Island Authorities hand the girls over to the Germans, or send them away. Neither did the police escort them to the Harbour; they were not allowed to enter the White Rock area. In fact, as Mr. Cohen points out: 'Those who registered as Jews in 1940 simply did not foresee the dreadful consequences of their declarations' any more than did the Island officials, and the deportations seem to have happened more as a result of the girls' honesty, and ordinary sense of duty as citizens, to comply with the requirements of the powers that be.²⁹ As were so many other future victims in Europe, they were also swept along by a certain innate human confidence in the reliability of ostensibly reasonable behaviour, which was consistently ordered by the Nazi hierarchy to hide their true purpose.

Auguste Spitz was born in Vienna on 29 August 1901. She entered Guernsey as a nanny in September 1937, but after her internment as an enemy alien, she was employed as a domestic at the Castel Hospital. Known as Gustie to her friends, she was a well-liked member of staff. Beryl Ozanne remembers that 'she was a real character,' with a good sense of humour, which extended to christening the hospital cat with the name of Churchill.³⁰ In her account of Miss Spitz, Una Plumb, who was a nurse at the hospital, paints a similar picture, describing 'how full of fun Gustie was and...that [her] favourite saying was that she liked all people.' Knowing what happened later, Ms. Plumb concluded: 'How terrible...that such an innocent person could die in the gas chamber merely because she was Jewish.'³¹

Nurse Therese Steiner was also employed at the hospital. Born in Vienna on 24 February 1916, she qualified as a dental nurse before travelling to England to take up a

nursing position with a dentist in Kent. When the family moved to Sark on the outbreak of war in 1939, she became a nanny to the children, travelling with them to Guernsey shortly afterwards. However, Mrs. Potts and her children soon returned to England but Therese, already viewed as an 'enemy alien,' was unable to travel. Like Auguste Spitz, she took up her employment at the hospital after being released from internment on 25 June. She was also very well liked, and her considerable talent as a musician soon gained the admiration and respect of her colleagues. Told of impending deportation, reports of her reaction vary. The night before, she went with Auguste Spitz to visit their friend Elizabeth Duquemin, who remembered: 'They had a paper with them from the Germans...and were in a terrible state of anxiety. They borrowed a suitcase from me and I never saw the poor girls again.'³²

Other friends at the hospital have different memories. 'Mrs. Whales...[the] Assistant Matron recalled that they left the Island in good heart...and indeed...a few days prior to their departure, [Therese Steiner] went of her own accord to the Kommandantur to solicit official aid in expediting a family reunion!'³³ Whatever their state of mind as they sailed away from St. Peter Port, the two girls were not alone with their worries, as they found themselves in the company of two other deportees. One was an American citizen, Mrs. Millicent Mc Gahy, whose husband had already been deported, and the other, Marianne Grunfeld, born on 5 December 1912 in Katowice, had lately been employed by Edward Ogier at Duvex Farm. Since she was small and fair, and Slavonic in appearance, she had not registered under the First Order, and for a while remained undetected by the German Authorities, even though she had appeared on the list of aliens, and on the identification of citizens registers which followed. Furthermore, 'her name was not one of the five names of Jews supplied [in November 1941] to the German Authorities by the Bailiff... and the President of the Controlling Committee,' although they obviously knew of her existence, having unusually granted her work permit the previous year.'³⁴

There has been some speculation that Marianne was maliciously betrayed by an acquaintance who harboured a grudge, but attention may also have been drawn towards her identity when the farmer was under investigation for suspected illegal activities, which resulted in his trial in April 1942. Whatever the case, her friend and co-worker, Mary Edwards, described what happened in a private letter dated 22 May 1945: 'We worked together quite happily until April 1942. Then one day a policeman came and ordered her to meet the German authorities...Despite every effort - made by Mr. Ogier to keep her here [he even offered to adopt her if it would satisfy them]...nothing moved them and she was sent to France.' Edward Ogier is indeed on record as doing everything he could to save Marianne. Furnished with a letter of introduction by John Leale, he made an appeal at the Feldkommandantur on 18 April, just three days before the girls were due to leave. Writing that same day, Reverend Ord recorded in his diary: 'This morning...a friend stopped me outside Grange Lodge...to vent his rage and sorrow. He had gone to appeal for a girl employee who is...to be carried off. The [German] officials listened to the arguments he put but were powerless to resist the inhuman decree of the Nazi Frankenstein.'

An appeal had also been made by John Leale on behalf of Therese Steiner, but as Sandra James reported: 'despite a plea that 'Therese was, by virtue of her work as a nurse, a 'key person' and therefore protected from being drafted to work for the Germans, the plea went unheeded.'³⁵The official hospital records also make comment: 'The President... reported that two members of the staff, Miss T. Steiner... and Miss A. Spitz...were under orders from the German Authorities to leave the Island. It was resolved to record an expression of regret at losing their services as their work had been of the highest order.'³⁶

On arrival in France, the four deportees were first taken to Laval, where they were probably required to register, before being left to find work. Therese was soon employed

as a nurse, but the others were given lodgings at the Hospice Saint Louis. Marianne became an interpreter, and corresponded regularly with Mary Edwards for about two months, until 'my letters to her were returned.' Mary then wrote to the Matron of the hostel where Marianne had been living, but later recorded: 'She could tell us nothing except that Marianne had been fetched one night by some Germans with a lorry and had taken very little luggage.'³⁷In another letter, written towards the end of 1945, Ms. Edwards poignantly spoke of her hope that her friend was still alive:

I have been waiting so anxiously for news of Marianne but so far none has reached here. I expect it is on account of hearing so much...about Belsen Camp that she is constantly in our thoughts... this week...it was announced that there were 30,000 displaced [persons] still unable to communicate with the outside world...She may be one! I haven't given up all hope yet.

But the harsh fact was that all three Jewish girls were long since dead. The Yad Vashem Archives confirm the dates, and other information shows that sometime after they had been taken from their lodgings, they 'were herded into Convoy Number 8 [on 20 July,] which on July 23 reached Auschwitz where they were slaughtered soon after arrival.'³⁸ Two days later, the more fortunate Mrs. Mc Gahy was allowed to leave Laval for Paris, where she found refuge.

This deportation of the three Jewish girls from Guernsey was actually one of the first of many from Western Europe, which ultimately led to the gas chambers in the East. It is precisely because of this timing that it is extremely unlikely that anyone, apart from possibly the German Commanders involved, could have had any idea of the horrific fate which awaited them. In spite of the fact that the extermination process was already in place by October 1941, and that the Wannsee Conference was finally held on 20 January 1942, to clarify the details of how it would be conducted, the policy was intentionally kept secret from the wider world. As Heinrich Himmler made clear in his speech to SS

Generals in Posen on 4 October 1943, this 'extremely important subject...must never [be mentioned] in public.' He continued: 'I mean...the extermination of the Jewish people...This is a glorious page in our history which never has and never will be written.'³⁹ However, so many murders were taking place, that by spring 1942 the truth was seeping out of Nazi-occupied Europe by many routes, and on 21 May, the Bund Report from the Jewish labour organisation in Poland was sent to London. This report, received within two weeks, put the number of Jews 'already dead at 700,000. The rest were in dire danger...the German government [it stated] has begun to implement Hitler's announcement that...before the end of the war, whatever the end, he will kill all the Jews in Europe.'⁴⁰ In response, the BBC Archives record that on 25 June it gave out advice that 'the ghastly story...should be given the fullest publicity in all languages.'⁴¹

At this point, it must be remembered that by 25 June 1942 most wireless sets in the Islands had already been handed in by specific German 'Order.' However, many others had been retained, and even though no details are given, it may be significant that Ambrose Robin wrote on the same day: 'without wireless news wild rumours are in circulation and some very black pictures are being painted.' But in any case, there was often scepticism about 'tales of atrocities,' as already mused upon by Izette Croad, and the same was true all over the so-called civilised world, as the 'Liberal Imagination' of the masses simply could not reconcile details of unthinkable horrors, with what Tony Kushner describes as the normal requirement of maintaining 'day-to-day sanity.' But the unthinkable was indeed taking place, and these BBC broadcasts served as the first wide-ranging public herald. However, whether or not some Islanders were able to pick up these broadcasts - or similar ones after 25 June - such knowledge could not have helped save Therese, Auguste and Marianne. Their fate had been finally sealed upon their deportation from Guernsey two months before, and four weeks after the first BBC broadcast was made, they were probably already dead.

Afterwards

The question of levels of culpability with regard to the role of the Island Authorities in the promulgation of anti-Jewish legislation has been discussed earlier. But, long after the war was over, the German administrator, Dr. Wilhelm Casper, who was in charge of Jewish matters in the Islands until 1943, was still writing letters which made startling assertions about his part in enforcing those measures. In a letter to Dr. Fraser dated 28 May 1998, the ninety-six-year-old Dr. Casper explains:

When the order came in 1942 to evacuate the Jews in the Channel Islands to Germany I told General Count Schmettow: ‘The order is not conform[ing] with International Law. But if I don’t give the order to the Bailiffs I shall be executed. If the Bailiffs do not perform the order SS police would be sent to the Islands like to all other occupied countries...I see only one positive solution... to give the chance for the Jews to sail to England. If you employ the...coast watch...with other tasks I could ask the Bailiffs to tell the Jews that they have the opportunity to sail to England unhindered by Germans.’ Count Schmettow agreed...Later Prince Oettingen phoned me that two Viennese Jewish ladies in Guernsey refused to sail to England. They said that all Austrians in England were interned.⁴²

These claims are largely uncorroborated, but in another letter a few years earlier, Dr. Casper had also stated categorically that: ‘nobody at that time on the Channel Islands - neither the Bailiffs or I - knew what would happen with the evacuated Jewish people... We thought they would be interned like the other people evacuated from the Islands.’⁴³ All of these claims paint a picture of the Doctor as a humane and caring man, but when the contents of a contemporary letter sent by him ‘to the SS HQ in Paris’ are also taken into account, his claim to good intentions is immediately suspect. In this letter, Dr. Casper ‘recommended that [the Jews] be sent to Dachau never to return. He also requested a supply of yellow cloth stars with the word “JEW” written on them in

English.⁴⁴ However, even though this evidence seems quite damning, it is impossible to judge now with any certainty whether his later account of events may contain some truth, or whether it was simply intended to exonerate himself - and his associates - from blame after the results of their policy emerged. However, his explanation does seem designed to influence and shape the wider collective memory of German Jewish policy in the Islands, and also demonstrates the almost universal human desire to show one's own, as well as one's collective group, actions to posterity in as good light as possible.

In this context, it is also interesting to note that even though the Island Authorities did implement German anti-Jewish legislation without much protest, their general attitude still bears no comparison with that of their much less oppressed counterparts in France. There, the French Authorities ruthlessly promoted their own anti-Jewish policies, which had precedents dating back to 'measures against foreigners...[in] the 1930s...which had started under the Republic.'⁴⁵ In a recent study, Julian Jackson clearly shows that in France: 'During the first two years of occupation the prevailing sentiment towards the Jews ranged from indifference to hostility,' and 'the Jewish "problem" was one of Vichy's earliest preoccupations.'⁴⁶ Robert Gildea explains: 'in the demonology of occupied France communists were second only to Jews,' and both were therefore 'excluded from national life as the price of national redemption.'⁴⁷

The first anti-Jewish legislation appeared on 3 October 1940, and 'despite what Vichy apologists later claimed, the Statute was not imposed by the Germans...over the next twelve months Vichy issued [a further] 26 laws and 24 decrees on the Jews.'⁴⁸ Treatment of foreign Jews was even more callous. 'From 4 October 1940, they could be interned at the discretion of the prefects. Seven main camps were used for this purpose, and by the start of 1941 about 40,000 Jews were held...Conditions were atrocious...in total about 3,000 Jews perished in the French camps...before the Final Solution had begun.'⁴⁹ One of these camps was at Drancy, where Auguste, Therese and Marianne were probably taken

to await their last journey.

Many years later, in 1998, a service of remembrance was held by the Jersey Jewish community to commemorate the suffering of the Islands' Jews, and the courage of those non-Jewish citizens who attempted to assist them. The late Lord Jakobovits, emeritus Chief Rabbi was present, together with both Bailiffs. Mention was made of Mr. Albert Bedane, the Islander who risked his life by hiding Mary Richardson, and his story has also now helped shape the Islands' own collective memory of the Jewish wartime experience, allowing it to emerge with more dignity. In fact, thanks to the BBC television programme his story has become quite well-known, and Mr. Cohen's conclusions about a general lack of anti-Semitic behaviour amongst the Islanders during the Occupation, have also helped to defuse some of these more troublesome areas of Occupation debate.

However, this more enlightened approach does not affect the tragedy which unfolded at the time. As Sir Philip Bailhache also said at the remembrance service of 1998:

The suffering which your President has described [in his speech] was the result of unspeakable evil...the scale and clinical efficiency of the Holocaust were I think without parallel...the bare statistics, six million Jews [murdered] tend to deaden the imagination. It is only when the statistics take human form with names, faces and identities, and are recognised as [people] with hopes and fears of their own, that the extent of the horror becomes apparent...It is right that there should be a memorial to the Jewish people who suffered here and in the other Channel Islands.⁵⁰

Therese Steiner was just one such person:

She was arrested by French police...They seized her rings and her watch...some [prisoners] started to weep...they were marched out onto a railway platform [into] old trucks used for

animals. They were pushed in 80 per wagon, and then the windows and doors were sealed. Rail convoy number 8, carrying 824 Jews crossed the German border near Trier late on July 20... On board, Andre Lettich, survived to describe the horrors of Therese's final journey. 'We suffered terribly from thirst, and people had to put their mouths to knot-holes in the wooden walls for fresh air, or stood on each other's shoulders to reach the tiny windows high up... There was no food and no water. Children were crying and asking unanswerable questions... Nurses and piano teachers, professors and doctors, nice mummies and daddies, all were turned into something resembling the normal occupants of those wagons: weak and yielding and half ready for slaughter.' After three terrible days, they reached Auschwitz... [to be selected] for work...[or] sent to their deaths in the gas chambers.⁵¹

And did 'the scale and clinical efficiency' of what we now call the Holocaust 'deadend the imagination' of the victims, as well as of the majority of those of us who are alive today? On 4 March 1943, almost eleven months after the girls had been deported, Reverend Ord poignantly confirmed that Therese Steiner had been deeply anxious as she prepared to leave Guernsey: 'When I last spoke with her, she had orders to go to France. She was in great distress and seemed to feel that her feet were now set upon her Via Dolorosa. I did what I could to comfort her but what can one say or do?'

‘Many of the loyal old Jerseymen in 1945 stated; that without a full enquiry now...it would all come back to their grandchildren in the years to come: “the finger of suspicion of collaboration.” And how right our old people were.’

Jersey Archives Service. Joe Mière Collection: *L/C/24/C/5*

Collaboration: A Fair Hearing?

11.

‘Last week, with the publication of British government archives...old stories were retold. Once again seductive half-truths, distortions and stories of ‘Jerrybags’ ...became ugly full-blown lies. The older islanders expected a more sympathetic, accurate...account of their ordeal. Instead they had to suffer another bout of prurient sensation-seeking, and their mood was as cold and bitter as the gales that battered the islands all week.’

The Sunday Times 6/12/1992

Ever since the Occupation began, there has been a disproportionate interest in the extent of collaboration in the Islands, with accusations first arising mostly from within the Island communities, and later - as illustrated above - from Government and Press releases in mainland Britain. Books, published by Peter King and Madeleine Bunting in 1991 and 1995 respectively, have only served to intensify the controversy. Charges made against the integrity of the Island officials have already been largely investigated in the preceding chapters, and discussion of their conduct will remain ongoing throughout this study. However, the reputation of the general population has also been so widely vilified in recent years that the purpose of this chapter will be to examine different representations of their behaviour, set against a fresh appraisal of what may be reasonably shown to have happened, as it has been variously presented for public consumption over the years.

After Liberation, there was a general consensus in most early accounts, that those engaged in some sort of collaboration with the enemy were only a small minority of the population. In addition, not only did early British Establishment pronouncements support the integrity of responsible Island administrators, but Press reports were also quite balanced. For example, articles dealing with Pearl Vardon, one of the very few people

accused of traitorous actions, also pointed out that she was compared by the Lord Chief Justice at her trial to the ‘majority of...heroic Channel Islanders who...put up a magnificent defence against the invader.’¹ Ms. Vardon was later sentenced to nine months imprisonment for making enemy broadcasts.

Such sentiments were also reflective of similar views which had been published during, and immediately after, the Occupation. For example, two early articles in the *Daily Mail* had quoted accounts from recent escapers. On 21 November 1941, a young Jersey farmer reported that ‘Channel Island girls are giving the occupying German troops the cold shoulder,’ and on 5 October 1942 a fisherman - Mr. Lawrence - reported: ‘At first the Germans tried to be friendly, but the Guernsey people had just made up their minds to ignore their existence...when I left...the effort to create a friendly atmosphere had been given up.’ A later summary of the general situation, as described by ‘prominent citizens from Jersey and Guernsey,’ appears in the *CIMR* in September 1944: ‘Collaboration in so far as it existed, was purely a commercial matter conditioned by the necessity of keeping the economy...running since the Germans had it in their power to starve the population to death. But there was no collaboration [and] discipline was generally good.’ Similar articles appeared within other editions of the Review, and in a broadcast made by the BBC to the USA on 16 June 1945, Herb Plambeck - a recent visitor to Jersey - stated: ‘During the Occupation...hatred for Nazism was complete. Only 10% or less of the residents are believed to have collaborated...[and the Islands will] long be remembered in history for the brave hearts of their people, so strong and defiant in these...terrible years.’²

But around the same time back in the Islands, there was still ‘bitter anger against those who had wilfully betrayed them...[and] many people were determined...to bring justice to those who [had] committed despicable acts.’³ Emotions were raw, and it is not surprising that with all their grievances fresh in their minds, the first phase of collective

memory relating to collaboration was troubled, even explosive at times, as some of those women who had been friendly with the Occupier soon found out. Even as early as 5 September 1944, Kenneth Lewis had outlined in his diary what he understood the punishment of such 'Jerrybags' would be: that their hair would be cut off, and he recorded that 'postcards have been sent out...[saying]: "You are No...on the list...signed the GUB [Guernsey Underground Barbers]"' But when Liberation came 'most decent people considered that, although in many cases the women richly deserved punishment, it should not be inflicted by self-appointed tribunals,' and Reverend Ord wisely concluded that: 'Girls who have had children to Germans will have their own burdens to carry long after public feeling has cooled.'⁴ Other voices of reason were also raised in the *Jersey Evening Post*, and on 18 June 1945, at a time when Joe Mière described how 'everybody was pointing the finger,' there appeared a letter headed: 'Is there a difference?' It read: 'A girl that had, figuratively speaking, run the shoes off her feet in getting food, etc., for numerous people, who were most effusive in their thanks, now [received] the cold shoulder. Let those people remember that according to English law a receiver is as guilty as the thief.'

Thus, as it turned out, most threats of retribution came to nothing, but a few ugly incidents were reported. In a later interview, Joe Mière described how some 'pure cowards...got hold of girls...by the harbour [and] were...hacking their hair with scissors, [and] stripping them naked...[Another time, a] girl ran past naked, blood pouring from her head,'⁵ There were other similar occurrences, but as Michael Ginns points out: many of the more sensationalist journalist accounts were unlikely to be true, for example: 'tarring and feathering was [a] myth. By 1945 there wasn't any tar.'⁶ Soon such acts ceased, though some girls - as well as men - who were thought to have fraternised with the Germans 'lost jobs...after anonymous phone calls...told their employers that otherwise the premises would be wrecked.'⁷ However, it is an interesting commentary on the constancy of some so-called 'Jerrybags,' that within weeks they were seen to be

going out with British ‘Tommies.’

Amongst other citizens who had favoured the enemy, and made money out of the Occupation, were various farmers, black-marketeers and profiteers, and this group were also regarded with anger amongst their fellows. However, it seems that a fairly large proportion of these managed to keep their ill-gotten gains, despite efforts to the contrary. Madeleine Bunting describes one instance, where a ‘Jersey bank clerk, outraged by the bags stuffed with German money that certain islanders...had asked him to change, drew up a list of their names.’ His sister remembers: ‘He was told by one of the Liberation Force officers to tear the list up because Churchill had said that the British Empire was not to know about things like that.’⁸ It would seem that this became a fairly general understanding at the time, and must have endured for years afterwards, since Alan and Mary Seaton Wood also concluded that: ‘the main reason why there was no action against disloyal conduct was the feeling that it would be bad for British prestige to admit that in the only British territory...occupied, everybody had not behaved perfectly.’⁹ Published in 1982, Solomon Steckoll obviously believed the same, as he categorically stated that such motives for non-action ‘can be accepted.’¹⁰

Another group of collaborators for whom no-one had a good word, was comprised of the seemingly ubiquitous spies and informers, who were reportedly tempted by rewards offered by the Germans, or simply by some grudge against one or more of their neighbours. ‘Spies, frequently females would stand in...queues and listen to gossip...and it was not unknown...for one member of a family to denounce another.’¹¹ People were anxious, malnourished and afraid, never knowing when the Germans would decide to search their houses or put them out into the street. In such a climate it was not surprising that tensions were high, and as Izette Croad concluded on 8 February 1943, ‘one almost begins to doubt everybody.’ About six months later, on 14 August, Frank Barton vented his anger about ‘local quislings...Some are the genuine article...some ...in high places.

Others - and these are perhaps the majority - are those contemptible people who sit on the fence...ready to come down on whichever side appears to be winning... These people are utterly soulless, loyalty has no meaning for them.' Of course some of the more minor incidences of disloyalty would have carried less impact if conditions had not been so difficult for so many, but as far as the work of some informers was concerned, the results were often serious, when those accused were arrested, imprisoned, and ill-treated. In fact, there is evidence that such patriotic people as John Ingrouille, Louisa Gould, and members of the G.U.N.S. organisation in Guernsey were all betrayed by known informers, and whilst most of them later died in captivity, those treacherous individuals who had divulged their names were allowed to escape without punishment, as a direct result of British policy.

At the end of the War, it was evident that the social fabric of the Islands had been torn in many places, and it was therefore only natural that the vast majority of those who had suffered through the actions of some of their neighbours, should seek redress through recourse to British Justice. To facilitate the process, such organisations as the 'Jersey Loyalists' and 'Jersey Auxiliary Legion,' which had been information-gathering with others throughout the Occupation, decided to amalgamate, with a view to placing their joint resources at the disposal of the Authorities. An announcement appeared in the *Jersey Evening Post* on 2 June 1945, and the group - retaining the name 'Jersey Loyalists' - then lost no time in putting together a petition which was presented to the States government on 21 June. The contents were crystal clear, as reported within the *Jersey Evening Post* the following day:

Your petitioners deplore and beg to report that during the Occupation... a number of inhabitants... have in varying forms and degrees, either deliberately or otherwise collaborated, consorted with, assisted, associated or traded with the King's enemies... and this to the sorrow, disgust and humiliation of all loyal subjects of His Majesty... Your Petitioners consider that the

actions...of such persons constitute acts of disloyalty and treason, and...render the guilty persons liable to punishment appropriate.¹²

The contemporary view of most Islanders could not have been clearer. In fact, there can be no doubt that all this groundwork had been undertaken in the sincere belief that such offences should not be swept under the carpet, and that all those who could be proven to have transgressed should receive 'every pennyworth that [is] their due.'¹³ However, it would soon become apparent that the post-War British Government had other ideas, and as Sherwill explained in June 1946, matters were largely taken out of the hands of the Island Administrations, since: 'The Royal Court could not punish those who co-operated with the Germans, [because] trials for treason or treachery could not be undertaken without the consent of the Attorney-General of England.'¹⁴ Richard Breitman throws more light on what the general British Government policy was likely to be, as he writes:

Some British officials had little enthusiasm for the whole concept of war-crimes trials. In June 1942, Anthony Eden told the War Cabinet of his...opposition to any form of...special judicial machinery...he was concerned about Britain's being saddled with the burden of trying huge numbers of war criminals and urged a quick disposition of the issue to facilitate the return to a peaceful atmosphere in Europe.¹⁵

Meanwhile, around the Islands, interest in the quest for justice was widespread, and many letters appeared in the Press. Probably in response, a British officer was established in a hotel in Guernsey, where 'anyone could make a report in respect of the activities of fellow-islanders during the Occupation...A number of accusations and claims were submitted.'¹⁶ Things seemed to be progressing, and early in July 1945, a conference was held in London to discuss war crimes and collaboration. Both Jersey and Guernsey sent representatives to meet with Sir Frank Newsome and J. B. Howard at the Home Office, but all came to nought, and in spite of 'repeated calls for action...no action ever

resulted.’ To the utter disbelief of people like Frank Falla, and the relatives of Charles Machon and Joe Gillingham, who had died in captivity: ‘Paddy Doyle, who had informed the Germans of the existence of their resistance movement, [G.U.N.S.]...was allowed to slip quietly out of the Island and back to his native Ireland.’¹⁷ Other informers were also assisted by Government to leave the Islands, and it seemed that what Norman Le Brocq had been told earlier by a British officer - that statements taken would ‘all be recorded away and forgotten’ - was actually proving to be true.¹⁸ Certainly this policy would have been in line with Eden’s views on the previous page. Then in November 1946 the matter was finally settled, to the dissatisfaction of many, when the Home Secretary issued his written report. In it he claimed that ‘careful enquiries were made into all...allegations...in only twelve cases was there information to suggest consideration of prosecution, but the Director of Public Prosecutions decided that in no case was there sufficient ground.’¹⁹

At this point, the injuries already inflicted upon the Islands’ psyche by sufferings caused by such collaborators, were thus compounded by the British and Island Governments’ lack of action. Once more it was perceived - rightly or wrongly - that the population had been let down, and however complicit in decisions made, the Island officials also bore some part of the blame. In a clipping probably from the *Jersey Evening Post* in 1946, an article reads:

Jersey resents Traitors GO FREE decision... The reaction of thousands of loyal Jerseymen and women today is one of disillusionment and resentment, and many in their bitterness are asking - though in their hearts they know the answer - whether loyalty to one’s King and country really paid at a time when with the enemy in occupation, the disloyal had the laugh, the money and the food.²⁰

In fact it seems that the outcome of the collaboration investigations did damage to the community out of all proportion to the actual number of offenders involved, and it is

interesting that estimates of this number remained in line with contemporary sources and survivor-witness testimony for many years. To mention but a few: in 1967, Frank Falla suggested that about two percent of the population were involved, and even Peter King, who is critical of the behaviour of Island Government officials, speaks of ‘only a few hundred.’²¹ There is even some speculation in contemporary accounts, that many of the culprits were not amongst their ‘own people,’ but more likely among imported workers who had been trapped in the Islands, especially the neutral Irish. However, there is an acceptance that some Island-born residents, as well as English did consort with the enemy. But the ‘serviceman’ who gave these details, also stated that against these ‘disturbing facts’ he could also say that ‘these are a small minority.’ He added: ‘Reports, few of which have found their way into the British Press, confirm this and are a source of pride and comfort to the returning servicemen. These tell of the faith, fortitude and self-denial of the real Channel Islanders...nearly all [of whom] refused...truck with the German and treated him with disdain and dignity.’²²

Such general conclusions undoubtedly gave comfort to many, but concurrent feelings of disillusionment sank deeply into the collective memory, and only in 1967 had one of the ex-prisoners, Frank Falla, written that his bitterness had almost gone. Perhaps with the passage of time, similar anguish and passions may also have faded amongst his compatriots, as already suggested by Carel Toms, and a more peaceful period of associated memories then followed, until it was suddenly interrupted by the release of the PRO documents in the 1990s. From this point onwards, the whole scene was to change, as the apparent early official ‘condonation of the sins of the...few,’ which had caused such bitterness and anger amongst the Islanders in 1946, managed somehow to become translated into the willing collaboration of the many, as National newspapers carried sensational headlines, such as; ‘Secret Files Accuse Island Leaders of Collaboration;’ ‘Islanders Outraged by Wives who Slept with Germans,’ and ‘Channel Island People Profited from Nazis.’²³

What is particularly interesting to note is that much of the information - as in the case of the 1992 article quoted at the beginning of this chapter - had been derived from newly-released statements actually made by Island escapees during the War. Although - as already mentioned - these people were likely to be 'Unusually brave and uncompromising,' they were also mostly ordinary citizens, and as such no more likely to be in full possession of whatever facts may have been available than any other man in the street. As one article, headed: 'Occupation files reveal "200 letters a month from local informers,"' which appeared in the *Jersey Evening Post* on 19 November 1996 pointed out: 'There is no comment...on how much value was put on the information received, and little hard evidence of collaboration which would satisfy a court of law.'

More specific views are offered about other documents released around the same time. On 20 November 1996, an article in *The Times* gave details as follows:

The MI19 report said the number of women of 'all classes and families' who had 'gone' with Germans was very high, with some informants suggesting that it was as many as seven out of ten...The same informants supplied lists of male collaborators, who included black-marketeers, and islanders who had helped the German forces to requisition supplies. Their lists included Mr. Roberts, a barber who would only cut German hair, [and several other named persons. The article continues]: The reliability of these accusations can be questioned since George Le Breuilly, manager for the Country Gentlemen's association, listed as a collaborationalist in one report, is later revealed to have been arrested...for listening to the BBC...[However, he refused] to collaborate with [the Germans,] preferring to serve his prison sentence instead.

With such uncertainties in mind, what should today's reader now believe? Questions to do with women fraternisers will be discussed later, but on the subject of named collaborators included within the same MI19 report, Roy Mourant - one of a group of three escapers whose interview notes were released at the same time - commented:

I think it is absolutely disgusting [that names have been revealed, and]...this bandying about of a figure of 900 births and 70 percent of Jersey girls going out with Germans is utterly wild...I knew many who escaped at the same time as we did and although some of them would have made sensible reports, some...were very angry young men who made the wildest allegations...The names that have been revealed were well known to all of us, although there was no proof that...rumours about them were well-founded. Things weren't always as they seemed. Mr. Roberts...for instance, is mentioned...as serving only Germans. He used to cut our hair...[but] If you went...and there was a German inside...you went elsewhere - there was nothing Mr. Roberts could do about it. The whole thing is distorted.²⁴

However, in the 1990s, it seems that open season on the Islands' reputation had begun in earnest. As early as the summer of 1992, 'the "collaboration" slur first appeared in a report in *The Guardian*' concerning slave labour camps in Alderney. The *Alderney Magazine*, published the same summer continued as follows:

The Daily Mail repeated the allegations of collaboration [in the Islands, and] instead of making it clear that there were no collaborators in Alderney, *The Guardian* published further allegations of collaboration by 'islanders' on May 7, despite a complaint made by an Alderney States representative. The final insult came from the Reverend Leslie Griffiths in his broadcast [on Radio 4, in which he said that they should 'hang their heads in shame,'] ...Forced to apologise the following morning after being told that all but one [Alderney] Islanders was evacuated nine days before the Germans seized the Island... [the Reverend explained how] 'he had based his comments on the Guardian report.'

Terming it: 'ill-thought,' the *Daily Telegraph* later revealed that there had been an 'amazing number' of complaints to the presenter of the Radio programme, and the Alderney representative said that the clergyman's allegations had caused 'appalling damage to the reputation of this most British of communities.'²⁵

This incident may seem insignificant, but when faced with the potential power and influence of just one part of the British Press, one is bound to wonder how many more mistaken allegations may have been printed for the world to see. One is also reminded of the very serious accusations which are still being printed about the likely role of the Guernsey officials in the murder of the three Jewish girls, and of Bob Le Sueur's pertinent observation made in conversation with the present author in 2001, that although 'denials can be issued...who will know [they] were ever made?' The controversies of the 1990s raged on, and somewhere in the midst of them, in 1995, Madeleine Bunting's book: *The Model Occupation* was published, accompanied by ringing endorsements from a selection of well-known historians. Eminently readable, and including in its description some of the more positive aspects of the Islanders' behaviour under Occupation, it nevertheless paints a very negative picture of their integrity. Even on a first reading, it is clear why the Islanders should have been insulted and dismayed, for in amongst much excellent detail and research, there lurks an intrinsic attack upon their collective honour. Some comments are particularly hurtful for any patriotic Islander, as it states:

Fifty years after the war's end, Churchill's claim that the British alone had fought Hitler's cruel regime without seeking any compromise still holds strongly in contemporary accounts of the war. The Channel Islands do not fit this history, islanders compromised, collaborated and fraternised just as people did throughout occupied Europe.²⁶

From this a further argument is advanced, that the Channel Islanders' experience may also have charted the way that mainland Britons would have acted under occupation. Presumably this means that instead of the attack upon the Islanders' integrity being intended as an insult - as it was most certainly perceived - it was actually just a springboard assumption for the larger hypothesis that there is no special ethos attached to being British, and also: 'directly challenges the belief that the Second World War proved that [Britons] were inherently different from the rest of Europe.'²⁷ As Andrew Roberts

continues in the same Sunday Times article: 'All this goes to the heart of our national self perception.' Indeed it does, but when one bears in mind the unique circumstances of the Occupation of the Channel Islands, and the fact that by summer 1940 Churchill had already organised a 'secret army' to resist if Britain was taken, then the two occupations would certainly have unfolded very differently on the ground. Asa Briggs, in his Memorial Lecture - quoted at the beginning of the introduction to this study - had already concluded this, and in 'Hitler's Britain,' a programme on Channel 5 on 10 December 2002, it became clear that four thousand civilians, plus auxiliaries, had been recruited very early in the War and trained to operate from a system of more than five hundred underground operational centres, in the event of a German invasion. The evidence presented – together with testimony from a good number of survivor-witnesses – was very convincing, and, unlike the completely disarmed Channel Islanders, these mainland British had been very well equipped, with every man being given his orders in advance of the much-feared invasion. Bearing all this information in mind, it is now easy to believe that Mr. Roberts' conclusion in 1996 was also correct, and 'fortunately,' concerning the probable behaviour of mainland Britons under German occupation, 'the Channel Islands' experience in 1940 tells us precisely nothing.'

However, aside from this brief scrutiny of yet another myth which evidently found its roots within the Occupation of the Channel Islands, even more recently - in November 1998 - the likely truth about the degree of collaboration in the Islands was discussed at some length in the *Jersey Evening Post*. During his researches into the fate of war-time Jews in the Islands, Freddie Cohen had come to the following conclusion: 'It is not correct to say that collaboration and fraternisation with the Germans were the rule. There were undoubtedly instances but in general islanders were loyal to the crown.'²⁸ Coincidentally, at around the same time, *The Guardian* ran a report on David Cesarani's study guide: '*Britain and the Holocaust...* which...gave the impression that collaboration and fraternisation were the rule.'²⁹ In two subsequent articles in the *Jersey Evening Post*

dated 20 November and 12 December 1998, Professor Cesarani was later said to have ‘apologised’ to Mr. Cohen and to have ‘accepted that the relevant paragraphs in his booklet are inaccurate,’ whilst agreeing ‘to amend...the text to reflect this.’ However, as the second article of 12 December also explains, it seems that future collective memory had already been influenced. It continues: ‘despite [Prof.] Cesarani’s offer...the story still reverberates around the world. Frank Keiller, who punched a German officer on the nose...on 29 September 1942,’ is just one Islander who has taken up the cudgels, as he ‘wrote to the *Canberra Times* refuting the original Cesarani story which was picked up by the...publication ...[and pulled] no punches in his condemnation of the allegations.’

Other interested Islanders have also been gradually galvanised into action since that time, and considerable effort has been expended in putting the record straight. Taking this into account, it may well be true that ‘divisions have been buried deeper’ within the community - as claimed by Ms. Bunting - but having been granted no quarter in recent years, who can blame them? As Paul Sanders explained: ‘What has created consternation is criticism which engages in passing whole-scale assertions about the loyalty and trustworthiness of the islands population in general, whilst making little effort to explore the daily routine of [Occupation life]...Many critics tend to forget such realities.’³⁰ Meanwhile the outcome of all these assaults upon the Islands’ reputation remains the same: the collective memory has been injured and, as has happened much sooner in many other post-war societies, is now seeking to repair itself.

1940: The Invasion of the Sun Gods³¹

‘At the very outset of the Occupation...the Germans made it abundantly clear that they intended to bestow the inestimable boon of permanent citizenship of the Third Reich on the fortunate inhabitants of the Channel Islands, and to free them, for good and all, from the hated yoke of England...They started...by offering...social

intercourse with the officers and men of the Army...organising dances and other gatherings as “meeting grounds.” The success of this move did not come up to expectations, since ninety-nine percent of the population - some ...after nibbling at the bait and arriving at the conclusion that the proposed “intercourse” was not to stop at dancing - declined to play. Only a comparatively few girls...reacted to the dual appeal of uniform and ready money.’³²

A discussion of defiance will be included within Chapter 12, which deals with ‘Offences against the Occupier.’ Meanwhile, more evidence against widespread collaboration in the Islands is to be found within many contemporary accounts which echo the sentiments of Horace Wyatt above. Also very relevant, are the strong connections between many Islanders and their loved ones abroad. As Victor Carey explained in a letter to the Red Cross dated 11 July 1944:

The circumstances in this Island are probably unique. In 1940, four-fifths of the children and altogether almost half the population were transported to England, so that scarcely a family is undivided. Hundreds of men are without their wives, many women have their menfolk in England, and what is perhaps even worse, hundreds of parents are entirely dependent upon...Red Cross messages for news of their young children.³³

In Jersey, the number of child evacuees was much lower, but the Islands were still home to the families and friends of more than 10,000 Allied service personnel, as well as many of the nearest and dearest of other evacuees who left in 1940. Later, these people would be joined by relatives of others who were deported during, or after September 1942. Sometimes these latter were single members of families where the rest were exempt, as perhaps one parent or some siblings had been Island-born, but few allowances were made. Thus, as happened elsewhere in Europe, some mothers were left with agonising dilemmas about whether to send their teenage sons away in short trousers, in the hope

that they might escape forced labour, or use as hostages or human shields - which were accepted as very real possibilities for the men. As Ambrose Robin explained on 16 September 1942: 'The misery...is indescribable, almost every family is directly or indirectly involved.'

In light of the above information, it is interesting to take a fresh look at Occupation life behind the scenes, to make a better judgement about just how receptive the remaining British Channel Islanders were likely to be to overtures of friendship from the enemy, when even from the earliest days so many of their people were living with painful separations of this kind. As Victor Carey said in his letter, their position was unique in Europe, and their opinion of the Germans was bound to be affected. Proof appears in many diaries, for example, Kenneth Lewis wrote sometime in August/ September 1940: 'The announcement of a big air-raid on Glasgow has upset many whose bairns are thought to be in that area.' Later, Elizabeth Doig explained how many other people also felt: 'we couldn't fraternise with them...How could we when all our loved ones were fighting against them?'³⁴In addition, when translated into probable figures, the number of Islanders in this position is startlingly high, and even rough estimates offer a very good idea of the total. Out of a population of about 64,000, probably at least 6,000 were living without their school-age children, and a further 21,000 without their older children, husbands, or fathers who were in the Allied services. These estimates are based on the modest assumption that each of the 3,000 children who left accompanied only by teachers, and the absent 10,400 servicemen, had left only two close family members in the Islands. To this total of 27,000, must then be added the remaining close relatives of probably a further 20-25,000 other evacuees who departed for England in June 1940, and those connected with around 2,000 deportees who were forced to leave during or after September 1942. Even if all these people left only one of their family behind, then the numbers must increase dramatically to somewhere in the region of 50,000 Islanders, who were directly affected. At the same time these figures take no account of the many other

Island residents who had relatives in Britain before the War began. Although difficult to be precise, it is inconceivable that the majority of these people would have felt able to welcome the invader, and one can only imagine how they would have felt at Liberation, if their relatives had returned from exile – and fighting the enemy – to discover that those left behind had been willingly fraternising or collaborating with German personnel during their absence. For all these reasons, it seems most unlikely that collaboration could have been the general rule.

However, having established that the attitude of most must have been qualified by their unusual family circumstances and consequent anxieties, it is also true that the remaining Islanders were still left facing a dilemma not dissimilar to that of the occupied peoples in the rest of Europe. As Ralph Durand explains, some knowing little or nothing about Germany's war record, or thinking that guilt should rest upon their leaders, 'were prepared to be friendly with the Germans...[and] Some of the [soldiers] were genuine objects of pity; bewildered home-sick youths who...showed genuine gratitude for any kindness shown them.'³⁵In the beginning, this feeling translated into a willingness to hold sports meetings with the Occupier, but it was very short-lived, and seems to have involved no more than two football matches. The first of these, which witnesses agree took place on 22 August 1940, was held on the Victoria College Sports field. In his personal reminiscences, written before the more modern furore about collaboration erupted, Arthur Kent wrote about the occasion as follows:

Some misguided local footballers...were persuaded to turn out for a game labelled 'Jersey versus the German Army'...The names of the Jersey players who took part and...the local organisers...are known to me, but I shall refrain from mentioning them. They experienced embarrassment enough at the end of the match when requested to line up...alongside the German team for propaganda photographs.³⁶

H.E. Aubin, who was a boy during the Occupation, mentions another match which he believes took place on 5 December the same year. Such details are not important, but what is significant is Mr. Kent's reluctance nearly forty years on, to name the players who took part in the first event. This phenomenon is not unusual when witnesses later discuss any subject to do with wartime events, which may be interpreted as not quite honourable, or as some form of collaboration. During his study of the Occupation of the Dodecanese Islands, Nicholas Doumanis also noticed that 'interviewees were reticent on a number of subjects, as they knew that whatever they related would be read by outsiders...For example, few would divulge the names of collaborators and would only do so if these people were dead.'³⁷In an essay about 'Moscow's Victory Park,' Nurit Schleifman suggests how - in accordance with the theories of Halbwachs - such reluctance fits into the normal workings of any collective group:

collective memory is a way of belonging to a group that thinks in common about the past...as we maintain contact...[we] place ourselves in its viewpoint and employ conceptions shared by its members. Consequently, exposing new [or] painful truths about the past can be seen...as a way of putting oneself outside the...group [and] excluding oneself from the common memory.³⁸

In addition to this first small episode of fraternisation, as time went on many people provided services for the Germans simply in order to survive. The paradox of their relationship with the Occupier has already been demonstrated, but conditions became so desperate that, as Kenneth Lewis explained on 15 January 1942: 'It was all very well for Churchill to say...we must keep away [from] the Germans but if he were living...with the shortage of food as we are nowadays, he might well be pleased to accept anything the Germans gave him...in our case Dad never asked the Germans for anything but accepted all he had given.' Just as Frank Barton had clearly not compromised his loyalty by accepting food, neither did many others. This point of view is also vindicated within the contents of Professor Pfeffer's Report, which hints that Island behaviour was indeed

being tempered by Colonel Britton's advice: 'In general the population is working... together with the occupying authorities, because people are of the opinion that they can best survive the war like this without compromising their patriotism...[They regard] the occupation as a passing storm, whereby people...commiserate the individual German soldier and his unpleasant task.' But whatever the case, the whole population had no option but to help at least some parts of the occupation to run smoothly. As one witness asked, when the Germans changed the direction of traffic in the Islands to the Continental system, should they have refused to co-operate? Such a question may seem ridiculous, but compliance could have been seen as helping to facilitate the German war effort. More conundrums also presented themselves, such as when Izette Croad enquired in her diary on 20 December 1942: 'Dr is going to get me some marvellous German drug for my chest. Query - is one unpatriotic in accepting?' But the overwhelming truth - as borne out by contemporary diaries - seems to have been as Mr. Le Sueur pointed out in a later interview: 'I remember very clearly the whole climate at all times...to 95%...people were anything but collaborationalist, and anyone...thought to be doing something that was...would have been socially ostracised.'³⁹

But over time friendly relationships did develop, and as Baron von Aufsess noticed, children under about twelve were generally not afraid of the soldiers, simply because they had seen no reason to be. As may have been expected, they found the marching and parading interesting, but that did not stop many of the older ones from committing small acts of sabotage. Some - although this was resisted by many pupils in schools - also became quite fluent in the German language, thereby potentially placing themselves on more familiar terms with individual soldiers with whom they had contact. Friendships developed slowly, but after an initial period of suspicion, and with a strict background order to the Germans: 'that fraternisation with the inhabitants and making friends was forbidden...nevertheless human contacts were made.'⁴⁰

One area of such contact, which was of considerable annoyance to many amongst the population, was developed through the action of some girls - and even some married women - who seemed to completely overlook the fact that the Germans were their enemies, and entered into relationships which sometimes resulted in pregnancy. In addition, some residents are reported to have held wild parties, and even a few sex orgies have been reported with relish by various writers - perhaps most notably within *The People* on 27 June 1965, which claimed: 'Girls were stripped, made to dance on tables and given champagne shower[s]...And they loved it!' Such tales find occasional support in the accounts of some German officers, and others who witnessed their activities. Amongst the latter, are included Cecil Bazeley, whose work is held by the Imperial War Museum, and the former include the diaries of Baron von Aufsess, who describes at one point the difference between the preferred method of conducting the sexual act by English as opposed to French women.

There has been so much controversy about the actual number of women involved in such liaisons, that it is impossible to say now with any certainty how many may have qualified for the title of 'Jerrybag,' and this is yet another area of the Occupation where, unsurprisingly with the passage of time and more recent accusations, today's survivor-witnesses are reluctant to name names or pass judgements. As Beryl Ozanne explains in her book, published in 1994: 'We, who were here...knew a lot of what went on, but that is all water under the bridge now.' And she asks: 'Were all the British men perfect in their behaviour? Were there no girls of other nationalities willing to give comfort...to our troops?'⁴¹ Even contemporary accounts are often contradictory in their opinions, sometimes reacting angrily to tittle-tattle, when vastly inflated numbers of babies were rumoured to have been born, and sometimes wary, especially when one of the accused girls happened to be within a diarist's circle. At the same time, genuine attachments were usually treated sympathetically, and other extenuating circumstances were also taken into

account. As Kenneth Lewis wrote of his friend Sheila: 'I know' that she 'is definitely what is called...a Jerry chaser...[but] I do not for one moment class her with some of the other girls who...sleep with them etc.'⁴²

Estimates of how many women did go with Germans have varied enormously even in contemporary accounts, and have ranged from quite low - in most of the Islanders' own more considered opinions - to very high in the more recent British Press, as stated in the article which suggested that as many as seven out of ten were enjoying illicit relationships.⁴³ German accounts of what happened also vary widely. 'Oberleutnant Randolph Kruger remembers that by the time he arrived on Jersey in 1944, most of the young soldiers, and even some of the married ones, had girlfriends amongst the Islanders,'⁴⁴ whereas Herr Kanmiers recollects: 'Ah...the girls...they kept...always a distance from the Germans...all girls had sometimes friends with Germans but...not a lot.'⁴⁵ Dixie Landick has this to say: 'There were some young women who...provided...favours...in exchange for silk stockings...or whatever other goodies the occupying forces could provide...[but] actually the Jerrybags didn't have to be large in number because the Germans imported from France a number of ladies of professional stature who provided entertainment...for the troops.'⁴⁶ In fact, by the end of 1942, there were three brothels established in Guernsey, and one at La Maison Victor Hugo in Jersey. Other similar establishments were also set up for the Organisation Todt. Probably as a result of these activities, clinics dealing with venereal diseases 'saw a big increase in attendance during the Occupation, with a peak of 2,724 [cases] in 1943, 10% for syphilis and 90% for gonorrhoea.'⁴⁷

By way of further explanation of the conduct of Island women, and apart from material benefits, Mrs. Cortvriend later suggested that many of the relationships were simply entered into as a relief from the intolerable tedium of Occupation life. In addition, many of the married women, who had had the company of husband and children in 1939, now

found themselves without both, and there were no visits or holidays, or even letters, apart from the occasional Red Cross forms. In fact, the situation was not dissimilar to that which arose in wartime Britain, when the U.S. Army arrived. Frequently described by British troops at the time as ‘over-paid, over-sexed and over here!’ there was obviously no love lost between them and the British ‘Tommy,’ even though they were allies, but still many thousands of girls formed attachments, and later travelled half way round the globe to set up home in America.

However, in the Channel Islands during the War, marriage with an enemy soldier was forbidden by the German Authorities, though inevitably children were born of some of these unions, and as time progressed - as James Dalrymple points out in *The Sunday Times*, on 6 December 1992 –

The progeny of these romances [became] another of the island half-truths. During the occupation there were 184 illegitimate births on Jersey and 285 on Guernsey, and there are stories of scores of middle-aged men living there today with flaxen hair and blue eyes. But [he continues, Island historian] Peter Tabb...dismisses this as just another Jersey myth. There are about eight people still living here who are known to be children of the Germans...names and addresses are available, but who really wants to disturb them?

The answer to the last question still unfortunately seems to be the British Press on occasion, but still the topic of most interest, is the actual number of German-fathered babies born. Over the years, some ‘less reputable journalists [have] had a field day...and one bright fellow went so far as to tell his readers that the number of illegitimate births in Guernsey during the war totalled over 2000.’⁴⁸ Later, Frank Keiller recorded that ‘a major London Daily [had gone even higher, claiming] the true figure was 3000; a thousand more than all the babies born in all the Islands during the Occupation.’⁴⁹ The official Island figures, first given by Alan and Mary Seaton Wood, are as quoted by James

Dalrymple, though Ralph Durand puts the number of illegitimate births lodged at the Greffe in Guernsey at only 196. However, none of these take into account any additional German-fathered babies which may have been born to married women, or heed the fact that some of these children may well have been fathered by forced workers or Island men. At this juncture it is also very interesting to note two diary entries made by Reverend Ord in Guernsey. On 19 August 1943 he wrote: 'An ugly rumour has it that before Christmas some 500 local girls will have had children to Germans. This is a serious statement to make...wartime and Occupation temptations notwithstanding... [though] there has been enough to break down discipline during the past three years.' Then on 2 March 1944, he continues: 'In view of the rumour mentioned [last August]...I asked the Matron what the actual figures of births of babies with German fathers might be. She and the Sister thought for a moment or two and then said that perhaps the outside number was about 40, not more, for 1943, while not thrice that number has been born during the entire Occupation.' The Reverend concluded, rather optimistically as it turned out: 'This lays a disgraceful aspersion.'

It is also significant that although Ms. Bunting claims that German survivor-witnesses recall that the number of women fraternisers was much larger than the Islanders admit, such claims do not accord well with German records, which state in May 1944 that: 'only eighty children have been born [in the Islands] whose fathers are unquestionably members of the...occupying forces.'⁵⁰The documents also explain that 'all mothers with children already born, in so far as they comply with our racial specifications will be transferred to Germany, and that...pregnant women will be taken to...“Lebensborn” homes in France.' However, the documents add that many mothers were 'not up to standard.'⁵¹

Whatever one may now conclude about the final tally of German-fathered babies in the

Islands - and without attempting to pass judgements - it is also interesting to compare what happened in the rest of the occupied territories. In neighbouring France, Robert Gildea states that: 'it has been calculated that the Germans [fathered] between 50,000 and 70,000 children,'⁵² and in Norway 'between 8[000] and 9,000 children were born as racially valuable,' all this being in accord with Himmler's avowed intention 'to rob and steal [suitable Aryan children] wherever I can.'⁵³ It is also worth noting that the Channel Islanders have accepted and accommodated their extra-ordinary citizens, whereas in Norway, being identified with Germany became a crime, and a large number of the children were institutionalised. Afterwards, many became victims of sadism and torture, and when they became adults, they were marked out as traitors. There were many suicides, and a group of survivors is now suing the government for compensation 'for gross abuse at the hands of the state.'⁵⁴

As a footnote to this investigation into the likely number of Island girls involved with the enemy, there is of course a very human consideration which should be advanced to qualify what has often been represented as a shameful and unpatriotic pastime. In the Channel Islands as elsewhere, some girls did actually fall in love with soldiers, and so did some of the married women who were alone or inclined to take their opportunities. Such attachments were not uncommon, and may easily be evidenced by a note made by H.W. Beckingham after Liberation: 'Transporting...[German] POWs from the prison camp to the work sites [in the Islands] created a problem, for on many occasions we had screaming girls running after the trucks trying to throw letters to the prisoners.'⁵⁵ Particular romances have also been publicised, and several memoirs mention some girl or other who, having apparently been abandoned holding the baby in 1945, had since been married to the German father who had later returned. One similar story was of the romance of Dolly and Willi Joanknecht, who married in 1947, and who were still together nearly fifty years later. In Sark, there was the story of Werner Rang, a medical orderly who fell in love with a local girl, Phyllis Baker. This also resulted in marriage.

The couple set up home in the Island, where Werner soon became a well-respected member of the community. In Guernsey, nurse Mauyenne Keane fell in love with a German doctor, and they too became engaged and later married.

However, other relationships were not destined to have such happy endings, as many of the soldiers were posted to the Eastern Front, where they perished or simply lost touch. There were also affairs which ended when soldiers returned home to their wives, but even then the genuine love attachments did not always end, as in the case of Gladys Sangan, a Guernsey girl whose tale was told in the *Sunday Mail Review* on 22 December 2002. During the Occupation, she was living with her often violent husband, whilst desperately missing her daughters, who had been evacuated in 1940. Then, by chance she met Hugo Fach, a young soldier whom ‘she still calls the love of her life.’ Hugo was kind and gentle, and she recalls how ‘we just used to walk and make love on the cliffs... He was very, very special.’ After the war, Hugo was repatriated and both continued within their strained marriages. For them, there were few later meetings and no conventional happy ending, but they remained in love, and when Gladys now reads Hugo’s last letter before he died, her ‘eyes fill with tears. For it serves as a last testament to an impossible love that transcended war, politics, and even the conditions of a decent life, but [was] surely no less beautiful for that.’

Thus, from contemporary evidence, it certainly seems that wilder accusations about the degree of wanton collaboration in the Islands may be refuted with confidence. As Paul Sanders also concluded during his researches: ‘There was collaboration... fraternisation...[and] denunciation. At the same time...these were not mass phenomena.’

⁵⁶Certainly the records of wartime births, immediate post-war accounts, and survivor-witness memories, as well as the majority of diarists all support this conclusion, and very largely underpin the Islands’ own, more comfortable, present-day collective memories of collaboration, as they are currently being defended upon the public face of Occupation

history for the future. And with this in mind, the final words should be accorded to writers who lived through the trauma. One such was Ralph Durand, who concluded his memoirs with pride in Guernsey's wartime performance, and another, Horace Wyatt, who also wrote in 1945 before there was any position to defend: 'Yes! By and large, the record of Jersey during the Occupation is one of which there is no need to be ashamed, and one not unworthy of the great loyal traditions of [this] little island.'⁵⁷

‘Writing in 1971 Norman Longmate commented that, ‘it is hardly a matter of pride that the Channel Islands should have been the only enslaved country without a resistance movement.’

Peter King, *The Channel Islands War 1940-1945*, p. 83.

‘[The Islanders] are quick to point to resistance activities, however petty, that they may have been involved in. They are anxious to demonstrate their defiance and bravado towards the Germans. Their defensiveness stems from feeling that in a war which has passed into the popular imagination as one of extraordinary feats of heroism, their stock of brave exploits is meagre.’

Madeleine Bunting, *The Model Occupation*, p. 192.

Offences against the Occupying Authorities

12.

‘France’s foremost scholar on the Second World War, Professor Jean-Pierre Azema, estimates that...roughly 3% of the population, had become militants or active supporters of the Resistance by Spring 1944. No comparison is intended with the...heroic action of some French Resistance movements but, if figures have anything to say about a general willingness to confront the occupying force, the Channel Islands have little reason to shy away from comparisons with the rest of Europe...4,000 people were arrested during the Occupation for breaking German law in the...Islands, a figure representing [more than] 5% of the population...to this should be added the number of...escapees that ran at 225.’¹

The above figures are a matter of record, and give a very adequate riposte to such criticisms as appear opposite. But what will always remain surprising is that so many Islanders dared to commit offences against the unique backdrop of their subjugation, especially given the enormous presence of enemy personnel. It is also likely that many offenders were suffering from various degrees of malnutrition, which would not only have sapped their energy, but also increased anxiety levels, and thus rendered them less likely to take risks. What is also notable is that, in contrast with the subject of the last chapter, which has probably been the most over-exposed feature of the Occupation, details of defiance, resistance and escapes which took place in and from the Islands have generally been amongst the least explored and publicised. Only in the last fifteen years has there been an apparent upsurge of interest, as the forty-fifth and fiftieth anniversaries of Liberation loomed large upon the Islands’ historical horizon.

At the time when the Islands were struggling under the German yoke, the States line

had been unequivocal – don't offend the enemy, and offer no resistance of any kind - and probably because of this, the idea that some offenders had jeopardised the greater good of the community 'still had an enormous grip on the popular mind for years afterwards.'² Subsequently, lack of recognition for the courage and sacrifice of many such persons after Liberation only added to the uncertainty of their position in the collective memory, and even though recollections of their actions flickered and even burned in some groups within the community, they were granted no official place in the history of the period. Writing in the early 1950s, the Seaton Woods expressed their concern about the paucity of honours, which had been conferred upon those who had dared to commit offences against the Occupier. They pointed out that while it may be understandable that the Island Authorities felt they could not countenance anything like sabotage or resistance during the Occupation, 'it seemed strange for this attitude to be carried over by the Home Office, to the bestowal of awards after the war was over.' They continued: 'It struck the authors as even more strange when they began their work that no attempt had [even] been made to compile a Role of honour of those like Canon Cohu, who had died for their courage.'³

Speaking as one who had only just survived his treatment in the German penal system, Frank Falla afterwards gave a glimpse of the more personal feelings of many others who had also suffered. In the last chapter of his book, entitled 'Forgotten people,' he commented that the treatment of those who resisted, even after the war: 'left a great deal to be desired.' He explained: 'I suppose it all dated back to the days of the German Occupation when we were naughty lads and stepped out of line with the Germans... under International Law [we] had a right to be defended before a Nazi tribunal by our own lawyers...[but our Island Authorities] disowned us blatantly then, and...never got round to owning us again.'⁴

Ironically, it was the Soviet Union which showed the first major recognition of the

bravery of some Channel Islanders in May 1965, when twenty gold watches were awarded to those who had sheltered or fed escaped Russian forced labourers in Jersey.⁵ Neither was there apparently any problem in recognising the value of their offences, or their status as ‘resistants’ amongst other European countries. As early as 5 June 1946, Frank Falla was invited to attend the vast Maquis celebrations, held throughout Belgium in solemn remembrance of the great European army of uniformed and civilian men and women who had given their all in the fight for freedom.

Meanwhile, as the heroes of the Channel Islands’ Occupation were being neglected by their governments, and very largely denied a role - not just in the post-Liberation celebrations, but for many years afterwards - the converse was true for those who had committed offences against the Occupier on the Continent. In such countries as France, Belgium and the Netherlands, no subject has been so frequently studied as the Resistance in all its forms, and several thousand historical studies on the subject have been published for France alone.

The largest number of publications concerns... armed guerrilla groups, intelligence networks, escape lines for Allied pilots, [and] sabotage teams. Other important forms of resistance covered are the clandestine press, political agitation...and symbolic manifestations that defied the occupier...Still another category deals with individual acts of resistance such as hiding Jews or refusal to work for German industry. A last group of studies defines resistance as an opinion [including] the resistance of churches.⁶

By comparison, for the Channel Islands even the more recent works of Peter King and Madeleine Bunting, which acknowledge the courage of some ‘resistants,’ have been largely dominated by seeking to point out ‘how few they were and how widespread by contrast were passivity and...collaboration with the Occupiers.’⁷ However, even in other European countries, some problems have arisen, as ‘attempts to identify and quantify the

resistance sociologically [have] lead to the most divergent conclusions,' and even though each individual author has argued his case, yet 'attempts at a general and universally applicable definition of resistance as a tool for the social historian...[have been] doomed to failure.'⁸

For a long time after the defeat of Germany, the spotlight was naturally focused upon the more spectacular aspects of armed resistance. Films and documentaries dramatised such incidents, and everywhere the Allies and most of those liberated revelled in their glorious victory. At this point in time, individual acts of defiance and more minor instances of resistance were largely overlooked, seeming tame in comparison with exploits of more obvious daring, and for some previously occupied countries of Europe, where 'being liberated was [seen as] too passive a mode to celebrate the recovery of national independence...glorification of the contribution of the[ir] resistance movements was [adopted as] the only basis available' to create 'a true national myth.'⁹This same 'national myth' was also used to promote the idea of wide-spread resistance amongst the citizens of such countries, and to claim that defeat was never conceded throughout the entire period of their subjugation. By extension, it was then established as the essential bedrock and pre-condition for their reconstitution as self-respecting states after the War. Of course, in the Channel Islands there was no such necessity for the re-establishment of national pride in the wake of Liberation, and thus an early official recognition and promotion of a glorious post-war image for the Islands' heroes simply did not carry the same importance. In the early days, John Leale was even heard to claim that it would be impossible for the government to confer post-war honours upon those who had allegedly broken the Hague Convention. This curious logic, not applied anywhere else in liberated Europe, even seems to have extended to those people who had been convicted under German Laws which were clearly illegal under the Convention, such as those relevant to the possession of, and listening to wireless sets, and in this respect at least was quite plainly 'rubbish,' just as Frank Falla later described it.

However, the attitude of the Island Authorities gradually changed. The Bailiff of Jersey extended a warm welcome to the visiting Russians in 1965, and the arrival of the Anne Frank Exhibition in 1988, which attracted a large number of visitors, may also have stimulated interest in other related issues. Around the same time, interest was also growing in all aspects of Second World War history in popular culture around the world. As Anthony Beevor wrote in *The Sunday Times* on 14 July 2002: ‘in the 1990s, a generation which had shrugged off the ideals of collective loyalty suddenly wanted to know about the experiences and suffering of the individual... Those brought up in this new civilian age, it emerged, were fascinated by deeply personal questions: [such as] how would I have survived such suffering?’ Such moral dilemmas, the author argued, now provide the ‘very stuff of drama’ for many people, and interest in the War grew stronger. In the Channel Islands, a gradual reappraisal of the Occupation had already begun, and the Occupation and Liberation Committee set up by the States of Jersey in 1992/93, commissioned several major projects to investigate and commemorate the lives of many defiant citizens, who had been so long ‘forgotten.’ The final boost to this collective quest for information was probably injected, and later sustained by the recurrent criticism of the Islands’ war record by ‘outsiders,’ through the medley of media reports and other publications already mentioned.

Another factor relevant to the change in attitude towards resistance in the Islands, was a general change of approach to what constitutes worthwhile opposition to an Occupying force, and what does not. In the 1970s, as wartime heroism and patriotism became less powerful emotions, historians generally began to challenge the presupposition of the value of armed resistance, and to probe the case behind the wisdom of such actions. People began to realise that acts of bravery were not always an individual matter, and that others were also likely to suffer, since the Germans often took extreme reprisals against the innocent, as evidenced by various well-known massacres in such towns as Oradour-sur-Glane and Putten. Many other towns had had lucky escapes, and one is bound to

consider here the key question posed by Bernard Baker in his diary during the Occupation of the Channel Islands: 'I should like to be guided as to the best way to damage the German war machine. I can of course kill a German, sabotage an aeroplane or destroy a number of lorries...but if by doing so I bring heavy punishments to bear on 40,000 people...am I a patriot? Or am I a traitor?'¹⁰ A definitive answer to that question has not yet been written, but in the British Channel Islands the possibilities for armed insurrection were severely limited for reasons already made clear, and in any case - given the circumstances- the general lack of such violent action may indeed have been sensible, just as Charles Cruikshank concluded in his official history. Furthermore, in an article on the economic and strategic effectiveness of resistance, Professor Alan Milward also explained 'that European resistance had achieved very little in strategic terms and that its real importance lay in a very different area.' He wrote:

It is in the moral and psychological dimension that resistance assumes its greatest value. Most resistance was personal, isolated and unique, and in affecting the ultimate outcome of the war was entirely unimportant compared to the co-ordinated...actions of real armed forces. But for each individual the act of resistance did have a psychological value of immense importance...It was the ultimate affirmation of every human being's right to his own individuality.¹¹

If one is ready to accept Milward's arguments, then the general lack of armed resistance in the Channel Islands should now cease to have any relevance to the Islanders' overall resistance record. It should also remove all stigma attached to later criticism that some aspects of their defiance were 'petty.' After all, singing a patriotic song, resisting the advances of a German soldier, wearing a 'V'-sign brooch, or passing on BBC news may seem very petty offences by today's standards, but the Occupier made many new laws, and tolerance could be extremely low. Thus many Islanders suffered imprisonment, and some even torture or death, for similar transgressions. Even harder to quantify and evaluate, is the case for resistance of opinion, but film-maker Sandra

Wentworth Bradley, who prepared material to be shown in the United States Holocaust Museum in the 1990s, agreed with the popular view of many when she wrote: 'Through the whole project...I had difficulty understanding the difference between resistance and defiance [among oppressed peoples]...[but] for me...spiritual resistance was resistance just as real as physical resistance.'¹² It could also sometimes be the precursor to more defined physical resistance later on in the War - as claimed in some French studies - particularly when conditions deteriorated, or when plans or weapons became available to hit back at the oppressor, as happened in France in the run-up to D-Day.

This being very largely a summary of more recent debate - and leaving the special circumstances of the Channel Islands' Occupation aside - the incidences of defiance, resistance and escape, for which there is ample evidence, should now be allowed to retain and expand their relatively recently-found prominence upon the face of the wider Occupation experience. Around the Islands today, there is no shortage of memorials to 'offenders,' as 'the island community no longer feels any uneasiness in addressing the legacy of the 'missing people'...on the contrary, the issue has [now] become a source of pride and reflection.'¹³The reader may now judge for himself the importance of this feature.

Defiance

'[I] was very interested in reading...Mr.Churchill's idea of the proper attitude of a country towards its enemies... "In War, resolution. In defeat, defiance. In victory, magnanimity. In peace, goodwill."' Izette Croad Diaries, March 1943. ¹⁴

In spite of early instructions from their leaders, an attitude of defiance was presaged in the Islands from the very beginning of the Occupation. As Leslie Green recorded in his memoirs, even though some people were truly frightened and hung out white pillow-cases from their bedroom windows to signify surrender, others 'hung out protest

garments such as baby's nappies, white knickers, underpants or even vests full of holes; anything to show their disgust.'¹⁵In fact, in spite of many German accounts – including those recorded by survivor-witnesses interviewed for Madeleine Bunting - claiming that relations were 'absolutely correct,' most also confirm that they 'wouldn't go so far as to say friendly.'¹⁶ Writing in 1945, Ralph Durand recalls that one German official 'described the attitude of the Guernsey gentry towards himself and his colleagues as "passive insolence,"'¹⁷and in her diary account, Adele Lainé believed: 'they probably knew...that most Guernsey people hated the sight of them and whenever possible completely ignored them.'¹⁸All around the Islands, many other contemporary diarists agreed with this general assessment of the situation. For example, Elizabeth Doig wrote: 'I never stepped off the pavement for soldiers...they had to walk round me...Because we wouldn't fraternise with them...they called [it] "dignified insolence."¹⁹ Writing in Jersey on 10 September 1940, Izette Croad also noted: 'We take a pride in just ignoring them...the majority of us do at any rate,' and in his book published in 1946, R.C.F. Maugham described how such feelings translated into everyday life, as he recalled: 'the daily spectacle of hordes of Germans wandering about...St. Helier...as they disdainfully...regarded the unaccountable people who, to their indignant astonishment, scarcely glanced in their direction.'²⁰And, should any doubts remain, a former warrant-officer in the Italian army gives independent corroboration in an article published within the *CIMR* in the summer of 1944. He had recently been one of eight hundred Italians working for the Organisation Todt in Guernsey, where he described conditions as follows: 'The...people still refuse to have anything to do with the Germans...You can see that [they] are very short of food, but they hold themselves proudly. We used to say amongst ourselves that [they] were living on their British pride - they had nothing else.'²¹

In addition, there is evidence to support the assertion made by Inspector Lamy in his post-war memoirs, that his men also ignored the Germans whenever possible. In a letter from the PlatzKommandant to the Bailiff of Jersey dated 29 June 1944, Major Heider

complained: 'On the approach of [German] patrols, the policemen either hurry up a side street, engage in conversation... with their backs to the street or stand before a shop window.'²² Similar complaints had already been made, and surviving documents also show that several policemen were charged with related offences.

'V'-signs

The first resistance amongst the Islands' population, began to manifest itself clearly in the summer of 1941, in direct response to the launching of the 'V' for victory campaign in Europe, which was instigated by the BBC and Colonel Britton. In the absence of any other instructions from the British mainland, it seems that although many Islanders thought the idea was likely to invite dangerous reprisals for no real benefit to the Allied cause, many others seized the opportunity to register their defiance. Just as the idea of doing something anti-German every day had appealed to many - even though it rendered only a pin-prick upon the corporate efficiency of the German Forces - yet it too carried appeal, and was recognised as representing yet another opportunity to discomfit their 'visitors.' However, the 'V'-sign campaign in practice often led to reprisals against the innocent rather than the guilty. Huge 'V'-signs were drawn or painted across the streets; on house walls, or even on German sign-posts, and soon afterwards nightly guards selected from amongst local people were ordered to patrol the affected districts. Wireless sets were also confiscated in these areas. Treated as anti-German demonstrations, the penalties for those caught were severe. Two teenage girls in Jersey, Lillian Kinnard and Kathleen Norman, received sentences of nine months each to be served in France, and a Guernseyman, Xavier Louis de Guillebon, 'who had the ingenious idea of chalking 'V's on German bicycle saddles, so that the rider afterwards walked around with it showing on his behind,' was given one year.²³

Often schoolchildren were involved, and Ambrose Robin reported on 9 July 1941 that 'some half...dozen small boys of 10 and 11 years...were carted away from the Castel

School...to appear before the Commandant.’ They were later returned with chocolate in their pockets, but the experience was none the less traumatic, and their parents were very relieved by the outcome. However, within weeks, the Germans had decided that the best option to deal with the campaign was to use it as a means of peddling counter-propaganda. As Reverend Ord commented, their solution was hardly logical, given that the German word for victory is ‘Sieg,’ and he wrote on 23 July 1941: ‘The “V”-sign has surely turned the German brain. A huge article covers the [Press] Front Page, claiming that all over the Continent people believe that the campaign is: “the sign of certainty of German victory in the struggle for Europe.”’ Next, the enemy began to paint their own ‘V’-signs, and soon the situation was largely defused, though it had promised to turn ugly at one stage, as evidenced by Victor Carey’s experiences before he issued his highly controversial ‘Reward’ notice. But the campaign continued in more imaginative ways. As in France, contempt for the enemy was shown by the wearing of brooches, fashioned mostly out of coins to make a ‘V’ shape, and various other items were also sported to make the same point. As evidenced in contemporary diaries, many Islanders wore patriotic colours whenever possible, and already - on the first anniversary of the German air-raids over the Islands - many people wore black ties, and restaurants and tea-rooms attached black bows to their flower vases.²⁴ Such gestures may seem insignificant, but they continued, and were frequently punished. As Reverend Ord noted on 30 June 1943: ‘The Gestapo have been arresting people for wearing patriotic insignia, particularly the “V”-sign brooches, [and] the wearing of red, white and blue colours - even in dress.’

However, in spite of associated persecution, it would seem that the Islanders did have the last laugh in respect of their ‘V’-sign campaign. As J. H. L’Amy wrote:

Several months before Liberation, work was commenced re-laying the granite paving in the Royal Square [St Helier]...It was covered with a heap of sand...The men always took great care not to uncover the centre of the pile...[and] a German military band played beside it every

Saturday afternoon... [A] few days after...Liberation this heap...disappeared...[and] there incorporated in the paving...was a permanent memorial to Colonel Britton's campaign in the form of a huge V in dressed stone...with the year '1945'...embedded firmly below it.²⁵

The mood of general defiance continued, and at times became more overt, especially when the RAF paid a visit to the Islands. As Adele Lainé explained: 'It was astonishing how calmly we thought of RAF raids. We even looked forward to them with pleasure as we knew they would upset the Germans.'²⁶ And on 2 September 1941, Peggy Brock recorded in her diary:

We had a daylight visit from the RAF on barges in and just outside the harbour... We...leaned out of the window upstairs and cheered...they say the esplanade was crowded with inhabitants yelling themselves hoarse with enthusiasm much to the anger of the Huns. Now there has come out in the Press an order - what we are to do in the event of a raid. We have to keep indoors (oh yeah!) and not acknowledge the attacking planes in any way!!²⁷

On another occasion - on 8 September 1941- Reverend Ord noted very heavy detonations in the Island early in the morning, followed by more activity in the evening. He wrote: 'At the Valette bathing pool, youngsters...stood up on the sea wall and screamed out to the pilots "Give it to 'em! Give it 'em, Good old RAF!"' He concluded: 'No lack of spirit there.'

Latent Patriotism

Besides these spontaneous demonstrations of loyalty, there were others involving many more people. One such occurred on 6 June 1943, at the burial of two RAF Officers, Sergeants Butlin and Holden, at the Mont-a-l'Abbe Cemetery in Jersey, where 'over a hundred wreaths were later placed on the grave.' Izette Croad recorded the scene: 'The

funerals took place at 6.30 this morning. Hundreds of people were there from all over the Island, [even] though no one was allowed in the cemetery.’

Later in the year however, in the cold grey light of 17 November 1943, came a public funeral service with full military honours for nineteen Royal Navy ratings who had been lost during a battle in the Gulf of St. Malo, when the cruiser *Charybdis* and a destroyer were sunk. On the same day, Reverend Ord wrote that this occasion represented the first opportunity the Islanders had had to show their loyalty to Britain and their respect for the men who had died. More than twenty one percent of population, representing every stratum of society, decided to take it. And so: ‘the people of Guernsey, 5,000 of them...made their way to the Foulon Cemetery...They came on foot and on bicycles, but they came...Although it was November there were flowers everywhere...there just wasn’t another flower to be had in the Island.’²⁸ As *The Star* reported the next day: ‘every vantage point was black with people, even beyond the limits of the cemetery... Within living memory, there has never been... such a moving manifestation of grief and pride and sympathy.’ And as Reverend Ord walked through the wreaths two days later, his observations are even more revealing, as he noted that if the Germans had read the cards:

they must have had a shock... [The wreaths] now number at least a thousand...and the inscriptions...and the abundance of red, white and blue ribbons and rosettes showed what people felt after three years and more of foreign repression. [He continued with especial mention of just one]: a huge wreath four or five feet in diameter - whose inscription said: ‘From the RAF - WE WILL CARRY ON!!’

On the same day, a similar service was held in Jersey, where the bodies of twenty-nine more Allied casualties had been washed up. But the aftermath was predictable. As Frank Falla later pointed out: ‘Following this demonstration of public feeling the Germans banned civilian attendance at British servicemen’s funerals.’²⁹ Such a demonstration of

loyalty by so many Islanders had obviously given cause for concern, and even though it failed to provide any practical resistance to the German war-machine, it certainly registered the population's anti-German feelings, and compares with the Dodecanese Occupation, where 'patriots performed rituals which advocated their anti-Italian feelings in [other] less obtrusive ways...[such as] writing propaganda tracts, relating...patriotic feelings in private conversations, or shedding tears after hearing a patriotic song.'³⁰

Interestingly, all of the above phenomena may also be found within the contemporary diaries of Channel Islanders, but as conditions worsened the mood of defiance gathered momentum, and the myriad of offences against the Occupier increased, with another very large demonstration, involving about five thousand Jersiaise sporting red, white and blue colours, using the excuse of an inter-Island football match on 29 May 1944.³¹ However, it would only be fair to admit that most incidences of resistance were of a minor nature, or would have been considered such under less draconian circumstances. Offences included: showing lack of respect for German culture; insulting German troops; possessing an illegal wireless set; listening to or disseminating BBC news; sheltering escaped forced workers or other fugitives; stealing or receiving German goods; black-marketeering; committing sabotage or 'going slow' on German work projects; making escape attempts, or being found in possession of a camera or some kind of weapon. Other offences, mostly not discovered, were breaking the curfew, or carrying out other acts against the Germans, as prescribed by Colonel Britton. What is also interesting is that instances of disloyalty and denunciation may also have been balanced 'in...almost equal measure' by 'tipping-off in the event of danger.'³² It would also be relevant here to comment further upon later accusations of moral decline amongst the Islanders, about which the Reverend Ord makes the following comment on 2 September 1942: 'Bad laws make bad habits... The German authorities have broken their plighted word: is there any doubt that in desperation, others will take the law into their own hands.'

Individual Acts

As may be deduced from the figure of 4,000 people arrested during the Occupation, it would be impossible to do justice to all of them within a study of this kind. Of course many had committed relatively minor offences, but there were also amongst them those whose actions required great daring and courage, and for which punishments were in line with those inflicted upon some of their more celebrated counterparts on the Continent. For example, William Symes, the owner of a waterfront pub - 'The Dive' - in St. Peter Port, 'smuggled out information which reached the Maquis and M19 operatives in France and Spain...[He] was caught, and taken to Cherche Midi prison in Paris...[and later to] Buchenwald.'³³ Another man, Jack Sohier, was betrayed by an informer 'for keeping a hidden radio. Sentenced...to twelve months jail in France, he escaped...and joined the Resistance in Normandy.' He died a hero, 'leading a charge against enemy gun emplacements on the...eve of...liberation.'³⁴

Two more Islanders who also died for their offences, were Clarence and Peter Painter. Peter had continued to use his house for Scout meetings long after a ban had been issued, and had also taken 'photographs of German planes...[and] contrived to assemble a map of the German Island fortifications.'³⁵ During a house search, a First World War Mauser was found in good working order, and Peter - then nineteen - and his father were arrested, tried and sent to France, later being sent 'on 6 January 1944, as was the practice for many 'Nacht and Nebel' prisoners...to Natzweiler-Struthof concentration camp.'³⁶

Also amongst the Islands' brave was Major Marie Ozanne, who read the scriptures in uniform outside Nocq Road Citadel, Guernsey, after the Salvation Army movement became illegal on 18 January 1941. She was cautioned by German Police, and eventually arrested in 1942, after writing letters of complaint to the Kommandant about the treatment of prisoners held at 'Paradis.' Living quite close to this facility, Marie had been tormented by the screams of the inmates as they were beaten and tortured by their OT

guards. She was imprisoned without trial, and later released after becoming very ill. She died at the Castel Hospital on 25 February 1943.³⁷

It is also important to remember that, even in the climate of fear and uncertainty, even children committed offences, and many tales are still told today of damaged German road signs, sand in petrol tanks, and refusal to learn German during compulsory lessons at school. In the *Daily Sketch* on 18 April 1942, Victor Lewis reported that: 'Prizes were offered of extra rations to children proficient in German. But no prizes were won. [In addition] at the end of last term every schoolchild was given a toy, on one side of which was a picture of Hitler. Next day, commanding officers had to order...street cleaning. Main roads were littered with smashed toys!' It was also mainly the younger generation who clashed with German soldiers during the deportations in September 1942.

As the boats were due to leave a large crowd... commenced singing patriotic songs and...the situation became...ugly. The boys were chased and one laid out a German officer, while others played football with a soldier's helmet... spectators shout[ed] at the soldiers who eventually chased the boys with revolvers and bayonets. Fourteen boys of about 16 years were arrested and taken to the German section of the local prison.

The Press report from which this extract was taken also added that some were later given prison sentences.³⁸ Similar displays evidently continued, and on 22 April 1944, Ambrose Robin noted: 'Nothing of interest today except that a boy has been imprisoned by the Gestapo for five weeks for whistling "There'll always be an England."'

Other Islanders refused, or side-stepped, German demands for requisitioned articles. In 1942, one friend of Elizabeth Doig, upon receipt of a letter asking why she had not sent in her bicycle replied: 'My reason is that I will do nothing to help my King's enemies.'³⁹ Another Guernsey woman wrote to the Kommandant in the wake of a demand to hand

over Allied leaflets, saying: 'that she did not have a leaflet...but that if she had, she certainly wouldn't hand it over.' Later 'she was produced before the Kommandantur and found to be mentally deficient.'⁴⁰ There are also many famous tales besides, such as the one about Mrs. Green, who was imprisoned in France for making an 'offensive' remark. Perhaps as a reminder of the foibles of memory, this incident has been variously reported. Nowadays, it is generally thought that she said: 'to Hell with Hitler for a rice pudding,' but on 22 September 1941, Ambrose Robin noted: 'Mrs. Green employed at the Royal Hotel received six months for replying "Heil Churchill" to an officer who addressed her "Heil Hitler."'"

Wireless Offences

The final confiscation of wireless sets was ordered in June, 1942. It came as a considerable blow to the civil population, and triggered indignation and law-breaking on a massive scale. Many people handed in a second set, and those remaining were hidden in all kinds of unlikely places. Later, crystal sets were built, and at Liberation so many sets appeared in house windows, that it became obvious how the BBC news had usually managed to circulate so quickly. But many people had also been cautious. There were informers to consider, and the death penalty 'for serious cases' was introduced towards the end of 1942. Nevertheless, large numbers of people were arrested, and many diarists note with sympathy and fear when one of their friends has been apprehended.

Perhaps the most famous case occurred in March 1943, when a number of people from St. Saviour, in St. Helier, were arrested and charged with spreading BBC news. Four of them, who later died after being in concentration camps, now have their names engraved upon the Jersey Memorial, unveiled on 9 November 1996. They were Canon Clifford Cohu, John Nicolle, Joseph Tierney and Arthur Dimmery. Between them, they organised a network to disseminate the news. Surviving documents show that eighteen people were eventually tried in connection with this operation, and many more were questioned. At

the trial, Mr. Dimmery was sentenced to only three months and two weeks, but this was to be served on the Continent, and afterwards 'he was sent [on] to Neuengamme, and then to Laufen Internment Camp, where he died on 4 April 1944.'⁴¹ His 'crime' had been to dig up a wireless set belonging to a Mrs. Bathe, who loaned it to John Nicolle. It was from this wireless that Mr. Nicolle gave out news to Joe Tierney, who wrote it down and reproduced it. Canon Cohu obtained his news from this source, and passed it round the patients at the hospital, and elsewhere during his visits. Even more incautiously, he also boomed out 'the latest intelligence' as he cycled through the streets in Town, and always prefaced his announcements by ringing a bell or calling out 'Wonderful news today!'⁴² In court, the Canon was sentenced to eighteen months. At first imprisoned in Jersey, he was then sent to the Continent, where he met Frank Falla at Naumburg, but then he and Joe Tierney were sent to Spergau, where he died on 22 September 1944, of erysipelas, caused by malnutrition and ill-treatment. Joe Tierney escaped, but was later recaptured, and died at Celle during a forced march. The fourth member of the captured group to perish, John Nicolle, had been sentenced to three years. He was eventually sent to Dortmund Prison, where he died of starvation and overwork, sometime after his arrival on 21 April 1944.

Also in Jersey, Herbert and George Gallihan produced a news-sheet called 'The Bulletin of British Patriots' in June 1942. This encouraged people not to give up their wireless sets, arguing that they were not illegal under the Hague Convention. The two brothers were also sent to the Continent - George to Dijon prison, and Herbert to the concentration camp at Wolfenbuttel. In Guernsey too, news was gathered and disseminated by organised groups. Best known was the Guernsey Underground News Service - GUNS - which was set up in May 1942, by Charles Machon, a linotype operator at *The Star*, Cecil Duquemin, Ernest Legg, Frank Falla and Joseph Gillingham. This 'news-sheet had a circulation of about three hundred until 11 February 1944, the date on which Charles Machon was betrayed by an Irishman he had thought to be reliable.'⁴³ The sheets were also read by more than seventy people in Sark, through the

action of Hubert Lanyon, the baker, and a carrier named Wakely. 'Following the arrest and interrogation of Charles Machon, Herbert Lanyon was also arrested...[and] sentenced to six months imprisonment in Guernsey...[Even though he was beaten unconscious during questioning, he] was more fortunate than the GUNS publishers. All five were sent to Germany,' where Charles Machon and Joe Gillingham died, and their three colleagues barely escaped with their lives.⁴⁴

Also in Guernsey, there was another news service run between June 1942 and Liberation by Mr. L.E. Bertrand. His news-sheets were circulated to locals and foreign workers, and even to Island officials working in the Bailiff's office through the action of Madeleine Sims, the wife of one of the agents who worked for *The Star* newspaper. Luckily he was never caught, and in spite of the horrific fate which befell some of those who were, there were always many others prepared to take the risk of detection in order to raise the spirits of others. In the words of Reverend Ord recorded in August 1943, the news continued: 'hot from secret sets, and spread like prairie fire.'⁴⁵

Later, especially after manufacturing instructions were broadcast by the BBC, many crystal sets began to be made. The Seaton Woods reported that Father Ray of the Jesuit College in Jersey made and gave away sixty-three sets during the course of the Occupation, and there are reports of many more.⁴⁶ Mr. Taylor and his daughter in St. Helier made hundreds...[and] Andre [the] hairdresser made over five hundred in the little room over his shop.⁴⁷ The latter got six months in jail, but production still flourished, and after D-Day came vastly increased access to Allied broadcasts, because of the nearness of the Expeditionary Forces' transmitters in Northern France.

Propaganda Tracts

Lucy Schwob and Suzanne Malherbe were half-sisters, known in France as Claude Cahun and Marcel Moore. Resident in Jersey, but previously involved in anti-Nazi

agitation in Paris during the 1930s, they soon began a resistance campaign of their own, which operated for about four years until their arrest on 25 July 1944. Believing that a mutiny of the garrison would provide the best chance of liberation for the Islands, they aimed to undermine German morale by noting down selected items of BBC news, translating them into German, and then distributing these bulletins amongst the troops. Their method was simple – slips of paper were inserted into cigarette cartons left in places where they would be sure to be found, and signed ‘the soldier with no name.’⁴⁸

Their trial began on 16 November 1944, and in his summation Oberst Sarmsen stated that the women’s actions ‘could not be considered as a mortal crime. It was a political crime.’ With a foretaste of much later arguments, that resistance is worth most on a psychological level, he added: ‘It is indeed a more serious crime. With firearms one knows at once what damage had been done, but with spiritual arms one cannot tell how far-reaching it may be.’⁴⁹The two were sentenced to death, but following various appeals, including that of Alexander Coutanche, the sentences were commuted, and they remained in prison in Jersey. Upon release their health had suffered considerably, this being partly due to a failed suicide attempt they both made soon after arrest, but they resumed their lives, and later wrote to thank the Bailiff for his kindness.

Spying and Underground Movements

As the months of the Occupation rolled on, it occurred to a good many people that there were opportunities for spying and gathering intelligence to help the Allied war-effort. Some conducted their own research, and various small organisations were formed to co-ordinate ‘the task of gathering information on a variety of subjects, such as the location and description of enemy fortifications, the strength and organisation of...German forces, and the compilation of lists of informers, collaborators, and black-marketeters.’⁵⁰The hope was to pass this information on to British Intelligence, and some of the material supplied by successful escapees did indeed originate from these groups. One of the best known in

Jersey was largely run by ex-British officers: Majors Crawford-Morrison, Manley and L'Amy. In Major J. H. L'Amy's unpublished memoirs, he describes how:

during the summer of 1942, I discovered that one of my friends - Major W. Crawford-Morrison, Controller ARP, was working on parallel lines so I got in touch...[and] we were able to pool our information. From that time... several of us met...at the ARP office every Saturday morning. Our group [consisted of six persons]...Personally I had 'planted' a few trustworthy agents in German employment who kept me informed of what went on 'behind the scenes,' and this method was further developed...as our activities progressed...[Some] agents...signed on as lorry drivers for the Germans and drove...into various underground tunnels... As a result we were able to make complete plans of the tunnels and...estimate...the quantity of ammunition stored in them. When our survey...was...complete...we tabulated the position of enemy headquarters, gun and searchlight positions...etc... [and a] 'Leica' camera...enabled [Stanley Green of West's Cinema] to reduce this sheet to a size slightly larger than a postage stamp.⁵¹

When Major Morrison was deported to Germany in 1942, he took a copy of this photographic reduction with him. Unfortunately, the information did not reach England from this source until early 1945, but meanwhile, the remaining members of the group had more material ready for sending, 'as well as valuable data prepared by the St. Martin's Underground Movement, [which] was of considerable military value.'⁵²It was then that Mr. W. Gladden, a prominent member of the Movement, provided a boat he had built for a party of five escapees. The documents were entrusted to them, and successfully delivered after their departure from Fauvic on 23 February 1945. But soon more action was deemed necessary, and as Admiral Huffmaier continued to claim that the Islands would be defended to the last man, it was decided to establish a radio link with England. The Chief Engineer of the General Post office - Mr. P.G. Warder- supplied a transmitter, and Dr. R.N. McKinstry organised a concealed room at 'Les Vaux Convalescent Hospital' for the operation. Another escape was planned, but events were then superseded by the Liberation.

Besides these movements, a resistance organisation also grew up towards the end of the War within the Jersey Communist Party, later known as the Jersey Democratic Movement. In time, this became linked with Paul Mulbach and other anti-Nazi German soldiers in the Island. In a later interview, Norman Le Brocq explained how he and a group of friends began by helping a couple of forced workers, but soon branched out, as they found quite large numbers of people were prepared to offer assistance. At great risk, fugitives were given shelter within the homes of sympathetic farmers and townspeople. Later, the group organised 'morale-boosting leaflets,' which were circulated within [Mr. Le Brocq thinks - all] the OT camps, and 'by the end of the Occupation we were regularly...duplicating leaflets calling for a mutiny in the garrison, as well as our own propaganda.'⁵³ It was towards the end of 1944 that Mr. Le Brocq and Les Huelin had met with the disaffected soldier, Paul Mulbach. They soon decided to trust him, and continued to meet regularly in Town. Paul Mulbach produced the text of leaflets, and the JCP duplicated the contents, delivering them back to the same place about a week later. Herr Mulbach eventually deserted, but discontent was growing amongst the soldiers, and a plan was formulated to

disarm the big-shots and hand the island over to the Allies...it was all set for...May 1, 1945 and...[then] postponed 'til May 15. [Mr. Le Brocq continued]: There were a number...of...leaflets [which] called for...destroying of military targets and there were a number of fires and small explosions...but the Palace [Hotel explosion on March 7, 1945] was the big moment...and...quite a number of the German high naval brass were killed or badly wounded in that.⁵⁴

There is also evidence that 'in the last months of the Occupation some Jersey youths...stole...weapons and explosives in readiness to assist the British landings they longed for,' and R.C.F. Maugham wrote of two attempts made on the life of General Wolff.⁵⁵ The first took place on 18 March 1945, when a bomb was thrown at his car. The

General survived, and the second attempt was also unsuccessful. However, on 19 March other plans fared better, and a large garage containing German vehicles and ammunition was blown up.⁵⁶ Whoever was responsible for these incidents, fortunately for the JCP their activities were never deeply probed, but given a longer time-frame, such happenings may have portended a very different and very violent end to the Occupation, as suspected by John Leale in his post-war address. Another factor to consider, is that the unmistakable rumblings of discontent amongst the troops - as noted by contemporary diarists - could have erupted at any time, and Major L'Amy's later judgement may well have been correct; that if Hueffmeyer had refused to surrender, 'there is no doubt that... insurrection would have assumed formidable proportions.'⁵⁷ Thus, if Liberation had been delayed by just a few weeks, it is impossible to predict what violence may have erupted in the Islands from a number of sources but now all possibilities must remain speculative.

Concealing Forced Workers

However, what is not speculation is that many other private citizens unconnected with the JCP also risked their lives to help escaped forced workers, and at Liberation it became known that more than twenty were still in hiding amongst the population. Since just one of these - Michael Krokeen - actually named and thanked fourteen of his helpers, and mentioned other benefactors, in a letter to the *Jersey Evening Post* on 22 May 1945, there must have been quite a large number of Islanders involved in these activities. The redoubtable Dr. Mc Kinstry is known to have been foremost among them, and one of his helpers later reported that he had 'turned out an ambulance to pick up an escaped Soviet youngster [on several occasions, keeping one of them]...for about five months...in his own home.'⁵⁸ Mr. A. C. Halliwell, a surgeon, was also involved, and both men 'did brave and wonderful work for the escaped Russian prisoners, eradicating birth marks and tattoos, dying their hair, providing false documents, and hiding them on farms.'⁵⁹

Amongst other compassionate Islanders who also happily did not get caught, were Mrs. Metcalfe and her sister, and the family of Stella Perkins, whose mother gave food and shelter to a whole series of escaped forced workers. But another family was not so lucky, and Louisa Gould and her brother Harold Le Druillenec, were among seven Jersey residents arrested in May/ June 1944. Mrs. Gould, a widow, ran a general store in St. Ouen, and her two sons were Officers in the Allied Forces. It was in July 1941 that she had been notified that her son Edward had been killed when his ship HMS 'Bonadventure' was torpedoed in the Mediterranean, and around October 1942 she was asked to give shelter to Feodor ['Bill'] Burriy. Mrs. Gould, saying that she had 'lost one of my boys' and that 'the other is away,' agreed to look after him, and Bill remained in her home until an informer gave them away.⁶⁰ Then, in spite of a warning sent by Pat Tatum, which allowed Bill time to leave the house safely, a 'radio and camera were found, and...a couple of small labels from...gifts that Louisa and Harold had sent to Bill.'⁶¹ Louisa was sentenced to two years imprisonment on 22 June 1944, and Harold got five months for 'reception of wireless transmissions.' However, their sister Ivy Forster who, unknown to the Germans, had also given shelter to another forced worker, George Koslov, was saved from deportation by the efforts of the Prison Governor and a doctor, who 'fiddled a sample and said she was unfit to go.'⁶² On 29 June Louisa and Harold were among the last prisoners sent to France. The last time they saw each other was at Belfort, where the Germans made selections for the concentration camps. Mr. Le Druillenec arrived at Neuengamme on 1 September 1944, and was sent to a satellite camp in Wilhelmshaven. It was there he recorded that

a fellow prisoner... brief[ed]...new arrivals: 'Your...Block Chief...[he said, has] got powers of life and death... You'll see things going on here that'll drive you nuts if you try to figure them out...guys beaten to death for stealing a swede, guys tortured for weeks and then killed because a camp chief didn't like their faces...Don't worry...Don't judge it by the standards of a sane world.'⁶³

Later, transferred from this nightmare to Bergen-Belsen, by some miracle Harold Le Druillenc survived, but his sister, Louisa had been sent to Ravensbruck Concentration Camp, where she worked with Madame Tanguy - who survived the ordeal - 'in tandem until February 13, 1945, when Louisa, invalided by then, was selected and sent to a newly erected gas chamber.'⁶⁴

For such people as these there would be no 'moderate Occupation,' as described by Herbert Morrison at Liberation, or 'model Occupation' as hoped for by Ambrose Sherwill. For them was only the grim reality of Nazism with conditions often dictated in accordance with Hitler's 'Third Degree' and 'Nacht und Nebel' Decree, and the ever-present possibility of transfer into the deadly concentration camp system. For many years there was little information on the number of people who had been subjected to such treatment, but according to painstaking research conducted by Joe Mière, the former Curator of the German Military Underground Hospital in Jersey, the total number of prisoners sent to the Continent is as follows: 'For Jersey 172, Guernsey 144 and Sark 7. According to...estimates the final number...could reach between 350 and 400.'⁶⁵

German Justice

There were a variety of German Courts in the Channel Islands. 'The majority of cases were dealt with by the court of the Feldkommandantur 515...with headquarters at Victoria College House in Jersey. The remainder were tried by the Jersey branch of the court of the 319th Infantry Division based in Guernsey.'⁶⁶ Most sentences were served in local prisons, where many of the Island staff treated their prisoners very well. However, many others passed into the hands of the Germans, who carried out brutal interrogations and inhuman regimes upon those suspected of crimes against the Occupying Authorities. The horrific experiences of the policemen accused in 1942, and of the young political prisoner Joe Mière, have already been mentioned, but there were many others who suffered, some of them within the confines of known torture centres such as 'Paradis,' in

Vale, Guernsey. The fate of some of the prisoners who ‘vanished’ may well remain unknown, but what happened to them may be guessed through contemporary diary accounts describing the condition of other detainees, who emerged from incarceration in a very debilitated state, either: ‘reduced to a skeleton,’ or ‘broken for life.’⁶⁷Of course, for those sent to continental prisons, the outlook was even worse, but it should also be remembered that from August 1941, whether held in the Channel Islands or in France, all prisoners ‘were liable to the death penalty if any attacks or sabotage were made against the Occupying Power in the Occupied Territory.’⁶⁸This being yet another violation of the Hague Convention, it is not surprising that the Islanders were not very favourably impressed with the brand of justice handed out by German Courts.⁶⁹

In practice, for most people, punishment for their offence was a matter of fortune and timing, since not long after D-Day it became impossible to transport prisoners to France. One young girl in the early Occupation, was sent to a French prison for twenty eight months for writing poetry critical of Hitler, and another - June Sinclair - who slapped the face of a German soldier who ‘overstepped the mark...was swept into the Nazi system and ended her days in...Ravensbruck.’⁷⁰Yet others, like the girl who was tried in July 1944 for pouring dirty water over a German soldier apparently charmed the judges and was pardoned.⁷¹At the same time, it seems evident that many offenders simply failed to consider the likely consequences of their actions, and of course the object was always not to get caught. However, the number of people convicted of offences in the Islands became so high that there was a waiting list to serve one’s sentence in the local jail, and many accounted their conviction not as a disgrace, but rather: ‘a badge of distinction... [tangible proof] that you had stuck your neck out.’⁷²

Sabotage and Working for the Germans

As both contemporary and later witnesses have pointed out, there were many Islanders who would gladly have welcomed the opportunity to support England in her war effort

against Germany, but as Ralph Durand confirmed: ‘practically nothing could have been destroyed that would have appreciably hindered the German war effort.’⁷³ However, some attempts were made, and on 27 August 1943, Ambrose Robin noted in Guernsey that:

the whole of the staff at the Airport has been placed under arrest: When reporting to the batteries that British planes were about they omitted to mention that four or five German planes were returning to the Airport. The batteries concentrated on these...one [was] destroyed...another crashed into the sea...and another landed in Jersey with its tail shot away.

In Jersey, action was also taken, and the Seaton Woods recorded: ‘During the Battle of Britain, Charles Roche the Airport Controller...told his Chief Grounds-man to...[cut] the grass as smooth as a lawn, instead of the usual four inches. He thought it might encourage planes to run...into the fence at the end of the airfield.’⁷⁴ It seems he was correct, and ‘twenty-eight planes were damaged in this way before the end of the war.’⁷⁵

As far as shipping was concerned, access to the jetties was a considerable problem, since any locals allowed there were closely scrutinised. However, ‘when the Germans began to fit up the lifeboat with anti-aircraft guns, her coxwain under pretence of tuning up her engines contrived to put them out of action. The job of repairing them was entrusted first to the States Maintenance Engineer, and then, when he failed...to a private engineer, who...succeeded in making the engines quite useless.’⁷⁶

Besides these incidents, some German telephone-wires were cut, and in May 1944, Reverend Ord recorded that a man named Ferbrache was locked up for interfering with ammunition ‘to cause jamming in the guns.’ He had been compulsorily employed, and others also took risks by adopting the ‘go-slow’ policy recommended by Colonel Britton, or by stealing German stores. Ralph Durand describes how ‘it was common knowledge

that anyone in need of a bag of cement could get one by arrangement with one of the [local] drivers employed to transport it from the harbour to the fortifications.⁷⁷ Coal and petrol were also appropriated, and it seems that the German authorities ‘never missed it.’⁷⁸ Other workers simply ‘failed to turn up...[or] stopped working after a very short time.’⁷⁹ There is written evidence of this in various company records, for example: ‘The majority of Channel Islanders employed at Goetzky’s...made it a point to obstruct... work in progress,’ and in a report to a client on 26 June 1942, Herr Goetsky explicitly stated that: ‘The majority [of Guernseymen] are extremely reluctant to engage in regular work.’⁸⁰

Escapes

During the Occupation many escape attempts were made from the Channel Islands, especially by those wishing to pass on military or other information concerning the status of the territory. Since there was no support from Whitehall, and in the face of early hostile reactions from the Island Administration, decisions to escape were a lonely business, and many needed advice before attempting to navigate some of the most dangerous waters in the world. In addition, before D-Day, the only possible destination was England, which lay more than sixty miles north. Many attempts failed, but after the summer of 1944, there were more successes, as the nearby coast of Normandy came under Allied control. For many years no official record of escapes was compiled, but today, thanks again to research conducted by Joe Mière, the total number stands at 225, including 156 who set out from Jersey. Of these latter, twenty-six were captured, one was shot dead, and nine were drowned, and amongst those captured, more died later as a direct result of ill treatment in prison. Even for the lucky ones who managed to survive, tragedies associated with the fate of friends, often remained to haunt them for the rest of their lives.

The first escapes were made in the confusion just after the Islands had been seized in July 1940, and Arthur Marett was amongst five people who took a boat out of St. Helier at three in the morning, to be picked up a few days later by the British coastguard. Others are known to have departed from Guernsey around the same time, but the best known escape was that of Dennis Vibert from Jersey in September 1941. It was his second attempt, and he took with him a detailed report of enemy placements and defences in the Islands, as well as notes on the availability of essential supplies. His achievement inspired many Islanders to dream of following in his wake, but the task was daunting - Dennis had spent three days at sea, rowing an eight foot boat over almost seventy miles, until he was picked up by a destroyer off Portland Bill.

Another daring escape took place in autumn 1944. This too, had a definite military object, and was organised by eight boys who had formed a secret society, with the intention of carrying out a reconnaissance survey of Jersey. Once the requisite information had been gathered, they then decided to make their escape using canoes, since all boats had by this time been registered by the Germans. Two such craft were obtained, together with a rubber 'Folboat,' which required patching in about twenty different places. The canoes [also needed] considerable repairs,

but at about 5am on September 20, after carrying the craft for a distance of nearly two miles, the boys set off. After about an hour, one canoe began to leak, and soon afterwards was forced to turn back. The three occupants - Frank Killer, Peter Curwood and Hugh La Cloche were arrested on landing. The remaining five boys were swamped off the French coast about six hours later, but they managed to gain the beach in the American sector, and were later sent to London where they handed over their information.⁸¹

Other well-known escapes are those of Captain Noyon, who left Guernsey to deliver copies of the official report on the desperate state of the Islands' food situation in

November 1944, and of the five young men who set out to deliver information from the Jersey Underground organisations in Mr. Gladden's boat. These latter, set out from Fauvic, and it was from this very popular location that at least fifty intrepid people managed to get away between September 1944 and April 1945. This was a remarkable achievement, and was largely due to the help they received from a family who lived close by. At the time, Deputy T.C. Bertram might well have been 'described as the "Harbour Master" of the Fauvic "Port:" it was to his house that everyone came, [and] it was Mrs. Bertram and their daughter...who made hot drinks and took them out to the escapees waiting on cold nights.'⁸² A fisherman, Mr. Syd Le Clercq, was also on hand to help with advice about the coast and the tides. Deputy Bertram also sheltered two US Officers, Captain Clark and Lieutenant Haas, who eventually escaped from the Islands on 8 January 1945. His brave actions were amongst the few officially recognised by the States after Liberation. The risks he took were very real, as underlined by a contemporary Press notice, which read: 'anyone who takes in or extends help in any way to Captain Clark or Lieutenant Haas will be punished by death.'⁸³

But besides these happily successful stories, there were also tragedies. During an escape attempt on 11 October 1944, Douglas Le Marchand, M. Neil and K. Collins set out from La Rocque in a twelve foot boat. It was swamped, and as the lads tried to hide when they waded ashore, they were fired at by German soldiers. Nineteen-year-old Douglas was killed, and his two friends were jailed for ten months each. About four weeks later, on 14 November, Ronald and Madeleine Bisson accompanied by two boys, set off from Rozel in an open motor boat. Their engine failed and they drifted before striking a rock off La Saline Bay. They frantically shouted for help, but the watching Germans did nothing, and all four were drowned. Mr. and Mrs. Bisson had only recently married. Only two weeks afterwards yet another attempt ended in disaster, when two brothers, Bernard and John Larbalestier, and Peter Noel left Jersey from Gorey in a small

fishing boat. The vessel got into difficulties and sank. Both brothers were drowned, and Peter Noel was arrested on landing and lodged in jail.⁸⁴

There were many tragedies during the Occupation of the Islands, and all were devastating to the families and friends of those who perished. However, one of the most poignant stories of a failed escape must be that of Peter Hassall, who set out with two teenage friends from Green Island on 2 May 1942. The boys had collected a large amount of information and related photographs, which they were taking with them, but about two miles out their open motor boat struck a rock, and sank immediately. In spite of Peter's desperate attempts to save him, Dennis Audrain was drowned, and Peter and Maurice Gould were arrested when they swam ashore. Cruelly, a member of Peter's family had informed the Germans of their escape plan, and so they were waiting on the beach. Since they were detained under Hitler's 'Nacht und Nebel Erlass,' they were denied any possibility of privileges, and no-one was allowed to know where they were sent or what was happening to them. Maurice later died of TB and ill-treatment, and sometime afterwards Peter was sent to Breslau, where he was court-martialled and the death sentence requested. He received eight years hard labour, but was eventually freed by the Russians. When he returned to Jersey after the War, he did not speak about his ordeal for many years, finally sending a copy of his personal memoirs to a journalist who had first approached him decades before, not many years before he died in 1998.

On 3 May 1997, still haunted by the drowning of Dennis Audrain, and long after his 'excruciating experience' of trying to repatriate Maurice Gould's body to his native Island had begun, Peter Hassall was finally able to attend the much longed for service, which marked the reburial of his friend in Jersey. It is only now within the pages of his unpublished memoirs that the reader is privileged to glimpse just part of his previously 'unrepresentable' nightmare, and the difficulties which beset the three friends after they embarked upon their venture. Without his often painful recollections, the details of their

tribulations would have been forever lost, being represented only by the inscription of Maurice Gould's name upon the Jersey Memorial on the New North Quay, and as such remaining one-dimensional – just an infinitesimal part of the 'bare statistics' of millions of Second World War dead.

In June 1945, the *Jersey Evening Post* had publicised just a small part of Peter Hassall's story. As the sixteen-year-old sat by his friend's bedside in Wittlich Prison in 1943, he had already been through some horrific experiences. Having 'been tortured and questioned by the SS and Gestapo,' in the Fresnes Prison in Paris, he was then sent to a concentration camp, where he stayed for six weeks, being often beaten. He

was then sent to a coal mine near Warsaw and...stayed there for four months, coming up once a week. [He wrote]: After that I went to a salt mine for two months and...did not come up once. When I eventually came up I was blind for four days. I then went back to the Rhineland to a prison called Wittlich...I stayed there for 20 months, working as a first aid man for many hundreds of sick and dying Frenchmen, Dutch and many other nationalities.⁸⁵

It was whilst in Wittlich, on 1 October 1943, that Maurice died.

Towards the end of his memoirs, and about fifty years later, Peter Hassall also gives the reader a poignant insight into the still ongoing legacy of his own sufferings, and into the similar experiences of many other surviving prisoners like him:

As I turned back the years and looked in my little diaries, or interviewed some of my comrades, it was at times unbearable. I can now put the book away and write about other adventures in my life...I had no more to give, as I have been unable to escape Hitler's Night and Fog Decree, which took away the lives of Dennis and Maurice and has not given me a proper night's sleep since May, 1942.⁸⁶

FORCED WORKERS

'During the war I worked for years on...Jersey and Guernsey as "consulting and managing architect in a civilian capacity" at the building of fortifications for the German military forces. I was in charge of about 5,000 workers, mainly non-Germans who were treated well. In May [circa 1961]...I visited these Islands... and joined a sight-seeing tour...through the underground fortifications...The English lady-guide described "the cruel methods and incidents" during the building approximately as follows:-"foreign workers exhausted to the point of death through hunger and...heavy work perished in large numbers, and some of them not yet quite dead were immured behind the concrete walls!" Here I shouted in a loud and angry voice: "That's a bloody lie! I built these fortifications...not a word of what you say is true." Upon this the Englishwoman showed me a brochure...based...[on testimony from] one of the foreign workers, a Spaniard. As to my certain knowledge there had been no Spaniards amongst those workers, it is evident that the whole horrible representation is a cynically concocted lie...which is seriously incriminating the good name of Germany time and time again.'

Soldat im Volk No.12/61. Jersey Archives Service A/F/3

Men Without Hope

13.

‘It was a summer day in 1942, when the inhabitants of St.Helier saw a terrible sight. Making its way along the streets was a column of people - bare-footed, in rags and tatters and with ashen grey faces. Among them were women and children hobbling along with difficulty. Soldiers, holding fierce dogs on leads, surrounded the prisoners and were driving them along with blows from their whips...These were Soviet citizens...and war prisoners...and...later, Spanish prisoners came on the scene...also French, Poles and Czechs. Soon Jersey was covered with prison camps.’

From the recollections of Ivy Forster. ¹

‘I’ve never forgotten the sound that came out of the huts. I still get emotional. When people are starving, the pitch of their voices rises. The sound was like lots of birds in an aviary.’

Mike Le Cornu ²

Over the last sixty years, the apparent struggle for control over what features should be allowed to dominate the public face of the forced workers’ war has changed little. As men were sent into the Channel Islands from all parts of the Occupied Territories to transform them into Hitler’s Island Fortresses, the official picture of their lives, as promoted by German Military Command, was much in line with the civilised picture painted by the ‘consulting and managing architect’ quoted opposite. But even at the time the fortifications were being built, it was obvious to contemporary folk that beneath the surface of the official description of a well-fed and cared-for workforce, there were clearly visible signs that actual conditions varied from passable to atrocious. And thus the situation has remained, with the only comprehensive report on the treatment of the forced workers in the Islands - commissioned by the British Government upon Liberation -

being lost to researchers for decades, after it was sent to Russia and classified until 1993. Even the evidence published by Ms. Bunting in 1995, which included the testimony of many survivor-witnesses, as well as newly-released information from some parts of the Pantcheff Report, seems to have had little impact in resolving the ongoing disputes. The result is an impasse, since even today those who seek to portray a moderate - or even benign - image of the forced workers' overall experiences in the Islands are still vigorously competing for hegemony in the area of public memory, which has always been largely dominated by atrocity stories.

Unfortunately, it will probably always be true that a definitive book on the activities of the Organisation Todt in the Islands may never be written, since - during the closing months of the War - many original records are known to have been dumped at sea, or removed from the Islands. In Jersey too, many documents were destroyed, and many were burnt in the Circus Field at Millbrook.³ But more new information has recently become available from the Moscow Archives, and this study has been able to draw upon translations of more of the Pantcheff Report, as well as various annexes and attachments which have previously been unseen by anyone, except a BBC team in 1993. These documents reveal startling new evidence, the substance and implications of which will be discussed towards the end of this chapter.

After Liberation, the British authorities soon became aware that intelligence reports which they had already gathered, suggesting a large mortality rate amongst the foreign workers in Alderney were very likely to be true, as more reports of atrocities greeted the British troops when they formally repossessed the Island on 16 May 1945. By order of the garrison commander, Brigadier Snow, subsequent investigations were entrusted to Major Cotton and Captain Kent, and afterwards to Captain Theodore [Bunny] Pantcheff, who completed his report the following September. Statements were taken from over 3,000 witnesses, including 'every German soldier in the Alderney

garrison...[and] every liberated prisoner or forced labourer...who was readily available.’⁴ More such statements, including several from witnesses in Jersey and Guernsey, were also recorded by Major V.N. Gruzdev from the London-based Soviet Military Mission, who accompanied Captain Pantcheff.

However, once these enquiries had been completed, it was soon decided by the British Government that since ‘for practical purposes Russians may be considered to have been the only occupants of...camps’ [in Alderney], the resultant Report and other documents should be sent to the Soviet Union, without any official copy being kept.⁵ As a result of this absence of any official documents, which began to be remedied only when previously classified transcripts of similar contemporary statements began to be released within the PRO files, popular memory was left to gather its own impressions. Thus were conclusions inevitably reached through the general distillation of other survivor-witness and bystander testimony, or alternatively from what Captain Pantcheff described in 1981 as ‘a number of piecemeal accounts since those days.’⁶

Any other gaps were filled by some of the more horrific stories which over time were honed into present day myth. In addition, since the remaining testimonies were also largely unproven, and unsupported by significant numbers of others, they were automatically more open to doubt and question, and the first general account of the Occupation, published in 1955, clearly reflects this problem. When speaking of conditions in Jersey and Guernsey, Alan and Mary Seaton Wood spoke relatively mildly, in terms of ‘uniform callousness’ of the guards, and even though some brutality was mentioned, they claimed that the Islanders ‘had [only] occasional glimpses’ of this. As regards Alderney, they were also cautious, and though some reports of atrocities were described, they claimed that [they had been] unable to [find] satisfactory witnesses... [or]...any eye-witness story which stood up to examination.’ And thus, no doubt in good faith, they also commented towards the close of their two-page Alderney chapter, on the

dangers of ‘irresponsible atrocity-mongering,’ adding the hope that ‘it may be...on a small island, a common humanity could even mitigate some of the cruelties of a concentration camp, [and]...that... sufferings were less than in Europe.’⁷

About the same time, came the pamphlet by John Dalmau entitled *Slave Worker in the Channel Islands*. Introduced in the preface as a ‘true story,’ this personal account of captivity in the Islands is haunting, and probably at least partly responsible for some of the atrocity tales still told today. The author describes how one day he witnessed the mass murder of Russian prisoners waiting on the sand outside the Lazaret [hospital]: as one of the guards ‘set...[his Alsatian] dog to attack men lying on the ground and [then]... started knocking about the others until none was alive.’⁸In Spring 1943, in Alderney, he also witnessed on his first morning, how two prisoners who collapsed at work were thrown into the sea, and described how ‘throwing men over the cliff became the standard way of getting rid of exhausted workers.’⁹In corroboration of this story, he later detailed another incident which haunted him for years. From a boat at the foot of the cliffs at Fort Albert, he was lowered into the sea in a diving suit to free an entangled anti-submarine boom. He wrote: ‘amongst the rocks and seaweed there were skeletons all over the place. Crabs and lobsters were having a feast...I thought I must be dreaming...but the sight of fresher bodies standing...showed me I was not...I was not able to sleep properly for a long time.’¹⁰It is not difficult to imagine the impact of such images when exposed to the public consciousness, and supported as they were by the more nightmarish stories surviving in society from only ten years before, they gradually evolved into acceptable myths. Afterwards, once established, they soon became prominent upon the wider face of the Occupation experience where they still remain today, either emerging in conversation, or being regularly passed on to tourists. Whether such tales may be classed as likely based in truth, or simply: ‘not supported directly by...evidence...collected by a number of Island historians,’ as indeed some were by George Forty in his recent book, will be discussed later.¹¹

Certainly, the official history published by Charles Cruikshank in 1975 also eases the reader towards the more palatable option of accepting that, although the number of deaths of foreign workers in the Islands will always be open to question: 'it is difficult to believe that...[German death] certificates are not honest records.' It seems that Dr Cruikshank had been given access to 'several hundred' death certificates which were sent to the Imperial War Museum from the Islands for his use. Of these documents, copies of about fifty – mostly giving details of forced worker deaths in Alderney – are presently lodged within the Guernsey Archives, but the present author was unable to locate the remainder. However, it is clear that Dr. Cruikshank probably saw whatever documents were available in the early 1970s, but it is significant that he states that not only is the evidence that some workers 'were treated little better than animals... overwhelming,' but he also points out that since 'most of the documents dealing with the OT in the Channel Islands have been destroyed...[it] perhaps fortifies the view...that many thousands... died.'¹²But, he then asks, with the application of reasonable, common sense logic thirty years on:

Why at a time when the Germans were so fully in command of the situation...should they trouble to engage in a deception which they thought would never be revealed? It seems likely that even if ten times as many OT workers had died they would have produced certificates for them...secure in the belief that they would never have to answer to the world after their deaths.¹³

In 1981, there followed *Alderney Fortress Island*, published by T.X.H. Pantcheff. Presumably based upon his investigation thirty-six years before, this book is very informative, but although horrific in some of its descriptions, it is - perhaps surprisingly, in view of relevant documents since made available - not really controversial. This is largely because although it mentioned the total number of foreign worker deaths as being the minimum likely, it refrained from casting serious doubt upon these figures, which had already been largely adopted in the Islands from available evidence. They were: for

Alderney 'at least 389...329 buried in the 'Russian' cemetery and 60 in the parish churchyard.'¹⁴ Interestingly, the book also does not mention 'what the Russian copy of his report in Moscow makes clear: namely, that fifteen...suspected German war criminals had been in British POW camps, along with witnesses needed to convict them,' shortly after Liberation. Later, when Madeleine Bunting wrote to the Home Office in the 1990s, officials denied that this was true, and the apparent absence of such details from Pancheff's work in 1981 may well be best explained as she suggests: 'Pantcheff's book was checked by the Ministry of Defence and it is probable that parts of it were censored.'¹⁵

Soon afterwards in 1982, there followed Solomon Steckoll's work, *The Alderney Death Camp*, which presaged the reopening of more controversial issues in the 1990s. This book included what amounts to an indictment of the British government's failure to prosecute any of the Germans involved in the running of the OT camps, and SS-camp Sylt, when they were - as this book also states - already held in custody after the War. In fact, in the post-Liberation period this apparent omission also contributed to the general disillusionment of many Islanders, as well as to their feelings of angry disappointment about the eventual failure to prosecute their own war-criminals, the collaborators, whose escape from conventional justice has already been discussed. Mr. Steckoll also presented more evidence of atrocities, which allegedly took place in the Islands, but some of his evidence since seems to have been dismissed, possibly on account of what Madeleine Bunting later referred to as his 'sensationalist style.' One assumes this dismissal was probably made by those Islanders who, in line with many other 'decent people' as described by Major L'Amy, either 'cannot, or will not believe that such things happened.'¹⁶ Yet the accounts of some witnesses are particularly difficult to disbelieve. For example thirty-six years later, in conversation with the author: 'a survivor of Nordeney camp in Alderney, M. Albert Eblagon, [grandson of the one-time Chief Rabbi of Crete] went into shock as he related... [his experience as] an eye-witness when the

Germans threw a fellow-prisoner into the wet concrete of a blockhouse...after which they poured more concrete over the man.¹⁷ Mr. Steckoll also reported the testimony of a Jewish doctor, Jean Joseph Bloch, 'who described how the SS had prepared a [death] tunnel beside the Nordeney camp for the Jews...To make sure that it would function efficiently...they decided to try it out.'¹⁸ During the trial, eight hundred prisoners were forced inside for so long that some began to faint. They were then released.

It would be more than ten years later, around 1995, that the most likely objective truths of the forced workers' ordeal in the Islands would finally be allowed to begin their re-emergence. However, when Ms. Bunting first expanded upon the subject of what really happened to them, the fact that her book was so controversial tended to detract from its often excellent detail. Not only did she collect the testimony of many surviving forced workers who had been returned to Russian and Ukrainian territories after the War, but she was also among the first to extract information from parts of the newly released Pantcheff Report, which she found in the Moscow Archives. Her findings and conclusions based on this Report are startling, and her estimate of the death toll shocking, especially because it now seems that this estimate of 'probably ...between two and three thousand,' including those who died in transit, may well be as close to the truth as anyone will get, unless more documents emerge in the future.¹⁹

Over the years even higher estimates of deaths have been given by others. John Dalmau stated that: 'there were 59 survivors out of 4000 Spaniards in the...Islands,' and Georgi Kondakov wrote in 1991: 'such is the lack of information...that estimates [of the number of deaths in Alderney] vary from 400 to 5000.'²⁰ Afterwards, in 1996, the newly released PRO documents lent their own authority to information they disclosed. Immediately, news headlines broadcast to the world that 'Nazis crucified Channel Island captives,' and spoke of other atrocious acts.²¹ With its apparent official credentials, such evidence broke upon a startled public which, having largely forgotten much of the overt racism and

bigotry in Europe in the 1930s and 40s, especially in Nazi Germany, seemed reluctant to accept this information as credible. Some questioned whether it was just sensationalist journalism hiding behind a mask of officialdom, but the main bone of contention seems to have been the extent of the atrocities perpetrated, and the claim in various articles that many times the received number had actually died. One should mention here that – also drawing from the Pantcheff Report - Freddie Cohen's publication in 1998 added many more harrowing details of the fate of the Jewish prisoners who were also forced to work in the Islands.

THE EVIDENCE:

Contemporary Perceptions:

When Hitler issued his Fortification Directive on 20 October 1941, an enormous construction programme began in the Channel Islands. The Fuehrer specified, that since ‘the British may attempt to re-conquer the...Islands...Defence measures...must guarantee that...attack will be repulsed...[and] permanent fortification...must be pressed forward energetically...to create an impregnable fortress.’²²The agency put in charge of carrying out this programme was the Organisation Todt, which soon proceeded to import thousands of foreign prisoners and others to carry out the task. Numbers fluctuated during the Occupation, and total estimates vary accordingly, but in May 1943, German figures suggest that there were 16,000 foreign workers in the Islands, of whom 6,700 were in Guernsey, 5,300 in Jersey, and 4,000 in Alderney.²³ However, contrary to ‘popular legend,’ which at one time held that ‘the workforce employed by the OT in the...Islands consisted entirely of thousands of Russian slave workers,’ the truth is that, for example, in Jersey, ‘much work had already been done by...Spaniards and other classes of workers,’ before they arrived.²⁴In fact, Pantcheff reports that twenty-seven nationalities were eventually represented amongst the workforce, and of the French contingent, it is thought that between 700 and 1000 were Jewish prisoners, many of whom were sent to Alderney.²⁵However, not all the workers were forced, since ‘all

over...Occupied Europe the OT set up recruiting offices for voluntary labour,' offering 'high rates of pay and heavy workers' rations...Most of the volunteers tended to be tradesmen [rather than labourers,] such as carpenters...draftsmen, [and] clerks etc.'²⁶ Large numbers signed on, but for many there was reportedly very little free will involved, since for young Frenchmen - faced with the alternative of compulsory work service in German factories - work for the OT seemed the better option. For others too, there was even less choice, as Ambrose Robin recorded in Guernsey on 17 October 1942: 'All labour sent here is virtually on a compulsory basis - a refusal... leading to the calling in of the ration card etc.' It seems other inducements were also offered, and on 19 October 1941, Frank Barton had also noted that one young Luxembourger 'brought here...had no idea where he was going, and was told he could get home for weekends!!'

Of course, some volunteers were genuine, but when the number of workers proved insufficient for the many OT projects around Europe, more compulsion was used. The first of these recruits began to arrive at the end of 1941, being described by Leslie Sinel in his diary on 31 December, as 'very poor specimens, badly clad and shod and terribly hungry with some...seen on Christmas Day eating raw limpets and acorns [and]... always ready to beg for a bit of bread.' Amongst the forced labourers on the Islands were many French North Africans, with others from France, Belgium, Holland and Poland, as well as several thousand Spaniards, who had been taken prisoner after the victory of General Franco in the Spanish Civil War. Interestingly, it has been reported that 'all the forced workers were paid,' but following a conversation with a French conscripted worker, Reverend Ord recorded that this man- attracted by the promise of 'plenty of food, [and] plenty of money...[in the beautiful Channel Islands]' had 'been starving ever since, nor had they had any pay.'²⁷ On 13 August 1942, Leslie Sinel reported the arrival of 'hundreds of Russians' in the western part of the Island. He continued to describe how many were 'mere boys...very badly treated...being hit with truncheons.' More soon followed, and altogether about 1500 were sent to Jersey, and around 2000 to Alderney.

Judging by the much lower Russian death rate recorded in Guernsey, it would seem that only relatively few were sent there, though Reverend Ord and Frank Barton both noted the presence of French, Polish, Czech, Spanish, Moors, Algerians, Belgian, and Dutch, as well as a few Chinese and Italians. As to the kind of persons represented amongst their ranks, diarists also note a wide diversity. As Peggy Brock wrote on 30 November 1941: 'some...are a most pathetic sight. Some are literally children...only 12-14 years old and they cry bitterly if anyone is kind to them.' In March 1942, Adele Lainé adds her observations to the record: that the latest groups: 'are nothing more than the scum of the Continent.' Yet at the same time, it was realised that others were different: 'obviously intellectuals, men of superior calibre who had offended the brutal Nazi regime.'²⁸Local accounts vary, and it is plain that many Islanders were very worried that the filthy living conditions, and desperate state of many of the more unfortunate prisoners, was quite likely not only to spread diseases - of which typhoid was probably most feared - but also to increase crime levels, as indeed happened, when plundering and pilfering of food stores, livestock and crops began to escalate alarmingly. Sympathy for the obvious plight of these people was therefore tempered by fear, and some Islanders sought to distance themselves from the tragedy which was being played out around them, by simply dismissing the victims as: 'savages from the mountains.'²⁹There is evidence that this, and similar views lingered on in some circles for many years after Liberation, since 'some still say today that...[they]...were all criminals and homosexuals the Nazis had plucked from Soviet jails.'³⁰

Yet at the same time, in spite of their associated fears and reservations, many diary entries expressed sympathy for the workers, and recognised that 'decently fed men do not have to beg for more.' On 13 August 1942, Edward Le Quesne goes further, describing how the brutal treatment of 'helpless and defenceless prisoners...has caused a tremendous sensation amongst local people, and expressions of indignation can be heard on all sides.'³¹As well as reports of the residents' petition complaining about the

treatment of prisoners at St. Brelade, many diarists also note that they have helped individual workers in some small way. Indeed, there are so many such mentions that it would be impossible to do them justice here, but just two incidents will give an idea of what was happening regularly in and around local homes: 'Three or four French labourers called in...today...Mother gave them a few turnips - it was astonishing and pitiable to see how their faces lit up...[M]any of them appear to be almost starving - Peter gave his German bread to one yesterday and he told Peter he had had no food for two days.'³²The next more general account is taken from the unpublished memoirs of Vasily Marempolski, who was a prisoner in Jersey. It describes the scene as a column of Russian workers passed along a local road: 'Germans with guns and Alsatian [dogs] surrounded the...exhausted people.' Ivy Forster was there. 'She automatically touched the nearest woman...her old friend Augusta Metcaff [sic.] She nodded with a sign to her neighbour and the majority of women rushed from the pavement to the prisoners. Their bags...of vegetables and fruits were emptied quickly: everything...forced into the stretched out hands.'³³In Guernsey, Reverend Ord describes a similar - if more surreptitious giving of small gifts, as he exclaims on 31 January 1942: 'What a pitiable spectacle these ill-fed, ill-clad conscripts!..Local people have tried to help...as best they can, giving such food and clothing as they might...and braving the threats of Knackfuss for so doing.'

Since there are so many similar jottings in private daily diaries, it seems reasonable to assume a good level of reliability for these accounts. However, whilst contemporary evidence about the treatment of forced workers in Jersey and Guernsey is to be found in abundance, stories about the three most notorious camps in Alderney are much more scarce. From this former peacetime holiday isle - which was to become a grim fortress studded with guns under German occupation - would gradually emerge stories of Nazi cruelty, which would clearly echo the horror records of similar camps in Continental Europe. The camps were Helgoland, Nordeney and Sylt, the last of which had been

handed over to SS Baubrigade 1 in March 1943, and run by staff taken from the SS Totenkopf unit at Neuengamme concentration camp. From these places, of course, a scarcity of information was to be expected, since the only news of prevalent conditions depended upon a few returning Islanders, who had been sent there to work. The news was not good. On 6 December 1943, Frank Barton wrote: 'Ken reports that the Russian prisoners on Alderney are in a terrible state. Not only hungry but actually starving,' and on 16 April 1944, Reverend Ord recorded:

Men who have recently been brought back after working in Alderney...have terrible stories to relate of the fiendish cruelty of the German guards towards political and Russian prisoners. We were prepared for this by what Reinhold told us, as related by a friend who had seen for himself...One case of special brutality was that of a Russian prisoner...who had an accident to his leg...[T]he poor fellow began to lose blood at a great rate, and...stopped to pick up a piece of old sacking to bind his leg. The officer deliberately shot him. Appalling incidents of cruelty to Jews were [also] witnessed by...Guernsey workmen. The Jews received negligible rations. They were forced to work from 5am to 10pm or until they dropped. One of them fainted in a field. The Germans drove a plough-tractor over him.

As if to emphasise the horror felt by such informants at what they had witnessed, several diarists also report that these people 'were determined not to go back...unless carried.'³⁴ More evidence of conditions in Alderney was also clearly presented to the Islanders, when workers were being transported from the Island, en route for France. On 25 June 1944, one thousand political prisoners were seen coming from the harbour at St. Peter Port. Reverend Ord vividly describes the scene:

We heard a curious shuffling sound...[and then] saw a dreadful sight...Coming down from the harbour was a column of men in rows of five. All were in striped pyjama suits of sorts and their footgear varied from wooden sabots...to pieces of cloth bound around the feet...They were shaven-headed and in varying degrees of weariness and lameness...It tore the heart to see the

effects of this...deliberate degradation of human beings. At the head of the column marched five evil-visaged SS men armed with automatic guns. At the rear...and along the flanks...were more of these brutes...I have never seen such brutality written on human countenances ...[T]hose on the flanks just slouched by, accompanied by Alsatian hounds, which, fierce though they were, did not look quite so wicked as their human associates...All the emotions of pity, sympathy, sorrow, anger and horror surged through us as we watched...All day long the stench...and the horror of it remains with us.

The Reverend concludes with no doubt in his mind about what the contemporary face of National Socialism meant for these prisoners:

That a nation so given to loud boasting of its 'cultural mission' to the world...should have permitted so evil and demonic a force to...degrade its own nationals in such a way must remain an inscrutable mystery. These [were the] victims of fiendish cruelty and fanatical political ideology.

The next day, it is even more evident that the reality of future prospects for such prisoners had also sunk into the consciousness of at least some Islanders, as the Reverend describes the progress of yet another column, about fourteen hundred strong: 'It is to be hoped that all these unwelcome guests are taken away without delay or the food situation will be strained to breaking point. [But] we shouldn't mind the poor political prisoners being trapped here, if it saved them from being shot.'

But, even before this very damning evidence of the cruel regime prevailing in most Alderney camps, the general condition and similar ill-treatment of workers in Jersey and Guernsey was also being noticed by many Islanders. Very soon after the arrival of their own forced foreign workers, diarists began to comment with scepticism about the apparent discrepancy between official German versions of the Reich's treatment of these people, and what they could clearly see with their own eyes. As Reverend Ord noted on

16 November 1942: 'Knackfuss now gives us...warning...'As...[foreign labourers] ...are receiving sufficient food there is no reason for the civil population to give further food out of fear or...compassion.'" The Order then threatens punishment for anyone who ignores this instruction. The Reverend continues: 'Now this Notice is a downright lie and Knackfuss knows this as well as we do.' From similar entries in other diaries it is obvious that many Islanders who lived in the vicinity of the workers were also not fooled. As Frank Barton had remarked on 29 January 1942: 'There must be hundreds of French labourers in Guernsey now and a poor hungry-looking lot they are...[W]e are told they are well-paid...but they can buy neither clothes or extra food, and their rations are very meagre.' On 8 September 1943, he comments further: 'See long article in yesterday's *Star*...which is devoted to telling its readers how well foreign imported workers are treated.' He concludes: 'Well Guernsey has been no paradise for these poor beggars... many are in rags and their bodies are in a deplorable condition of filth and vermin.'

Thus, even during the war, it is clear that some of the Islanders had glimpsed at least part of what it meant to be a forced worker for the Germans, and particularly what it meant to be classed as an inferior human-being in the Nazi system. In Jersey, there were about fourteen camps scattered about the Island, the best known being Immelmann, Udet and Brinkforth, which was off the Five Mile Road near St. Ouen. In Guernsey, there were fewer camps - Michael Ginns identifies nine - but he also explains that large groups of forced workers were 'accommodated in requisitioned houses in...part of St Peter Port.'³⁵ There were therefore likely to be large numbers of potential witnesses near these facilities to observe German excesses, especially since: 'on the work gangs, which were in plain view of passing civilians, OT guards beat [workers] and left them for dead.'³⁶ Those who lived close to OT punishment centres were even better informed, and some individual complaints - in addition to those by Marie Ozanne - are also reported to have been made. The main centres known at the time were at Paradis, the Kingsland Air Rifle Club, and another house by L'Ancrese Lodge in Guernsey, as well as Silvertide and

Elizabeth Castle in Jersey. As far as just one of these, at Paradis, and its surroundings in Vale were concerned, the *CIMR* edition of November 1943, commented: 'What has horrified the Islanders has been the treatment of the foreign slaves. They were landed in a starving condition... whipped at...work and sometimes dropped dead. The dead were simply thrown into a lorry and tipped over the rubbish dump at the Vale Castle.' In corroboration of this practice, Miriam Mahy later wrote: 'There was talk that the Germans buried some of their victims from Paradis on a tip...near to my father's vinery. One day...he went to investigate and...found a...completely naked emaciated body...He knew then that the rumours were true.' A grisly sequel follows: 'just before Liberation... Bill was standing with my father not far below the tip...when a lorry passed close to them... [I]n it...were soldiers wearing masks...The Germans knew that...the bodies on the tip must not be found...They had to be dug out and reburied.'³⁷

Post-Liberation:

In spite of such evidence, which suggests that knowledge of atrocities was quite widely circulated amongst the civilian population, it remains unlikely that any accurate estimate of the number of deaths could have been made. In Alderney however, witnesses did have a clearer picture. But, what is also clear - by the deliberate destruction of most OT records - is that the Germans fully intended to draw a veil over the detail of their operations. Nevertheless, in the immediate post-war period much more information did become available to the Islanders, as announcements and details of investigations into relevant war-crimes appeared in the Press. As workers who had escaped in Jersey and Guernsey emerged from hiding, it also became obvious that their testimony was of interest, not only to the British investigators and their Russian colleagues, but also to newspapers and other interested parties, who were eager to hear their accounts. Many news articles printed thanks to whole lists of people who had assisted the fugitives in divers ways, and J.H. L'Amy commented in his memoirs about the workers' camps in Jersey: 'They were all bad, but... "Immelmann" easily held the record for murder and

sadistic brutality. This is amply born out by the statements of two Russian prisoners... whom I interrogated myself.' He continues, with reference to past scepticism - and future reluctance amongst some people - to believe in the extent of wartime atrocities: 'I propose...first to give the stories of these two men as they were related to me and then to add corroborative evidence from persons to whom they were unknown...[T]his is necessary...because there are people - decent people...who either cannot, or will not, believe that such things happened.'³⁸ He then proceeds to give the accounts of Peter Bokatenko and George Kosloff. Both described how

murder, both at work and in the camps...was of weekly occurrence, [as] men, [weakened by] hunger and exhaustion ...rested for a moment...[and] were either shot or clubbed to death... Bokatenko saw youths...struck repeatedly with spades, until they collapsed and died.' Both... confirmed...that many murdered Russians were buried on the site of their work. Many others were buried in the Stranger's Cemetery at Mont-a-L'Abbe.³⁹

The witnesses also stated that the method of killing was occasionally varied by shooting.

In addition, 'during the whole of his stay at Immelmann - [about thirteen months] - Kosloff declares...he was never given a change of clothing. All the prisoners were infested with lice and fleas [and]...were existing far below semi-starvation level.'⁴⁰ Eventually both of these men had escaped and remained in hiding until Liberation. Major L' Amy then continues his report by giving the reader a powerful insight into the still outraged feelings of the patriotic population on this subject, as he wrote: 'The Islands may well be proud of the brave men and women who sheltered and helped these... prisoners... They fully realised the risks they ran...when the Gestapo inquisition was at its height and the foul informers, like a cancer in our midst, were drawing 30 marks for each Russian they reported on.'⁴¹

As promised, at the end of his chapter, the Major quotes local witnesses who also saw atrocities of the kind described by the Russians. Of particular interest is the story of 'Mr. Heading...proprietor of the Finisterre Hotel at Ouaisne...[who] when the Germans were building the concrete anti-tank wall across St. Brelade's Bay... personally saw six prisoners murdered and their bodies flung into the foundation trench of the wall and then covered in concrete.'⁴²This account would tend to prove that at least some of the stories of bodies immured in concrete are likely to be true, although others of popular legend, are most likely not. Indeed, as demonstrated by *CIOS Archive Book 8*, some stories of bodies being thrown into certain other concrete foundations may well be founded only in popular imagination, since: 'The dense mesh of reinforcing rods... common to all bunkers...spaced at 15cm intervals...would make such a concealment [in these structures] impossible.'⁴³

Also in the wake of Liberation, much more information about what had happened in Alderney began to leak out. Thanks to J.H. L'Amy, posterity may also become privy to some of the details. He reported that there was a Jewish camp in Alderney, and that many murders were committed, 'mainly against Russian prisoners.' He had interviewed one of these released prisoners, and wrote: 'This Russian was in bad health from malnutrition and ill-treatment ...The prisoners were made to work whether sick or well and sometimes cold water was thrown over them in mid-winter...[Also] Russians were constantly shot without trial...In the cemetery at Alderney [he added,] there were about 1100 graves of men who had been murdered in this way.'⁴⁴More reports of around this number of graves in the Alderney cemetery also appear in other accounts, and in various Press articles relating to ongoing investigations. The Islanders, and the outside world, were on the brink of being able to see the wider picture of Germany's treatment of its forced labourers. But then, in October 1945, about a month after the completion of the Pantcheff Report, it was decided to send away the main evidence, and for the British to make no related prosecutions or take further action.

Modern perceptions

What now remains is to evaluate some of the more popular myths which have grown out of past atrocity stories, especially in Alderney, and to reach some sort of conclusion about how many of these tales may be proven to have a substantial base in the unprecedented quantities of recorded witness-testimony now available, and how many should be consigned to the historical dustbin as unsubstantiated horror stories. Of course, there is always going to be exaggeration of any such tales as they are retold over time, and some may be only isolated occurrences which were not representative of prevailing conditions, but before considering these options one must first consider present day perceptions. In spite of the desire, reported amongst some in the 1990s to try and understand wartime sufferings, and to imagine how it felt to experience cruelty and privation, there has also arisen an increasing tendency to consider even well-documented atrocity stories in the light, not just of what is 'unthinkable,' but also what Pieter Lagrou refers to as 'today's standards of tolerance and inclusion,' rather than by 'the opinions of racists and xenophobes, fascist and authoritarian [when they] were not [yet] an anathema to mainstream politics.'⁴⁵ Or, as Carl Becker explains, there is a tendency in every generation to 'understand the past and anticipate the future in the light of its own restricted experience.'⁴⁶ This I have found amongst some Island contacts, as it has been explained to me by several people that the forced workers couldn't have been as badly treated as some stories indicate, because it was in the Germans' best interests to get as much work out of them as possible. On this basis, it would simply not make sense to starve and beat a large part of one's workforce to death. However, notwithstanding the inescapable power of this obvious logic, its application with hindsight to the treatment of many Third Reich workers is sadly, and quite patently, wrong. As Pantcheff explained: 'Once people are labelled sub-human ... written off as of no value... the illogic begins to disappear. They could, after all be replaced.'⁴⁷

However, in the past it must be said that there was little evidence to support whatever

truth existed within the worst accounts of forced worker life, and Bob Le Sueur remembered that during many interviews with Spanish ex-workers, atrocities mentioned had never been witnessed first hand, but always passed on through others. Although he adds that 'this is not to say there was no truth whatever in these stories, it is simply that we were unable to establish any,' the same conclusion of unreliability has been drawn by many.⁴⁸ Under past circumstances, this comment would seem both fair and reasonable, but in the light of fresh evidence from the Moscow Archives - much of which has not been previously explored or cited - I believe that more of the mist surrounding the fate of the forced workers in the Islands may now be lifted, and many earlier conclusions reconsidered.

Recorded Deaths:

In addition to the belief of some - encapsulated within the remark of one American GI who felt unable to describe back home the scenes he had witnessed in Buchenwald, Mauthausen, and Ohrdruf, simply because 'things like that don't happen,' there has been another reason in the Islands for dismissing the theory postulated by some, that many thousands of forced workers may have been murdered there.⁴⁹ This has depended upon a firm belief already illustrated by Charles Cruikshank, that since the Germans are usually recognised as being meticulous record keepers, then around 389 foreign worker burials in Alderney, plus 116 in Jersey, and 109 in Guernsey - as recorded at the Foulon Cemetery - must necessarily represent a fairly accurate death toll.⁵⁰ Even Captain Pantcheff, in spite of his later reservations that 'the German records in Alderney were so confusing that one cannot but doubt whether those traditionally so renowned for...efficient administration were...really aiming at clarity,' later suggests a margin for error of only about twenty.⁵¹

However, documents relevant to these deaths in the Moscow Archives, soon make clear that in Alderney at least the Germans left no reliable records in the Islands, and only thirty out of the finally accepted total actually remained to be given to Sonderfuehrer

Wilhelm Richter, when he was there to 'clean up' the graveyard. In a Protocol, dated 12 July 1945, Major V.N. Gruzdev describes how

Two burial sites were discovered by myself and the British authorities: the first...in the town cemetery with 53 graves, and the second...so called Russian cemetery... contained 310...48 had crosses, and a further 6 graves...were Jewish. Crosses were [only] erected after the arrival of an Orthodox émigré priest from France one year after the burials...It is very difficult to seek out other such burial sites because the last camp prisoners had been evacuated two years earlier [and] because the majority of the Island has been mined... [However,] According to the testimonies of liberated citizens and also those of German prisoners of war, the bodies of those who died at work were either thrown into the sea or...buried where they fell. Absolutely no one knows where the dead prisoners from the SS camp Sylt are buried.⁵²

In testimony given to Major Gruzdev on 10 June 1945, Sonderfuehrer Wilhelm Richter explained the history of the Russian graveyard as follows: 'When the OT left [Alderney] they handed it all to Hofman.[sic] The graves were without crosses. The commander of Guernsey gave an order to put crosses there.'⁵³He added:

when... Major Kratzer sent me here, he made me clean up the graveyard. He told me that the numbers and names on the crosses [some on graves and others on a large pile in the corner of the graveyard] did not correspond. Therefore I tried to get hold of any kind of documents, but it was all in vain. This led me to a conversation with Frontfuehrer Hofman and the head of Borkum camp. They told me that, apart from the list of 30 dead Russians [who were last buried] there were no other documents. This list was sent to me.⁵⁴

And for any wishing to place faith in the number of bodies found within the graveyards, there are other sobering details given. In his report on burials in Alderney, dated 7 June 1945, Captain Kent describes the so-called Russian graveyard to the north of Longis Bay as he found it:

Though the graves are laid out in a definite order, they have crosses upon them [which show]...dates of deaths which do not follow in...chronological order...[O]n the western side, right next to the entrance, there is a...plot of freshly dug earth measuring 5 yards by 17 yards, [and] in the southern part, parallel to the wire...there is a row of graves. There are no crosses on these graves and the soil is relatively flat. Richter told me...that in March 1944... between the graves were three pits, where the earth would often fall in. He ordered the earth from these pits be dug out, but...no bodies were found.

The description concludes with a chilling observation:

In the centre of the graveyard there is a large hill, which had obviously been used for standing targets or...target practice.⁵⁵

Such testimony speaks for itself, and also within the ‘freshly dug earth’ and ‘three pits’ referred to above, may well have lain the reason for the obvious discrepancy between the number of bodies discovered by investigators in 1945, and the many survivor-witnesses, who either consistently name dead friends for whom there is no known resting place, or who estimate the number of burials at the Longis Cemetery at approximately 1,000 persons. To give two examples: ‘Testimony of Gaiderno/ Spaniard/...”Russians were shot...because they were Russians. There are approximately 1,100...buried.”⁵⁶Thomas Henry Pike largely agrees: ‘It is true that approximately 1,000 Russians are buried here. They died from lack of food and poor treatment.’ Other Island witnesses also lend support to these figures, for example Brian O’ Horly, who testified that: ‘in December 1942, and at the beginning of 1943, 700 hundred Russians died from hunger...[adding,] They also badly treated the... Jews.’⁵⁷Other burial sites are also mentioned, though again heavy mining of the Island had prevented investigation. In the testimony of Senior Sergeant-Majors Priekshat and Zeitlow, who arrived in Alderney on 20 November 1942, they state:

We witnessed how the Russians [and also a few French and Dutch] were 'buried' in a specially designated graveyard. This was one of the most narrow plots on the Island - on Simon's Place Hill. At the very beginning the bodies were simply stacked on [a] lorry - completely naked. When the lorry approached the grave...[they] were taken off...and thrown into the mass grave. Later [they] were put into [reusable] coffins.⁵⁸

Also within the Moscow documents, the number of deaths in SS camp Sylt between March and November 1943 was consistently given as 140, and although no one knows where these people are buried, the figure is likely to be reliable since it came from several named German POWs. Estimated numbers of deaths within other camps are also given by various witnesses, except for Borkum, where the mostly specialist workers lived a 'pretty normal' existence. All lend support to the likelihood of a very much higher death toll than the minimum given by Captain Pantcheff. Rather than attempt to list them here, a pretty good idea of what was concluded at the time about the fate of the Russian workforce is given in Major Gruzdev's Protocol of 12 July 1945, sent to the USSR Ambassador in England. Written 'in the presence of G.B. Captain Wallis, and...[four] liberated Soviet citizens,' he baldly states: '2,000 Russians arrived on the Island [Alderney.] 222 people are left alive. Where all the rest are buried is not known' No estimate of deaths amongst the other prisoners is offered.

In respect of the possible fate of those forced workers who were transported from the Islands during spring and summer 1944, the Moscow documents have yet more chilling possibilities to present. In the testimony of Captain Kronke of the ship 'Gerfrid,' given on 15 June 1945, the cargo log of this ship for just one of the many voyages made from Alderney to St. Malo, via Guernsey and Jersey reads:

24 June 1944...280 prisoners taken on board...(depart Alderney)

25 June.....(arrived) Guernsey.....Unloaded prisoners

27 June.....Guernsey.....taken prisoners on board
28 June.....Jersey.....Unloaded prisoners
29 [and] 30 June...loaded prisoners...left Jersey

As one might expect, this entry, also quoted by Pantcheff in his book, concludes: ‘1 July, 1944, 09.50...St. Malo: prisoners unloaded,’ but the original testimony signed by Captain Kronke refers only to the arrival of a different cargo, as it reads quite starkly: ‘1 July, 1944, 09.50...St. Malo: unloaded Germans.’⁵⁹

Concerning numbers of forced worker deaths in Guernsey and Jersey, there may also be some doubts. In Guernsey, where Reverend Ord writes on 12 and 28 November 1942: of ‘a lengthening row of graves down at Foulon, each holding five bodies,’ the post-war exhumations in 1961 indicate that only two of the graves contained five dead, and in both Islands there have been numerous reports of workers being buried on the site of their work, or even by the roadside, as well as in a number of other unmarked places. Of such burials in Jersey, Major Gruzdev recorded that one interviewee - Mr John Le Bailey- told him

how in 1942 the Germans buried dead Russians behind the ‘Brinkforth camp... [D]uring my own personal inspection’ [he continued]...’I did not discover any such burial sites. Because the burials had taken place in 1942 the whole square was covered in thick grass, and on the spot where our Soviet citizens had seen the Germans burying the dead...a bunker had been built.’⁶⁰

Bodies in Concrete and other Atrocities:

Some accounts of bodies being buried in concrete have already been mentioned, but probably most were isolated occurrences, though it does not make them any less real to those who witnessed them. There also seems little doubt that some workers were indeed immured during construction of tunnel walls, since there are contemporary witnesses

who report such deaths. In Jersey, amongst the Gruzdev papers there is also more eye-witness testimony describing how ‘people were sent to prison and hanged,’ and how others were ‘crucified alive.’⁶¹Evidence of similar atrocities in the PRO and Moscow documents, and of other wanton and cruel executions on Alderney, are too numerous to mention.

Dogs:

Although the widespread use of dogs has also been treated with scepticism, there is now ample proof that large - often Alsatian - dogs were deliberately and frequently deployed to control and attack prisoners in all the Islands, especially Alderney. In Jersey and Guernsey, there is of course contemporary evidence that columns of workers were guarded by dogs as they were marched through the streets, and in Jersey, there are eye-witness testimonies from two Russian ex-captives, that prisoners ‘were subjected...to the viciousness of...German dogs.’⁶²German evidence is more specific. Apart from a selection of testimonies amongst the Moscow documents, which claim that serious wounds were inflicted on various workers by dogs who were deliberately encouraged to attack them, a German Doctor- Helmut Jordon- testified on 3 June 1945:

When the prisoners of Sylt camp stopped on Guernsey for 8 days...I was asked to [visit]...When I went to the assistant camp fuhrer I saw that he had 5 dogs. They were huge animals, tied up in a special kennel. One SS soldier came...and released one of the dogs. With a wild bark it jumped out of the window...[and] the prisoners ran...to their barracks. The assistant camp fuhrer confirmed that all these dogs were trained to hunt people.⁶³

The testimony of Albert Henry Pike agrees with this statement and adds more sinister detail: ‘In...Sylt camp the German Shepherd dogs were kept half-starved for attacking prisoners.’⁶⁴

Medical Care:

Although it seems some medical attention was given to workers in the other Islands, the situation in Alderney is summarised very simply by Pantcheff in his book: 'There is no evidence that any constitutionally sick foreign forced labourer working for the OT ever received proper medical attention on Alderney or was sent from Alderney to receive it elsewhere.'⁶⁵The reason for this is probably because, as Russians reported they were told in all the Islands: 'Russians are pigs and they must be destroyed.'⁶⁶The testimony of Ivan Amelin gives further insight - which incidentally largely agrees with the account of John Dalmau - into the attitude of the German guards towards sick prisoners, as he describes the scene outside the only medical facility in Alderney: 'If the queue for the doctor was too long then he [the guard] would start to beat those standing in the queue. He would beat us about the head or the back with a stick...or with a spade, or a rubber cosh, until the person...would fall down, and even then would kick him.'⁶⁷There is also testimony that 'Senior Scharfuhrer Krellmann...a medical worker...gave injections to the prisoners from which they died in five minutes.' Probably the most desperate situation for the workers was in Sylt, where 'SS Captain...Hegelow...Commander of the SS guard...gave 14 days holiday...for every five prisoners killed.'⁶⁸

Starvation:

In answer to the question of whether some of the prisoners were consistently starved, the answer must be 'yes' for all the Islands. In the Moscow documents there is ample evidence that German soldiers were officially forbidden to give food to Russian prisoners in Alderney, and, as noted by various Islanders, similar warnings were given in Jersey and Guernsey in November 1942 and April 1943. Penalties for disobedience were severe, being six weeks in prison or a large fine. Yet in some camps conditions were desperate. As five Russian prisoners in Guernsey afterwards testified, when one of their comrades - Demchenko - fell down from exhaustion at work, he was not given food for four days. Other witnesses state that at another time, when these men were required to work from

7am to 8pm, rations were halved by the battery commander to 75 grams of bread and one litre of green leaf cabbage soup.⁶⁹ In Jersey conditions were just as bad, and many prisoners describe their pitiful rations. In Alderney, prisoners were probably even worse treated, as illustrated by details of their daily fare, supplied in statements held by the PRO, as well as in the Moscow files. Later, POW Franz Doktor explained what happened in Alderney: 'The prisoners had their rations...given to the SS shop...[They] sold this food and by doing so were earning about 100 marks per month [for each SS soldier.]'⁷⁰ The practice continued until 1942 or early 1943, after which a few improvements were made.

Death Tunnels:

Since there is no doubt, as prisoners were often told, that 'Russians...had to be destroyed as a nation,' and that a Himmler Order issued by SS Headquarters clearly stated 'that all prisoners should be killed in the event of the allies landing on the Island,' one should not be surprised if plans were made to carry out this instruction. As another German witness, Josef Kranzer elaborated: 'We were not to take the prisoners with us, but to shoot them.'⁷¹ Apart from the account of Dr Bloch's experiences of a death tunnel beside Nordeney, there is other corroborative evidence in a later interview with Mr Pringent: that 'each camp had its tunnel of death, [so] that when the invasion started, there was a tunnel...and they sealed the back end of it...and there was a machine gun at the entrance.'⁷² Although these accounts have also been disputed, whatever the finer points of the extermination plan may have been there can be little doubt that, had the order been given, mass murder would have taken place.

Bodies in the Sea:

There are so many separate contemporary accounts of bodies being thrown into the sea, particularly off Alderney, that it is very difficult to believe that all these witnesses may have been mistaken. Therefore it is reasonable to assume - even allowing for some

exaggeration in numbers - that there must be another explanation to help resolve the most serious disputes which have arisen over this issue. The testimony of Aleksandr Vailevich Valyk in the Moscow Archives, offers some insight, as he describes how:

We were placed into one camp [in Alderney]...with a strong wind from the sea... At 5am this German...kicked us out of bed and lined us up outside... we were... given half litre of coffee. Then we went to work in the stone quarry...After 3[pm] they brought the soup, the like of which no one in Russia had seen before... We had 30 minutes for lunch and they forced us back to breaking stones. At 8[pm] we returned to the camp and they gave us 250 grams of bread and some bad soup. [And] we lived like this for a whole month... the brutal treatment resulted in the deaths of our comrades. People, exhausted...began to fall ill...and it came to the situation where each night there were up to ten people taken to the sea... A lorry would arrive in the morning, which was used for collecting...from rubbish pits and toilets, [I]t would pick up the dead from the camp and take it all to the sea... When the waves started to throw the dead back onto the shore...the fascists started to create a graveyard. [The testimony ends]: They beat and starved us until such a time as there were only 500 of us left [out of 1800 people]...[and] there were very many weak ones who could hardly walk.⁷³

Because of limits of space, Comrade Valyk must necessarily be allowed to speak for many other witnesses with similar, and even more harrowing accounts. And their evidence fits in with that of others, for example, with the testimony of Georgi Kondakov, whose story appeared in the *Alderney Magazine* for winter 1989. This account describes how 'a particularly high death rate was reached towards the end of 1942,' and includes the recollections of V.I. Rosslova from Helgoland camp:

Usually they didn't bury the bodies at all but just threw them into the sea. A lorry loaded with corpses would go to the very end of the breakwater ... about 500 metres into the bay, dump its horrible load and [come] back...They stopped doing that at the end of 1942...[because the] new Frontfuhrer, Lucian Link... expressed displeasure that 'Russian corpses were littering the sea.'⁷⁴

However, despite the compelling nature of such statements as these, the question posed to cast doubt upon them has always been, since bodies entering the sea off Alderney are usually washed up somewhere, how could large numbers of dead remain concealed and unaccounted for, if they had been dispatched in this way? A solution to some part of the mystery, if they were not washed up on the shores and later buried, or if they were afterwards exhumed and disposed of, may be found within a *Sunday Times* article, dated 6 December 1992: ‘Then twenty years later, [in the 1960s] a diver found a huge pile of human bones, spread out over a mile of the sea bottom off the Alderney cliffs. The area was declared a war grave, but no attempt was ever made to count the dead or investigate the nature of their deaths.’

Today:

From all of these statements, it would appear that most of what have been increasingly either criticised or dismissed as nothing more than sensationalist myths in the Islands, are actually very well supported by contemporary survivor-witness testimony, as presented in various official post-war reports. In fact, as more information becomes available, the absence of reliable German records now seems relatively unimportant, especially given that similar registers of deaths in Continental camps have also proved vague and inaccurate. One example is Neuengamme, where Madeleine Bunting noted that ‘only 15,000 of the estimated 55,000 deaths...are actually recorded.’⁷⁵ Bearing this in mind - together with the considerable weight of additional testimony - it therefore seems reasonable to conclude that such supported myths are indeed very well-founded, and entitled to retain their place not only within popular memory, but also upon today’s face of the total Occupation experience. However, this is not to wish to ‘pander to the ghoulis,’ or to offend those who believe: ‘we should not rake over the ashes ...now that the Germans...are our...partners in [Europe]...and allies in Nato.’ It is simply as

Pantcheff stated, that 'there [is] merit in putting any extended understanding of an historical truth on permanent record, be it good or bad.'⁷⁶

And today, apart from the reminder of more 'Lieux de Memoire,' in the shape of memorials around the Islands to honour the various nationalities of forced workers who died, it is hard to imagine the sufferings of those thousands of people who constructed the huge fortifications ordered by Hitler. In fact some fortifications have been restored, but many more are now overgrown with vegetation, or serve as sea walls. Only 'A few scraps of graffiti, such as a star of David, or initials scraped into the setting concrete... [hint] at...the hundreds of men and boys who lost their lives.'⁷⁷ And in the 'time capsule of the Occupation,' as Lord Asa Briggs described the Jersey Underground Hospital Museum - now known as the Jersey War Tunnels - in his Memorial Lecture in 1996, a new, recently modernised face of Occupation life has been introduced to the interested world. The tunnels have been presented in several different ways over the years, but the latest reorganisation is the most radical, as amongst the exhibits, apparently pleasant German soldiers gaze out from television screens to address the visiting public. But not everyone likes this new approach, because it is felt to be unrepresentative of the original ethos of the tunnels, and of the treatment meted out to the workers who were forced to toil, and sometimes died, within their confines. In fact, this latest incarnation seems simply to reflect the favoured modern perspective on much wartime cruelty, one which is constantly searching for a relatively comfortable and acceptable end-product, perceived as being necessary to support reconciliation between former protagonists.

Yet, whatever may be today's representations, the true face of the actual Occupation experience for many forced workers in the Islands, although still incomplete, may now be clearly seen again as it was first glimpsed during the War. And, for any who wish to ponder further the question of whether these more 'unthinkable' features of the Occupation have been intentionally obscured, or purposely withheld from access by the

collective memory, as part of the consideration that ‘active memory of the Nazi past was...a needless complication in the struggle to win the Cold War,’⁷⁸ *The Sunday Times* article about the ‘huge pile of human bones...off the Alderney cliffs,’ concludes as follows:

‘For forty-seven years, as the honour and courage of this tiny outpost of Britain has been tainted by stories of Jerrybags and collaborators, a convenient veil has been thrown over what was perhaps the greatest modern massacre carried out on British soil.’

THE AFTERMATH

**'In announcing the end of the war in Europe at 3pm.on May 8, Mr
Churchill said:-**

**"Hostilities will end officially at one minute after midnight...
and our dear Channel Islands will also be free today."**

Channel Islands Monthly Review, May 1945.

Liberation and Beyond

14.

‘I was in the advance party...[which] came off Jersey at about 1600 hours on Wednesday 9 May, 1945...The stone piers were packed with cheering people... Eventually...[we] landed...and it took perhaps a quarter of an hour or more to get through the crowds to the waiting cars. Our backs were beaten and our hands wrung...and the women kissed us again and again.’

Letter home from Lieutenant-Colonel James Taylor.18/5/1945¹

The ordeal was over, and the Islanders experienced their first thrill of freedom with a level of poignancy and elation, that clearly reflected the stark contrast of this moment with the levels of privation and oppression, which had been their reality for so long. In Guernsey, the reception for the first landing party was much the same as reported in Jersey, and Surgeon Captain Ron McDonald and Lieutenant David Milln described the scene as follows:

people...were throwing fireworks... We went up the [jetty] steps to an enormous reception...They were the happiest lot of people I have ever seen...we were ...manhandled by the crowd, it was marvellous...[But] if anything, the Islanders were bemused...and...slightly stunned. If you actually..asked what had been going on they couldn't tell you, they couldn't describe it. They were free and you had this feeling that if you gave them a tot of whisky they would do an eightsome reel.²

The face of Island life had changed at a stroke, and the difference was so great that it was difficult to believe that the much-longed-for event had actually happened. As Dorothy Pickard Higgs explained on 10 May 1945, in a draft letter

to all our beloved ones [abroad]: This week has been so full of wonderful events, that it is impossible to write to each one of you yet. We have had no news...since March...last year, so you can imagine how our longing is tinged with dread of the news you may tell...Five years of dreadful isolation now seem like a nightmare - and almost as unreal - now we are alive and awake again...Some Islanders have suffered badly...but all that is past and so much forgotten that it is quite an effort to remember it.

The following week, Ambrose Robin comments on the enormous change in the food situation: 'This inundation of good news and...extra food has filled us to overflowing. The quantity of bread, meat and other things doled out to us today makes one nearly sick to look at it. The excitement...and abundant supply of food after the meagre rations of the past has produced a general reaction - no one can eat a good meal.'³

Island Government

'Everything I heard led me to the conclusion that the Island officials had discharged their difficult responsibilities during the occupation in exemplary fashion and had succeeded to a remarkable extent in getting the best possible treatment from the Germans commensurate with the avoidance of any semblance of collaboration.'

Herbert Morrison's War Cabinet report: 24/5/1945⁴

At Liberation, a general feeling of euphoria seemed to pervade the Islands, encouraging an almost universal bonhomie, except of course towards the collaborators. In Jersey, all former grievances against the Island Government were temporarily forgotten, and the Bailiff was cheered, not just in the Royal Square when he went down amongst the people, but also when he made appearances with the British landing party. The *Jersey Evening Post* was also ecstatic in expression of its 'fervent, sincere gratitude' for the freedom for which 'we yearned intensely,' paying tribute to the victorious Allies, and to those Islanders who had lost their lives in the battle for liberty. The article continues: 'In

this connection we should not be unmindful of the debt that we owe to our Bailiff and to those under him who have stood between the population and the Occupying Authority and have so devotedly served the interests of the community in these difficult years.’⁵

More praise for Alexander Coutanche followed soon after, when the Home Secretary visited the Islands and expressed full appreciation of his ‘sterling work, courage and integrity,’ to which he even added jokingly, that: ‘if anything he has done requires whitewashing, I will take care of it for him.’⁶This was the ultimate stamp of approval for the integrity of the Island Administration in general, and by Christmas, it was fully endorsed by the granting of honours to many of the main-players. However, it should be realised that recognition that the British had ‘left the Islands in the lurch’ seems likely to have been at least part of the reason for Mr. Morrison's conciliatory attitude. As Madeleine Bunting later wrote: ‘He had Churchill's blessing, and his task was to patch up the islands' relationship with Britain.’⁷

However alongside this early official approbation of necessary co-operation without collaboration with the enemy, the reputation of these same officials was much more fluid amongst the population they had sought to serve. This meant that although it had been generally accepted, as described by Leslie Sinel in his diary, that it was better to have a buffer between themselves and the Germans than to give the invader a free hand, there had also been much criticism of government personnel, both on an individual and corporate basis, since the chaotic days of the evacuation in June 1940. In diaries, opinion swings abound, and one Guernsiaisie who raged against the Bailiff in August 1941, with the words: ‘Alright Mr. Victor Carey...our turn will come and where will you be then?!’ had modified his view considerably in 1943, when he stated: ‘There is no doubt that the position of the high officials is difficult. They are literally between the devil and the deep blue sea...the German grip on...Island life is becoming tightened...and in things that really matter officials have to do as they are told.’ The situation remained volatile, and

from the maelstrom of see-sawing opinions such as these, it was perhaps inevitable that the Island administrators would emerge from the Occupation as a rather tarnished group of men, whose earlier difficulties were either considered irrelevant, or insufficient to absolve them from blame for many perceived mistakes in the execution of their wartime duties.

The backlash followed hard upon the celebrations of freedom. As early as 12 June 1945, the *Daily Mirror* declared under the heading 'Channel Island people attack leaders':

In two days more than 15,000...have signed a petition to the King asking for the enquiry [into the way Jersey's leading citizens acted during the Occupation,] ...urging a plebiscite to be taken so that they can vote on being incorporated into England...Behind this movement are the people who, in the days of the Occupation, were the resistance movement...now...the Island's first political party - the Jersey Democratic Movement.

Obviously aware of criticisms being raised against them, first John Leale, then Alexander Coutanche and others, felt called upon to defend their respective wartime records, either in speeches or in written accounts required by British government officials. Of especial interest to the British Establishment was the role of the Island government in the mass deportations of 1942/43, as well as in their execution of the Jewish Orders, and various other controversial matters, including Victor Carey's 'Reward of £25.' But the past was not to be the only cause of difficulty for many Island officials who had remained in post by request of Brigadier Snow, as the often turbulent nature of post-Liberation society only served to exacerbate their position, and too many frustrated Islanders found there was no help to solve their present problems. On 9 June the *Daily Mail* reported conditions as follows:

Sections of the population ...are too poor to buy in full the rations we are sending them... Unemployment is increasing, and there is no...insurance on which they can rely... Girls are being dismissed from their posts on incomplete evidence of fraternisation ...[and] the same ruling is being applied to men said to have done unnecessary work for the Germans... Collaboration...is being alleged against members of the [Jersey] States Assembly... which these people allege to be inefficient and undemocratic... Personal rancour...has to be met with to be appreciated.

In his memoirs, Wilfred Renouf explains yet another probable cause for this rancour:

‘We were cross, when soon after we were liberated...we found that our dictators [officials] had voted themselves their (FIVE years) 'backpay,' then a rise in...pensions [and]... salaries... [whilst] deliberately fail[ing] to take...civilians' 'backpay' into consideration.’ Mr. Renouf then describes how - early in the Occupation - ‘The leaders [had] set the example by lowering their salaries, and we, for our part [had been] happy to follow.’⁸

At the same time, the Islanders were also experiencing an upsurge of more practical problems, as they attempted to repair and reconstruct their lives and their health. The problems escalated as increasing numbers of former citizens - including Allied servicemen - began to return to whatever was left of their homes. Many of these premises, vacated by the Germans had been left in 'a disgracefully filthy condition,' and some evicted residents who had remained in the Islands, as well as returning evacuees, internees and servicemen, soon discovered that their homes had disappeared; whilst others found that the shell remained, but their household goods had completely vanished. For many of these people the only option was temporary accommodation, and compensation was not always available. Hardship and struggle were widespread and discontent grew around the Islands. In addition, there were personal traumas to face, as what had been anticipated as joyous family reunions after years of enforced separation,

were in fact often tempered by tensions of various kinds. Not only were the families of eight hundred and seventy servicemen grieving their loss, but when the evacuated children who had left such a gap in the community on their departure returned, they often found a considerable gulf between themselves and their parents, and some soon returned to their new lives on the Mainland. Others remained, but 'returned as strangers, speaking in the accents of London, Liverpool and Glasgow. Five years away...had broken family ties which would take time, if ever, to restore.'⁹Deportees also returned in due course, but amongst these groups too were many levels of regret, or even traumatic memories, which lay beneath the surface joy of their release. In addition, many of 'the evacuees did not... come back to a happy welcome' from their fellow-islanders.¹⁰There was always an undercurrent of feeling between those who stayed during the Occupation and those who had gone. 'The latter would be told: "You ran away." They would retort: "While you were getting on all right here...we were helping to win the war for you."¹¹It would take years for these multiple wounds to heal, and meanwhile 'the situation was not helped by the presence of those island farmers and shopkeepers who had not appeared too prosperous in 1940, but now seemed to have money to burn.'¹²

Also, for the relatives of those who had died whilst serving prison sentences on the Continent, or for those friends and family of the Jewish girls who had perished, there were months of uncertainty as they 'suffered agonies of alternating hope and despair before they knew the awful truth.'¹³Some waited years for a surviving fellow-prisoner to return and tell them of a loved one's last moments. Of those who survived, after months in hospital, Harold Le Druillenec returned, and gradually picked up his life again. He had weighed only five stones when rescued from Belsen, and suffered nightmares for the rest of his life, but he returned to teaching and later became a headmaster. Another prisoner, who was also released like a walking skeleton, was Frank Falla of the G.U.N.S. organisation. Held in Naumberg, he emerged with a

spot on one lung and a cloud over the other...through having pneumonia and being denied medical attention. [He later wrote]: I was worried about my health for I was experiencing sweats at night and haunting hallucinations that I was back...in my prison cell...I was advised that 'a couple of years in Switzerland would do you a power of good'...[but] I'd lost sixteen months wages [and] had a widowed mother to care for...so I had no option but to go back to work...as soon as I could.¹⁴

All these levels of hardship took their toll amongst people who were struggling to regain some semblance of normality in their lives, and when the Military government under Brigadier Snow restored their former system of government, after appointing two new Lieutenant-Governors on 25 August 1945, many eyes were focused upon the future of their Island leaders. As Charles Cruikshank explained, there was in society still a distinct 'sense that the "haves" [had] survived the Occupation better than the "have nots," [and this] served to rekindle the feeling in some quarters, however ill-founded, that the Establishment had been feathering their nests while the ordinary people suffered.'¹⁵The troubled war years, and unsatisfactory state of affairs shortly after Liberation, when their representatives were still not perceived to be coping well with their expectations and aspirations, made the restored States system seem not just troubled and open to brickbats and criticism as it had been during the Occupation, but now widely unattractive and ripe for change. It is interesting to note that in Sark too, many criticisms followed upon Liberation, where Sibyl Hathaway managed to retain her position. However, in Alderney, Judge French was not so lucky, and the position of 'Judge' was soon abolished altogether, with the Island being given two seats in the Guernsey States in 1948.

Back in Jersey and Guernsey, further anger was raised towards the end of 1945, when the Occupation Honours were announced. As Alan and Mary Seaton Wood recorded: 'to refrain from blame [for wartime mistakes] was one thing, but to bestow Honours was

more open to controversy...[and for Victor Carey, the] acceptance of a Knighthood... had the unfortunate result of reviving bitterness against him, which [in their opinion,] he deserved to be spared.'¹⁶ Nevertheless, other honours were more popular:

There was particular pleasure at the British Empire Medals for Bill Bertram, of the Fauvic escape beach, and for Harry Bichard...who had volunteered to unload foodships during...RAF raids on St. Peter Port. But it seemed unfortunate that, for the most part, Honours were only given to those in high places...and included few who had risked their lives doing anything which might offend the enemy...[Neither was there] recognition for any...who had suffered and sometimes died in exile for... repeating BBC news, or helping escaped Russian prisoners.¹⁷

Many Islanders noticed these omissions with anger, and some years later, the Seaton Woods were surprised to find that there had still been no attempt to compile a 'Roll of Honour of those... who had died for their courage,' or even to 'get a complete list of Islanders who had ended their lives in gaols and concentration camps.'¹⁸

The desire for changes in Government now became urgent, and at the beginning of 1946 the States in both Islands duly

transmitted to the King in Council proposals for reform... The changes finally recommended by the [resultant] Committee were aimed at increasing the democratic element in the constitutions...[In] Jersey the twelve Jurats who had been elected for life...no longer sat in the States, but were replaced by twelve Senators elected for a term of nine years...[reduced to six years in 1966, and in]... Guernsey the Attorney General and Solicitor General, appointed by the Crown, who had the right to speak and vote in the States, lost the right to vote. The twelve Jurats...were no longer to be members of the States...[and] a new office of Conseiller [was created,] twelve being elected by electoral assembly for a term of six years.¹⁹

Other changes were also made, and gradually all the Islands were able to begin their

collective journey into a less turbulent future.

As far as the first years after the Germans had left the Islands were concerned, the general desire seemed to be to forget anything to do with the Occupation as quickly as possible. Indeed, as is pointed out in some diaries, when the nightmare was over it became increasingly difficult to remember details of what had happened. Perhaps this partial amnesia was necessary to aid recovery from the anxieties which had been part of daily existence for so long, but still many Islanders experienced lasting effects from this period, even if it was only manifest by a refusal to waste food. Even amongst the leaders, it was reported by Alan and Mary Seaton Wood, that 'Coutanche himself had a breakdown which lasted many months, [and] Duret Aubin had to resign as Attorney-General in Jersey, owing to illness brought on by nervous strain.'²⁰ But gradually the position of those members of the wartime Island administration who remained in government, became more settled in the collective mind, and Alexander Coutanche was able to celebrate his Silver Jubilee as Bailiff of Jersey in 1960, this being the same year in which Ambrose Sherwill retired as Bailiff of Guernsey, to which position he had succeeded Victor Carey in 1946.

The course of Island government was now set fair, and apart from renewed criticism in respect of their treatment of the Islands' 'resistants' by Frank Falla in 1967, their integrity seemed to remain unchallenged as a group for many years afterwards. Even Mr. Falla stated that his views on the subject had mellowed, as he spoke out in defence of Victor Carey:

who received the biggest caning from England's national Press... [because he] signed notices presented to him by the Nazis and was blamed... for having done so. They failed to appreciate that if Carey hadn't signed them under duress...his juniors...would have been asked to do so, and if they had refused then... the Germans, themselves would have signed...and there was

nothing we could have done about it.²¹

Then in 1975, Charles Cruikshank described the Island leaders' wartime policy as 'plainly commonsense,' in the unique situation in which they found themselves. But this comfortable period was soon to be challenged, just as it had been in the immediate post-Liberation period, when in 1991, Peter King foreshadowed the re-emergence of more serious criticism, when he spoke of 'collaboration in high places,' and wrote that officials had simply 'surrendered to pressure.'²²

The PRO documents and Madeleine Bunting's book were even more pointed, as they did not hesitate to speak of general collaboration amongst the Island leaders, with particular mention of their role in the implementation of the Jewish Orders, which Ms. Bunting asserted were a clear case where their actions 'tipped into outright collaboration.' But today, the fight back is well underway, as Island writers consistently defend their Government actions using the same arguments as did some contemporary diarists, as well as the British government in 1945, and a flurry of early books written by Government secretaries such as V.V. Cortvriend and Ralph Mollet. These were also supported by other publications by Ralph Durand and Leslie Sinel, not to mention the official history which followed thirty years later. It is as if the Islanders' own concept of this feature of their Occupation experience has moved on and comfortably settled, whilst at the same time it is still periodically subject to fierce external attack from the British Press, or through various recent publications including those of Julia Pascal and David Fraser. In addition, rather intriguingly, just as the critical opinion of the Islanders in the 1940s has apparently been transformed into a high understanding and approval of their wartime leaders; the converse is true of the British Establishment, who have recently promoted the opposite view - as discussed in chapter 15 - through the lens of a schools education pack issued in 2001.

Museums and Tunnels

As Frank Stroobant later wrote in the wake of Liberation: ‘To the great majority...the events of the past five years were dead and buried. The thing that mattered was getting things straight again.’²³ And in the collective mind, after the war had ended, most things German were hated, with the large fortifications around the Islands simply being considered eyesores, especially since they often provided - literally - concrete reminders of the sufferings they had so recently undergone. The priority was first to dispose of the mines and as much scrap metal as possible, and large amounts of munitions were either dumped at sea or sold off to contractors. Then gradually as rehabilitation took place, perspectives began to change and tourist possibilities presented themselves as a real alternative to destruction. As time slipped by, the collective memory was able to distance itself from many unpleasant associations of the past, and as the Channel Islands Occupation Society became increasingly active in both larger Islands, some of the fortification structures, both above and below ground, became classified as protected buildings. Today, some towers and bunkers are museums, and two of the larger tunnels - one of which has already been mentioned in connection with the forced workers - have been open to the public for many years. Gradually after Liberation, small artefacts also became more valuable, as they were transformed from souvenirs into special possessions, and in Guernsey, a very large collection of these is on show at the German Occupation Museum in Forest, which has recently been extended to include a 'prison' room. Also during recent years the story of life during the Occupation has been presented through the creation of a tapestry, which was given the seal of approval by Prince Charles during his visit to the Islands to mark the fiftieth anniversary of Liberation. The tapestry had taken seven years to complete, and comprises ‘7,520,256 stitches [which make up a] twelve panel storyboard showing the ever-changing face of Jersey from the outbreak of war... through to May 9, 1945.’²⁴

As far as the tunnels are concerned, interest seems only to have increased during the

last decade, and they continue to represent an interesting conundrum of Occupation history, as there has been much speculation about their original purpose, as well as their present contents. In the case of the latter, intriguing tales emerge within *CIOS Book 4*, which states that:

Every schoolboy who has grown up in the Channel Islands since 1945 can tell you the whereabouts of a vast store of German equipment which lies buried in a German tunnel like some sort of El Dorado, (it has yet to be found!) while founder members of the Occupation Society will be familiar with the gentleman who can remember seeing British troops and other equipment somewhere in Jersey...but he can't tell you where!²⁵

However, on a more serious note, Michael Ginns explains that ideas about the intended purpose of the tunnels, have

ranged from the ridiculous - (that they were to form the basis of an underground railway system,) to the hysterical (that they were to house gas chambers to exterminate the civil population.) In 1972 one self-professed 'expert'... [claimed] to have seen the original 'secret' plans which showed that the tunnels were to be used to launch V2 rockets against England!²⁶

Maps are included in *Verstärkung der Kanalinseln 1941*, and 'show that they were ordered by Hitler, [and] intended to provide secure underground shelter for food, fuel and ammunition, as well as reserve troops and vehicles.'²⁷ Nevertheless, a question mark remains, since surviving records show that [they] were never referred to as anything other than 'Hohlsgangsanlagen,' or 'cave-passage-installations,' which is often abbreviated to 'ho.'

It is also interesting to note here that in spite of CIOS publications claiming the contrary, a recent book by Tom Freeman-Keel suggested, and sought to prove, that the

main tunnels were not intended to be used as stores, but as discreetly built gas-chambers, not just to dispose of the Channel Islanders, but also of more than 300,000 British Jews and an estimated 50,000 other British citizens perceived to be ‘undesirables’ once Britain had been conquered. Mr Freeman-Keel has since been largely criticised for publicising such theories, but he was not the first, or the only writer to suggest such possibilities for the tunnels. Gilbert van Grieken, a former forced worker in the Islands wrote in 1992, that

a mysterious...structure was started near to Les Vauxbelets close to the site of a slave labour compound...[It] had the hallmark of being intended as a crematorium. The signs are that it was the intention of the Germans to dispose of their surplus labour in Guernsey and probably Alderney, by...employment of their already perfected system of gassing the victims with Cyclon B gas, followed by cremation of the remains.²⁸

Ten years earlier, Solomon Steckoll had also suggested that tunnels were being built to be used as gas chambers, as evidenced by testimony from two former prisoners in Alderney. In addition, Vasily Marempolski makes reference to claims by another prisoner: that the size of the tunnels they were constructing together was similar to those he had helped build for the crematorium at Birkenau. All of this evidence remains unsubstantiated but, given the Nazi death system put in place on the Continent, one is bound to pause and at least wonder about a question raised by Tom Freeman-Keel in the course of his argument: ‘Bizarre beyond belief? So was the extermination programme in the rest of occupied Europe.’²⁹

Commemoration and Memorials

‘The memory of groups contains many truths, notions and ideas, and general propositions...But if a truth is to be settled in the memory of a group it needs to be presented in the concrete form of an event...a personality, or...a locality.’³⁰

When one considers the lack of any officially compiled Roll of Honour, such as the French 'Combattants Volontaires de la Resistance,' it is hardly surprising that very few people who had bravely resisted the enemy were included in the British Government Honours lists at the end of 1945. In fact, what is surprising, is that although the attitude of the Island Authorities gradually changed towards their heroes and heroines, many of the major projects of commemoration were only commissioned years later, mostly around the time when plans were being made to celebrate the forty-fifth, and more especially the fiftieth, anniversary of Liberation.

In the immediate aftermath of the War, the Island Press had carried articles about the sufferings of some Channel Islanders in concentration camps and prisons, with some National newspapers and radio programmes also featuring survivors' stories. Some cases were even raised in the House of Commons, but still no official action was taken, and when the question of memorials was raised in local Jersey papers, letters at the end of 1946 were largely concerned with the updating of the Cenotaph inscription, which it was felt should be completed before the following 11 November.³¹ Other concerns were also raised during discussions about a fitting memorial of thanksgiving, and an appeal for funds was launched, with various suggestions for suitable projects being listed in the local Press. At the same time, it was still being noted with anger that no help was forthcoming for those who had been severely affected by the Occupation, though on 5 January 1946 a small notice did appear in the *Jersey Evening Post*, placed by the 'Secretary, Political Prisoners' Benevolent Fund.' The notice read:

It is proposed to erect a Memorial in memory of all those people who lost their lives during the years of Occupation undergoing (a) captivity in prison or concentration camps (b) deportation... To help compile a complete register, will relatives of such please communicate... (1) Full name (2) Age at death (3) place at which death occurred (4) Date of death, if possible.

One wonders if the Secretary in question may have been Frank Falla, since he later wrote on the subject:

I would have thought Statesmen in the Channel Islands would have stirred themselves and got things organised on an official basis. But not a bit of it...no one seemed the slightest bit interested...I thought that if I could do some of the initial spadework, then authority might appoint someone to...do a professional job...[Then] after studying the Distribution of German Enemy Property Act, I saw that a charitable trust had been established...and thought it possible that some of the money could be given to those who had suffered. [However] when the Order was registered in the Guernsey Royal Court...hopes...turned out to be absolutely nil.³²

In 1960, hope was rekindled, when the British Government reopened negotiations with Bonn but he adds:

Even when the 1964 Anglo-German Agreement established a fund to compensate Channel Islanders...who had suffered Nazi persecution...not one official in Guernsey or Jersey saw that here was a cause which would be helped if it was officially recognised and presented...I had no intention of taking on the job, but soon found that it had become mine...yet...our treatment in Guernsey left a great deal to be desired...I think we have paid the full price for our alleged 'foolishness,' - some of our number with their lives...Nevertheless they have made us the victims of both systems: the democratic and the Fascist.³³[He concluded] at no time have the people of the Channel Islands been allowed to extract direct reparations from the Germans for what they did to the islands and their people.³⁴

This lack of official machinery set up to help those who had suffered, and particularly those who had offended against German Orders is important, because it also reflects the continuing lack of official recognition in the Islands for such people, through either research or commemorative acts. In Alderney, where so many forced workers had died, the first memorial was approved by the States in 1951, and dedicated by French patriots

in memory of their countrymen. Then in 1966, Mr H.C. Hammond, then a member of the States, observed that the plaque was incomplete and that it required renewal. Resolving to improve and enlarge the monument at the expense of his own family, a new marble tablet was subsequently erected and formally dedicated by the President of the States, Captain Herivel, in 1967. It read: 'In memory of all foreign labour who died in Alderney between the years 1940-1945.' Three years later, on the twenty-fifth anniversary of Liberation, 'a great concourse of ninety-five former prisoners, with their relatives... attended a ceremony at the Memorial... Wreaths were laid and... prayers read in several languages, and various national plaques were dedicated.'³⁵In Jersey there were also two early memorials, one a commemorative tablet set up in the 1950s at Westmount Crematorium by the crew of the Soviet timber-ship 'Yarensk,' in memory of the Russian forced workers, the other erected by former Spanish prisoners. In addition, every year Norman Le Broq organised memorial ceremonies to honour all the forced workers who had died during their imprisonment. It is worth noting however, that although widely supported by local people and representatives of the Russian, Polish, French and Spanish communities, this event was reportedly never attended by any Jersey official until 1985.³⁶

Of course, the Islands' lost servicemen were not neglected in this way, and even starting with the first anniversary of Liberation, there have been 'impressive' ceremonies at the Allied War Cemetery in Howard Davis Park. But for others who had suffered in the Islands, and in detention centres abroad, there was to be a very long wait for recognition of their ordeal. Only at the end of the 1980s, when plans were being made to commemorate the forty-fifth anniversary of the Liberation, did memories of these people begin to gain official recognition, and to be finally selected for settlement in the Islands' future historical record, through the medium of various newly-commissioned 'Lieux de Memoire.' This general change in attitude was presaged during the dedication of a memorial stone, at the formal opening of Liberation Square in Jersey on 9 May 1990, when the Bailiff, Sir Peter Crill stated:

I hope that this Square will be a reminder not only of the joy...felt in 1945...but also of the vision...of a wider peaceful Europe, embracing many nations...I think we now complete the number of memorials commemorating the Occupation and Liberation: We have the great headland of Noirmont, the stone on the New North Road, the stone in the Howard Davis Park, the Winston Churchill Memorial Park in St Brelade, and the plaque on the Tourism Office building across the road, and now this...Square...I think I may say we now have a full complement of reminders...of those who died both in the Forces and...those civilians whom the tide of war engulfed.

The Dean of Jersey was more specific, stating that the stone was dedicated: 'in gratitude to those whose courage and leadership sustained us during those dark days; [and] in gratitude to those who by their personal defiance of the enemy led to their being transported, and for some of whom Liberation in this life came too late.'³⁷

But this was to be only the beginning. Spurred on by enthusiasm for the fiftieth anniversary celebrations, which were discussed by a special States committee inaugurated in 1992/93, several more major projects of commemoration - this time dedicated to named citizens, whose personal defiance of the enemy had led to their deaths - were set up. One of these was a stone in St. Ouen in honour of Louisa Gould, but even though it is an impressive monument, it still only refers to the fact that she died in Ravensbruck, without making any mention of her courageous actions. It should also be noted that a first memorial in honour of those who were sent to the Continent and who died in concentration, internment and prison camps - mentioned by Sir Peter Crill - had already been open for some years. However, this did not give names, and as in some other memorials around the Islands, 'offenders' and internees were not differentiated. Yet, once the unease in addressing the legacy of the political prisoners and other 'offenders' was apparently gone, it was replaced by a flood of interest and pride, and more memorials soon followed.

On 27 April 1995, a granite plaque commemorating the bravery of 2,600 political prisoners incarcerated in the old Gloucester Street Prison was unveiled by the Bailiff, who paid tribute to their memory, and the following year the memorial honouring twenty Jersey people who died after being sent to the Continent, was dedicated on the New North Quay in St. Helier. In addition, various new memorials were dedicated to the memory of the forced workers, easily the most impressive being the recently completed exhibition on the site of the former Occupation Museum at La Hougue Bie. However, going back to January 1995, two plaques were also unveiled in honour of those people who escaped, or attempted to escape, from the Islands. One is situated at Gorey Harbour, from whence - amongst others - the two Americans, George Haas and Edward Clark set out for France in an open boat, and another at Fauvic, where the vital part played in escapes by families like the Bertrams was also honoured. A further memorial was later unveiled by Prince Charles in the Assembly Room at the Town Hall. This sends out a clear message to posterity, as it states that all escapees will be remembered 'with pride and honour.'

In 1998, another plaque was added to the Westmount Memorial. Unveiled on Liberation day, it read as follows: 'To the Jews who suffered during the Occupation, 1940-45.' Brief but to the point, this addition was welcomed by the community, as was a granite memorial stone in memory of the tragic escape attempt of Peter Hassall, Dennis Audrain and Maurice Gould, which was dedicated at Green Island slip on May 21, 1999. Interestingly, this memorial does acknowledge that the boys had been attempting to take valuable intelligence to Britain to help with the war-effort.

In Guernsey too, there has been much commemorative activity in recent years, with possibly the most notable, apart from annual services held to remember various other wartime casualties, being a very well-attended ceremony held on 17 January 1999 to honour the memory of all the forced workers who died there during the Occupation.

Plans for more memorials continue to emerge through the pages of the Island Press, with the most recent being planned to honour two RAF pilots who died in action in Jersey, and two more Jersey men who died resisting the Germans. Much effort has also been expended in mending relations with Germany, and visits between ex-deportees and the population of German towns where they were interned, have been undertaken with great success. One of the prime movers in the organisation of such events is Mr. Michael Ginns, President of the CIOJ in Jersey. He gives his reasons in the *Jersey Evening Post* in May 1995:

Over the years we [in the Society] began to realise that reconciliation was important...If you go on hating for ever, you don't promote peace...[Now] there are links with the town of Bad Wurzach to where Islanders were deported. The Burgomeister of the town has been here and met the Bailiff, and opened the Deportation exhibition in 1992...Now we...have German members...[but] one of the most important objects of the society is to get to the truth of what happened during the Occupation whether people like it or not... We tell the truth, good or bad.³⁸

All this is written under the heading 'Mission to preserve the truth,' and it seems that the quest goes on. However, at least in terms of commemorating and honouring the Islands' heroes, the official memory of the Occupation period is at last coming into line with the picture of their courage which has been widely recognised in popular memory for years. Tales of Occupation exploits, already featuring prominently in local folklore, are now finally assured of their rightful place in Occupation history. Gone is the possibility that they will be forgotten since, even when survivor-witnesses are silent, recollection of their defiant spirit will live on, already secure and settled in their various locations.

‘The Channel Islands were themselves again...And let it be said...they are as pleasant islands as you can find anywhere for a retreat from the world, when the breeze blows fresh...and the sun warms the narrow lanes...And if, to the casual tourist, all the fear and dreariness of the Occupation seem forgotten for ever in the summer sunshine, the secret stories of those five years live on in the memories with which each man is rewarded or tormented...’

Alan and Mary Seaton Wood, *Islands in Danger*, p. 308.

Conclusion and Memories Today:

15.

Written about fifty years ago, the quotation opposite is still highly relevant today, and in more recent years the might of official remembrance within the Islands and the quiet, personal remembrance of individual survivors seem to have become more aligned; although whilst survivors live, it will always be true that any number of memorials will not necessarily solve problems or heal wounds. But at the same time there has been considerable interest in official commemorative projects, and many discussions have taken place about which names should be added to particular memorials, and about the finer details of memorial services. However, such discussions seem almost insignificant in comparison with the harshly critical positions adopted by various writers on the Mainland, who seem to remain oblivious to, or even contemptuous of the Islanders' voices of protest; which have been, and still are strenuously raised within the Island Press against damaging allegations of mass collaboration and anti-Semitism, which regularly appear within the British media.

However, any historian knows that history must always be an interpretive art, and not an objective, neutral science. Thus, there will probably always be substantial differences between images of the Occupation as they are presented by different groups, both within and outside the Island communities, which then in turn jostle for a permanent position in the historical record. It is also true that 'the more volatile the memory, the more difficult the task to reach a consensual vision of how the memory should be appropriately expressed, and the more intense become the struggles to shape, [and] to own the memory's public presence.'¹ Eventually, the past should be 'whatever the records and memories agree upon,' but representations which have been officially approved or widely publicised may eventually take precedence over the rest, and will thereafter seek to

impose their vision of the 'truth' from their own preferred vantage-point, or perhaps through sustained appearance in educational literature, which has already been attempted.ⁱⁱ

With this in mind, it is generally recognised that the most powerful link between history and memory lies within the educational system of any society, because it has such a major responsibility for implanting knowledge and values in the younger generation. School textbooks and teaching content are hugely influential, and although most would seek to impart a legitimate 'truth,' yet they may - inadvertently or by design - promote certain differing beliefs. Such biased information may then be especially misleading for students who have no other relevant historical knowledge against which to evaluate such 'facts.'ⁱⁱⁱThis issue has recently become especially relevant to the history of the Channel Islands, as a U.K. Government publication for schools issued in 2001 sought to impose its own retrospective interpretation of Occupation history, based upon evidence supplied by an unnamed researcher. This version swept away the officially approved post-war version of events, which exonerated the Island Administration from any blame, and gave them honours for their conduct. It also omits to mention the deliberate policy of not prosecuting Island collaborators, when the Islands' loyal population were crying out for justice to be done. In an education pack aimed at sixth-formers, and distributed as part of Holocaust Memorial Day, the publication states:

that Channel Islanders' conduct did not fit into...Churchill's picture of a brave and good nation...[Islanders] 'compromised, collaborated, resisted and fraternised to the same extent as people all over occupied Europe. [It goes further], accus[ing] the Channel Island Authorities of collaborating with the Germans to implement anti-Jewish legislation and asserts that there was little in way of protest...on the part of the general population.'^{iv}

To have one interpretation presented without question, complete with the apparent

authority of the U.K. Government, simply invites the comment made by Jersey Senator Norman in the same Press article: '[The publication] takes a narrow view of a particular issue and...is totally prejudicial...If you are trying to stimulate learning, students need to have a balanced view put to them.' The Senator was reported to be so unhappy about this 'distortion' of the Islands' history, that he was considering asking the U.K. Department of Education to withdraw the publication altogether. He was not alone. A selection of letters from other Islanders was also printed in editions of the Island Press over the following weeks. To quote but one, which gives an excellent flavour of the rest:

With reference to the U.K. teaching publication...I believe that the president of Education has every right to be unhappy... He should be [demanding its withdrawal]...I personally believe that publications of this kind are an insult to the memory of our parents and the vast majority of genuine Jersey folk, in government and otherwise, who stayed in the Islands. Many of them are no longer with us, but...I am appalled to think that their...descendants should have this kind of rubbish foisted upon them in textbooks as part of their history...Sure we knew there were a handful of collaborators, and I firmly believe that they were looked upon by the vast majority with disgust and accorded the contempt they deserved.^v

These comments are now about two years old, but they very adequately represent the general beliefs of all the survivor-witnesses I met, as well as those interviewed in the past decade by other researchers as reported within their publications, and in transcripts which are currently available in various archives. Perhaps surprisingly, even the interviews conducted for Ms Bunting in the 1990s, presently lodged in the Imperial War Museum, are also in broad agreement. In addition, I found that other accounts given by my interviewees were also very much in line with those expressed in contemporary diaries. Far from reflecting changes of emphasis - such as have occurred within officially sponsored accounts of a 'moderate' Occupation - the memories of these people seemed to have changed little if at all. Mellowed they may have been, but some original impressions

and feelings obviously still remained, and exerted a noticeable grip on the speaker, when scenes of trauma were being revisited.

But before exploring more of what some of these witnesses think about the Occupation today, one must first reach some general conclusions based on what the study set out to achieve. As intended, the myriad of previously unseen or uncited records and sources now available have been widely used to evaluate the many and various representations of the Occupation, as they have been so far presented to the interested world. Through them for the first time, the true texture of the Occupation experience may now be much more clearly felt, and if the story is not yet fully told, then at least the foundation for a better understanding of the Islanders' ordeal has been laid for the future. Now it is possible to return to the war years and actually taste the confusion and fear of the Island populations as they were cast off by the British Government, and afterwards left to fend for themselves in a totally alien world. In their own words, still stunned Islanders are given a voice to describe their shifting emotions, as they watched and noted what sometimes seemed the incomprehensible actions of their own officials, as more and more oppressive restrictions were imposed upon their already difficult lives, and food supplies fast dwindled to worryingly low levels. Anxious, and often ill with stomach troubles and other weakening ailments, it soon seemed that possible arrest lay round every corner and hung over any incautious word. In this climate of fear, it is easy to understand how hatred of informers or any who seemed to be collaborating with the Germans grew in proportion to the increasing hardships suffered by their fellows. Yet it is now clear that collaboration by the majority of Islanders was indeed unlikely to say the least, and for the first time actual evidence is presented in support of this claim. At the same time, patriotism and belief in the British and Allied cause was very much in evidence throughout the Occupation, and the study offers incontrovertible proof of this within the text. Tales of horrors perpetrated against the Islands' forced workers may also now be proven to carry even more weight than heretofore, and the numbers who died are shown to have been

vastly underestimated in many earlier accounts. Of the experience of the Islands' few Jewish people during the Occupation, the study also illustrates where blame actually lay for their cruel treatment. In this, as in many other areas where accusations seem to have been postulated with seemingly little effort being made to substantiate them, earlier judgements of wrong-doing by the Islanders in all walks of life have been re-examined, and in some cases directly challenged or refuted.

Because of limits of space, discussion must necessarily be brief, but it is only fitting that some of the survivor-witnesses should here be allowed to express their present-day views on the Occupation experience, whilst at the same time helping to reinforce, draw together, and conclude the main arguments as explored within the chapters of this study. Mostly they now accept that serious difficulties were being faced by the British Government during many stages of the War, and illustrate how feelings towards their own administration have shifted in the post-War years. Other issues are also brought back to life, as practically all the main areas of Occupation experience considered within this study were aired during conversations with the present author during the last three or four years. Starting in June 1940, Luke and Lucy Le Moignon described how: 'At the start we felt bitter about...being left behind...Britain hadn't told the Germans about us being "open Town"...[But] we look at it afterwards and realise they couldn't have done much about it...it was just bad luck.'^{vi} Bob Le Sueur agreed: 'at a time when England was in desperate straits...it would have been absurd...to use remaining resources to defend these places.'^{vii} At first, they also spoke of a 'climate of fear' in the Islands, and said that there was 'a certain amount of co-operation.' However, there was also a general consensus that: 'overall the people behaved very well.'^{viii} As Mr Le Moignon explained: 'I can assure you that the majority of the Jersey people...played passive resistance...we did our little things...sometimes we were caught...we know a man who was shot. [But] we were young...we were daring.' And as far as the attitude towards escapers was concerned, he added: 'we were making plans ourselves.'

Speaking of food, modern recollections were also very much in agreement with contemporary diaries. Mr Le Moignon felt that: 'overall I would say we were lucky...(but) the diet was getting smaller and smaller...[and] in 1944 it packed up altogether...The townspeople couldn't get food like [those in the country]...they had to cycle out.' Desmond Mc Garry, who lived in St Helier, added to this picture: 'One of my more personal memories is of my own mother wearing a brass curtain ring on her finger. When questioned, she reluctantly confessed to having bartered her wedding and engagement rings...in order that we her children could have a little more food... There were also many other parents who were making like sacrifices.' He goes on to describe that he was 'very often quite weak through hunger, [and] had hospital treatment for general malnutrition, as had my mother.' He explained: 'We also used to steal bread...just tear it into pieces- it nearly drives you insane - hunger. I even nibbled at shaving soap and...tried grass...Huffmaier said he would have us eating grass.'^{ix} Phyllis Barnard also recalled how the children in her family 'used to cry for food.' Memories like these were obviously still painful even after so many years, and - in spite of a general recognition that some Germans were fair - there seems to be no doubt that they were collectively 'hated and despised.' What was also clear, was that - according to the overwhelming majority of witnesses- the population did indeed '[stand] back quite a lot,' and collaborators were very much looked down upon. In fact, the often over-zealous nature of some criticisms raised against those who fraternised, was described by Joe Mière: 'A girl only had to be seen giving directions to a German...and that was it.' He also related an incident involving himself in December 1944, when 'a neighbour said to my mother: "[Joe] was seen walking round town with two Germans. Did you know he was fraternising?"' To this his mother replied: 'Did you notice the handcuffs, you silly woman!'^x

Mr Mière now has very firm views about apportioning blame, even towards those who did collaborate. He explained: 'I wouldn't tell you who they were...they've got

grandchildren...it would hurt the children.’ Over the years, attitudes towards Island Government officials have also become tempered with more tolerance of their uniquely difficult position, and many interviewees said that they had greatly admired Alexander Coutanche. In addition, even when speaking of perceived mistakes made by the administration, the general consensus was also forgiving. As Joe Mière said: ‘they weren't actually traitors. They were frightened old men.’

There were also many remembered incidences of small gifts being given to forced workers. Desmond Mc Garry's parents used to pass fruit from their trees to workers who passed by on the road, and Phyllis Barnard remembered that her mother gave bread to a young Russian who came begging at their door. Several of the younger witnesses also mentioned that they had had to grow up quickly, and learn the importance of keeping secrets. Many had performed small acts of sabotage against German interests. Stanley Barnard described how some boys had placed dung in a large soup container brought near his home to feed German soldiers working nearby, and others too - far from quickly pointing out what they had done in a defensive way - quietly mentioned during interview how they used to empty German petrol-tanks at night, or let down tyres, or place spanners and other objects in vehicle gearboxes. However, as Mr Mc Garry remembered, the risks attached to these actions were considerable: ‘When we went out of our house we invariable saw Germans walking up and down the road...[They] were everywhere...we had a very big garrison ...They used to take hostages [when acts of sabotage were committed]...so that you can well imagine that people really feared for their lives, because they knew...the consequences were quite dire.’ Mr Mc Garry had more memories to relate: ‘We were always into things...but we were encouraged to do this by the BBC on our illegal crystal sets. Otherwise it would be surprising how we didn't turn into thieves at the end of the war.’ He goes on to describe how his brother was put in prison when he was seventeen, ‘and I was interrogated at the age of fourteen at Silvertide.’ When he arrived at the prison, he saw his brother Patrick ‘who had contracted

yellow jaundice...He looked terribly emaciated.’ He was told that if he gave information about the theft of two Luger pistols, thought to have been stolen by his brother or some friends at the local college, his brother would be released, but he would be kept and tried. Desmond recalls how he had seen a Luger under Patrick's pillow. During the interrogation, he also recalls that he was hit so hard that some of his teeth were knocked to one side, and one was lost. The effects of such treatment should not be underestimated, and Mr Mc Garry later described how he had felt ‘a little shaky’ after hearing a replay of his interview. He concluded: ‘We must have led a very strange life for people so young,’ and then added a comment which sums up the views of so many of his contemporaries: ‘It was living in a world of uncertainty which was the worrying factor.’^{xi}

Luke Le Moignon also explained how life became even more precarious after the deportations began in 1942: ‘It was quite frightening actually...you never really forget it - we got off at the very last minute.’ In spite of the similarity and broad agreement of most survivor-witness accounts - with an almost palpable pain in some, and mellowing acceptance in others - there is also a simmering anger over representations of some parts of their Occupation experience, as presented in recent years. One area which excites real emotion, is the question of the fate of the Jewish people in the Islands. Bob Le Sueur does not mince words on the subject: ‘There were some Jewish families here...but...not one was denounced...To say now that the Guernsey Authorities sent them to death camps is a monstrous lie...it makes your blood boil!...The Bailiff of Jersey went as far as he could...no Jew wore a yellow star.’ Similar feelings about the blanket accusation of collaboration, and remarks that the Islands were like a ‘holiday camp,’ also run high. In the words of Desmond Mc Garry: ‘this is...sheer affrontery to the honour of people who suffered near starvation, were imprisoned locally, deported to camps in Germany, and in some cases died because they happened to be incarcerated in these fortress Islands.’^{xii}

But, in spite of such high levels of outrage amongst many witnesses today, about the

injustice of some slurs upon their collective integrity - both past and present - the current perception of their Occupation overall is still characterised by a mixture of pain and general humanity, tempered by the belief that they were 'lucky it was not worse.'

Nowhere is this better illustrated than upon Joe Mière's desk, as there still lingers a shadow of his past imprisonment and beating, in the shape of a photograph.

Paradoxically this image is not of a fellow-Islander, but of Nicholas Schmidt, a young German soldier who had deserted, and whose Island girlfriend, Alice Thaireux, had been spared the death penalty after a plea by Alexander Coutanche. Mr Mière recalls that 'Nicky's' cell was next door to his, and describes how: 'the night before the [death] sentence was to be carried out, all night long, the poor chap was sobbing and crying for his dear mother- Meine Mutter, Meine Mutter- [I]t was very heart-rending and distressing to hear him and that night has stayed on my mind.'^{xiii}

Epilogue

And here this study may have also been allowed to rest, within fading photographs and mostly quiet recollections and reflections of those who personally experienced the realities of the Occupation, as they unfolded so many years ago. Their memories may still be mixed, but today the consensus of opinion about the legacy of their collective 'nightmare,' is very well-summarised by the closing words of Frank Keiller's book: 'The Occupation has left a few scars...Some things are still forgotten, A few better forgotten. But there is pride too. And most certainly there is no guilt.'^{xiv}

Based on the vast amount of evidence now available, such a conclusion seems fair and reasonable, but given that the overall aim of this study was to search for the 'true' nature of the Occupation experience, and explore the case for and against the above claim, it is important to finally establish the present state of the argument and where this work stands within it. Even now, as the fight-back continues and the dust of past injustices was beginning to settle, with the sting of perceived false allegations beginning to subside, a

new attack has been mounted against the Islands' integrity in the *Guardian* newspaper. Using the rather tenuous connection of the Islands' increase in official memorials to the slave workers and the Jews, to link its history with the commemoration of Holocaust Memorial Day 2004, Madeleine Bunting recently praised Jersey for making 'a clean breast' of what she has represented as its 'wartime shame.' Special 'compliments' were offered to the Bailiff, Sir Philip Bailhache, "who [she claims] grasped that the only way the Island would lay this ghost of a scandalous wartime past was through acknowledging a 'warts and all' history of the Occupation."^{xv} Ten years after the original publication of 'The Model Occupation,' and with so much new information now available, this renewal of old, hackneyed and tired allegations now seems an anachronism, yet it no doubt heralds the next phase of what has become an ongoing battle for control of the predominant features upon the face of the Channel Islands' Occupation in the future.

One wonders what the verdict of history will eventually be. But the evidence is clear, and I am happy to have presented new facets of the argument for consideration by the reader. My conclusions are also clear - the Islanders' contemporary views and records, most primary source material, as well as the testimony of survivor-witnesses today, overwhelmingly support an honourable narrative of Occupation history, with a few blemishes. It is in fact an overall wartime record of which Churchill himself may well have been proud, if he had known the details to which we are now privy. And thus, the most fitting words to end this journey of exploration into this most fascinating but nightmarish period of British history, are those which concluded the present Bailiff of Jersey's speech about 'small communities... swamped by superior force,' as quoted before the introduction to this study. Far from 'grasping' or 'acknowledging' anything even remotely connected to a 'scandalous wartime past,' Sir Philip Bailhache completed his statement quite simply as follows: 'Taken in the round Channel Islanders who endured the German Occupation have little of which to be ashamed. This was no model Occupation.'

COMMON ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Channel Islands Monthly Review</i>	<i>CIMR</i>
Channel Islands Occupation Society	CIOS
Guernsey Archives Service	GAS
Imperial War Museum	IWM
Jersey Archives Service	JAS
Public Record Office – now National Archives	PRO
Société Jersiaise	Soc. Jersiaise
Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force	SHAEF

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THE PRELUDE

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Chapter 4: Record and Interpretation: A Question of Paradigm

- ¹ Bell, *Guernsey Occupied but Never Conquered*, p. 413.
Note: According to A & M Seaton Wood, before the Notice of £25 Reward had been posted in Guernsey, both Jersey and Guernsey had issued general notices requesting information about people who were making 'V' signs around the Islands. *Islands in Danger*, p. 141.
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- ⁸ Rev. Ord, 24 September 1940.
- ⁹ Bunting, p. 335.
- ¹⁰ Seaton Wood, p. 43.
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⁴⁹ Soc. Jersiaise. OCC/942/CF Claire Follain, p. 16.

⁵⁰ J. H. L' Amy, chapter 6, p. 1.

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- ⁵¹ Ibid. pp. 1-4.
⁵² Ibid. pp. 16-21.
⁵³ IWM. Box 189. Tape 16; Soc. Jersiaise. GO.10/33.
⁵⁴ Ibid.
⁵⁵ *Prospect*, April 1997, p. 37.
⁵⁶ Maugham, p. 136.
⁵⁷ J. H. L'Amy, chapter 5, p. 14.
⁵⁸ Soc. Jersiaise. GO.10/33.
⁵⁹ Ibid.
⁶⁰ W. Garfield, p. 3.
⁶¹ JAS. C/D/P/L/A/7: Rex Forster.
⁶² Ibid.
⁶³ Sanders, p. 58.
⁶⁴ Ibid. p. 62.
⁶⁵ Ibid. p. 86.
⁶⁶ Ibid. p. 3.
⁶⁷ Diaries of Leslie Sinel and Rev. Ord.
⁶⁸ J. H. L'Amy, p. 11.
⁶⁹ Ibid. p. 13.
⁷⁰ Sanders, p. 82.
⁷¹ Rev. Ord, 28 July 1944.
⁷² JAS. C/D/P/L/A/4: Betty Bois.
⁷³ Durand, p. 152.
⁷⁴ Seaton Wood, p. 93.
⁷⁵ Ibid.
⁷⁶ Durand, p. 152.
⁷⁷ Ibid.
⁷⁸ Ibid.
⁷⁹ Sanders, p. 94.
⁸⁰ Ibid.
⁸¹ J. H. L'Amy, chapter 8, pp. 18-23.
⁸² JAS. A/F/3.
⁸³ J. H. L'Amy, chapter 8, p. 26.
⁸⁴ Ibid. pp. 28-29.
⁸⁵ *Jersey Evening Post*, 30 June 1945.
⁸⁶ Peter Hassall.

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- ¹ Soc. Jersiaise. GO.3/15.
 - ² Bunting, p. 149: Mike Le Cornu.
 - ³ *CIOS*, 8, p. 6.
 - ⁴ Pantcheff, Preface.
 - ⁵ Bunting, p. 295. Note: Controversies about the decision to send away the Pantcheff Report are also discussed by Bunting (pp. 276-314) and Steckoll (from p. 35).
 - ⁶ *Ibid.*
 - ⁷ Seaton Wood, pp. 57-63.
 - ⁸ Dalmau, p. 11.
 - ⁹ *Ibid.* p. 16.
 - ¹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 19.
 - ¹¹ George Forty, *Channel Islands at War* (Ian Allen, 1999), p. 124.
 - ¹² *Ibid.* p. 201.
 - ¹³ *Ibid.* p. 204.
 - ¹⁴ Pantcheff, p. 73.
 - ¹⁵ Bunting, p. 298.
 - ¹⁶ J. H. L'Amy, chapter 7, pp. 15-16.
 - ¹⁷ Steckoll, p. 49.
 - ¹⁸ *Ibid.*
 - ¹⁹ Bunting, p. 293.
 - ²⁰ G. I. Kondakov, *Island of Dread in the Channel* (Alan Sutton, 1991), p. vii.
 - ²¹ Soc. Jersiaise. GO14/1-14 Unidentified National, 20 November 1996.
 - ²² *CIOS*, 8, p. 164.
 - ²³ Bunting, p. 152.
 - ²⁴ *CIOS*, 8, p. 57.
 - ²⁵ *Jersey Evening Post*, 4 June 1998.
 - ²⁶ *Ibid.*
 - ²⁷ Rev. Ord, 8 July 1942.
 - ²⁸ *Ibid.* 25 June 1944.
 - ²⁹ Bunting, p. 149.
 - ³⁰ *Ibid.* p. 151.
 - ³¹ Le Quesne, p. 151.
 - ³² F. Barton, 19 December 1941.
 - ³³ V. Marempolski, p.41. Unpublished memoirs by courtesy of Mr F. E. Cohen.
 - ³⁴ Rev. Ord, 16 April 1944.
 - ³⁵ *CIOS*, 8, p. 84.
 - ³⁶ Keiller, p. 66.
 - ³⁷ Mahy, pp. 64-65.
 - ³⁸ J. H. L'Amy, Chapter 7, pp. 15-16.
 - ³⁹ *Ibid.* p. 19.
 - ⁴⁰ *Ibid.* p. 20.
 - ⁴¹ *Ibid.* p. 23.
 - ⁴² *Ibid.* p. 24.
 - ⁴³ *CIOS*, 8, p. 116.
 - ⁴⁴ J. H. L'Amy, chapter 7, p. 14.
 - ⁴⁵ Lagrou, p. 306.
 - ⁴⁶ Joan Wallach Scott, 'History in Crisis: the Others' Side of the Story', *American Historical Review*, 94. 3, (June 1989), 680-687 (p. 687).
 - ⁴⁷ Pantcheff, p. 118.
 - ⁴⁸ Soc. Jersiaise. R.W. Le Sueur 1993: Transcript of talk about Foreign Workers, 1942-1945.
 - ⁴⁹ Linenthal, p. 167.
 - ⁵⁰ *CIOS*, 8, p. 115. See also JAS. L/C/24/B/1/19.
 - ⁵¹ Pantcheff, p. 70.
 - ⁵² Moscow State Archives. (M.S.A.) Fund 7021. List 149. ZX05883/3.
 - ⁵³ *Ibid.* Interview 20, p. 37.
 - ⁵⁴ *Ibid.* Interview 20, p. 37 and p. 71/264.

It should also be noted here that in spite of not casting serious doubt upon the total number of deaths in Alderney, Captain Pantcheff does state in his book that two lists of the dead were made. However, both had been drawn up by Sonderfuehrer Richter using the 'garbled detail' found upon crosses in the graveyard. He added that 'Any subsequent list has been based on the same faulty data, but it is the best we have available.' Pantcheff, p. 68.

⁵⁵ Ibid. Appendix F, p. 22/212.

⁵⁶ Ibid. Major Gruzdev Interviews, p. 38.

⁵⁷ Ibid. Interview 25, p. 41.

⁵⁸ Ibid. p. 69/262, p. 70/263.

⁵⁹ Ibid. From Main Report No. PWIS(H)/KP/702 (p. 76/269 deleted.) My emphasis.

⁶⁰ Ibid. Gruzdev Interviews with Protocol: 12 July 1945, p. 10.

⁶¹ Ibid. Interviews, p. 11/65: Ivan Gedz.

⁶² Ibid. Gruzdev Protocol, p. 9.

⁶³ Ibid. Major Basilov Interviews. Ref. ex.no. 00634/01717 p. 72/265.

⁶⁴ Ibid. Basilov Interviews, p. 104/297.

⁶⁵ Pantcheff, p. 12.

⁶⁶ M.S.A. Fund 7021. List 149. Gruzdev Papers, p. 12.

⁶⁷ Ibid. p. 30.

⁶⁸ Ibid. Appendix 1. Section V Report 477, p. 43.

⁶⁹ Ibid. Gruzdev Interviews, p. 12.

⁷⁰ Ibid. Report PWIS(H)KP/702/703, 27 June 1945, p. 190/303.

⁷¹ Ibid. Basilov Interviews: Ex.no. 00634/01717, 23 April 1947. p. 87/280 and p. 148/341.

⁷² Mr. Pringent. Unpublished Interview. By courtesy of Mr. F.E. Cohen.

⁷³ M.S.A. Fund 7021. List 149. Interviews p. 3/57.

⁷⁴ *Alderney Magazine*, p. 24.

⁷⁵ Bunting, p. 292.

⁷⁶ Pantcheff, Preface.

⁷⁷ Bunting, p. 154.

⁷⁸ Linenthal, p. 7.

Chapter 14: Liberation and Beyond

¹ JAS. L/C/47/A/12.

² JAS. D/A5/D5/4.

³ A. Robin, 18 May 1945.

⁴ Bell, *Guernsey Occupied but Never Conquered*, p. 394.

⁵ *Jersey Evening Post*, 9 May 1945.

⁶ Seaton Wood, p. 292.

⁷ Bunting, pp. 239-232.

⁸ W. Renouf, p. 314.

⁹ Various contributors, *The First Casualty: The German Underground Hospital* p. 36.

¹⁰ Seaton Wood, p. 293.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Keiller, p. 170.

¹⁴ Falla, p. 145.

¹⁵ Cruikshank, p. 320.

¹⁶ Seaton Wood, p. 310.

¹⁷ Ibid. p. 302.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Cruikshank, p. 322.

²⁰ Seaton Wood, p. 293.

²¹ Falla, p. 208.

²² King, p. 56.

²³ F. Stroobant, *One Man's War* (Burbridge, 1967), p. 155.

²⁴ JAS. D/A5/D5/7.

²⁵ *CIOB, Book 4*, p. 3.

²⁶ *CIOB, Book 7*, p. 3.

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- ²⁷ Ibid.
- ²⁸ van Grieken, p. 56.
- ²⁹ Freeman-Keel, p. 145.
- ³⁰ Halbwachs, p. 200.
- ³¹ *Jersey Evening Post*, 19 September 1946.
- ³² Falla, p. 162.
- ³³ Ibid. p. 166.
- ³⁴ Ibid. pp. 168-169.
- ³⁵ Packe and Dreyfus, p. 152.
- ³⁶ C. Follain.
- ³⁷ Radio Jersey Programme. Recording by courtesy of Mr. Desmond McGarry.
- ³⁸ JAS. D/A5/D5/4.

Chapter 15: Conclusion and Memories Today

- ¹ Linenthal, p. 52.
- ² Lowenthal, pp. 187-190.
- ³ Eli Podeh, 'History and Memory in the Israeli Educational System,' *History & Memory Journal*, 12. 1, 65-101 (pp. 65-67).
- ⁴ *Jersey Evening Post*, 8 February 2001.
- ⁵ Ibid. 21 February 2001.
- ⁶ Luke Le Moignon in conversation with the present author, 21 February 2001.
- ⁷ Bob Le Sueur interview, February 2001.
- ⁸ Luke Le Moignon interview, 2001
- ⁹ Interview for IWM, 1989. By courtesy of Mr D.S. McGarry.
- ¹⁰ Mr J. Mière in conversation with the present author, 23 February 2001.
- ¹¹ IWM Interview, 1989.
- ¹² *Jersey Evening Post*, 29 October 1974.
- ¹³ *Jersey Evening Post*, 27 April 1995.
- ¹⁴ Keiller, p. 183.
- ¹⁵ *Jersey Evening Post*, 27 January 2004.

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Also many additional contacts who have supplied information on teaching about the Occupation in schools, growth and development of Museums, and information on investigation of German tunnel building in the Islands.